



The Diplomatic Club

February 2008 **Magazine**



People

The Ambassador of Brazil to Israel

Middle East Digest

OSCE 2007 Mediterranean Seminar

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84 Hashmonaim St. Tel-Aviv
P.O. Box 20344, Tel-Aviv 61200, Israel

708 Third Avenue, 4th Floor, New York
NY 10017, U.S.A

Club Diplomatique de Geneva
P.O. Box 228, Geneva, Switzerland

Publisher The Diplomatic Club Ltd.

General Manager Julia Verdel

Writers

Barry Rubin
Anthony J. Dennis
Patricia e. Hemricourt, Israel
Ira Moskowitz, Israel
Bernard Marks, Israel
Christopher Barder, UK
Ilan Berman, U.S.A

Reporters

Neil Sandler
Ksenia Svetlova
Olga Tyomina

Advertising

Tel: 972-3-5622061/2
info@diplomacy-club.com

Layout Irit Tal

Accounting Roded Rinegold

Legal Support Mati Simhovitz Law Office

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Tel: 972-3-5622061/2

Fax: 972-3-5620212

info@diplomacy-club.com

www.diplomacy-club.com

Dear Friends,

2007 was an eventful year for the Middle-East and the rest of the world. This year is now approaching its end. Despite the rapid end of the purely military phase of the Palestinian Conflict, the conflict is still raging, claiming too many lives. In Israel, the signing of the Road Map has not yet generated the hoped-for peace. We wish the Middle-East an active 2008 year focused on peace and development, where hatred dissolves and harmony blooms. To our readers, as always we would like to offer our best wishes for 2008:

- may your health be obvious (and need no discussion)*
- may your family relations be warm*
- may your friends be loyal*
- may your enemies become your friends (and those who don't, get lost)*
- may your spam be filtered*
- may your e-mails be answered*
- may your papers get published*
- may your wisdom deserve the approval of Confucius,*
- and your folly the praise of Erasmus*
- may your power get shared,*
- your wealth be free from greed*
- and your poverty from envy*
- may we communicate fruitfully across cultures*
- so that our horizons widen*
- and reason replaces violence*

The Diplomatic Club Magazine requests the pleasure to publish opinions, discussions and articles written by Ambassadors. We are looking forward to develop this idea.

As the year 2007 is now over, it is time to go back to work about new services for the coming 2008 year. And the Diplomatic Club will work harder than ever to bring its members new and improved services and events, and continue with the new deals and discount organized by the Diplomatic Club for its members.

The Diplomatic Club and myself wish you a successful New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Julia Verdel
General Manager
And the Editorial Team

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Brazil

Pedro Motta Pinto Coelho Ambassador of Brazil to Israel

by Neil Sandler

This Diplomatic Club Magazine reporter recently had the pleasure of speaking with Brazilian Ambassador Pedro Motta Pinto Coelho at his office at the Brazilian Embassy at Kaplan Street and Ibn Gavirol in Tel Aviv. The Ambassador began his tenure in March 2007. The Ambassador gave this reporter the following broad overview of the strong advancement in Brazil-Israel relations since his tenure began as well as important information about developments in Brazil.

Brazil-Israel Relations

The Brazilian Embassy was busily planning at this time for the arrival of Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, who visits Israel in February. Economic relations between Brazil and Israel are growing rapidly, having passed \$1 billion, from \$730 million in 2006. The Mercosur Free Trade Agreement was signed between South American countries and Israel in December 2007. The Ambassador states that Israel is a small country, but has a stable economy like Brazil right now. Brazil strives to be more politically involved in the region. One sign of this is that Brazil has opened an office in Ramallah. There is an Extraordinary Ambassador, Ouro Preto, to cover the Middle East, coming periodically, in charge of analyzing and dialoguing in the Peace Process. He comes to the region about two times a year and will accompany the Foreign Minister on February 14. The Brazilian Minister of Integration (Infrastructure) visited Israel last fall to discuss transposition water systems and attend the Prime Minister's Conference. Also visiting was the Minister of the Environment and the Governor of the state of Minas Gerais, a potential Presidential candidate.

The years 1988-90 was the period of highest inflation in Brazil, since then the



economy has stabilized, now inflation is at acceptable international standards, 3-4%. Many steps have been taken by the different administrations since then to stabilize the economy, now it is more open to the rest of the world. Brazil is hoping to reach GDP growth rate of 5% this year, not yet reaching the highest potential growth rate for developing countries, such as India at 10%, but acceptable. This is better than in recent years when the growth rate was only about 3 or 3.5%. Brazil has a large domestic market and export growth has been strong, such as with a 25% growth in exports to Israel. The Ambassador explained that 51% of exports go to developing countries (including China) and Africa is the third largest importer of goods from Brazil, with the order being United States, Argentina and then African countries combined. Major Brazilian exports to Israel include shoes, coffee, grain, beef, diamonds, electronics and electrical equipment. Brazilian Embraer Aircraft Company does a good business with Israel and recently sold 2 executive jets in the domestic market here, and their aircraft are equipped electronically in Israel. The exports to Israel last year were \$350 million, imports from Israel were \$676

million. Imports of fertilizer from Israel are quite large and accounts for some of the imbalance in the import/export ratio. Military cooperation is very important. There is an Air Force Cooperation Office here between Brazil-Israel, with involvement of commercial enterprises, as well as a Military Attache Office.

The Ambassador stresses that with the recently signed a Free Trade Agreement with Mercosur, which includes Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, we can see the strong relationship between Israel and South America. The Ambassador emphasizes the important political dimensions of this, as this is the first trade agreement that Mercosur has signed with a country outside of South America as an extra-regional partner. He says it shows the trust and confidence that Brazil and Mercosur have in Israel. Mercosur and Israel signed the Agreement last December 18th, in Montevideo, a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) finalizing the negotiations process started in 2005. Israel Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor Eli Yishai was at the signing. Besides promoting concrete commercial opportunities, it stresses, as well, Mercosur's interest in negotiating ambitious trade agreements out of South America. The FTA with Israel is part of Mercosur's effort in broadening its partnership with Middle East countries. Mercosur is also negotiating a FTA with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman). Mercosur intends, in 2008, to start negotiations with Morocco. There are also negotiations proceeding with the EU, India and southern African countries. The Agreement includes the following provisions: trade of goods, rules of origin, safeguards, cooperation in technical standards, cooperation in sanitary and phytosanitary regulations,

technological and technical cooperation and customs cooperation.

In Brazil

Ambassador Coelho says that Brazil is insulated sufficiently against possible stumbles in the world market because of its large market. Brazil is currently producing more than 2 million barrels of oil a day, a new record. There has recently been the discovery of the Tupi oil reserves offshore the southeast coast, potentially extremely large and Brazil could become one of the major oil-producers. Brazil is not a member of OPEC. Brazil is a pioneer in bio-energy, producing much ethanol and millions of cars in Brazil now can run on flex-fuel, a combination of ethanol and gasoline.

Brazil had a military dictatorship from 1964-84 and democratic growth was interrupted. The Ambassador maintains that elections are very well monitored now with the highest technology. In 2007 some corruption in Congressional activities and mismanagement of funds were uncovered by investigations of departments, the press and the system itself and a number of arrests were made. The system of checks and balances works much better now and the system is more transparent.

The FIFA World Cup will take place in 2014 in Brazil, the first one since 1950 in Brazil. Brazil has won the World Cup five times since then. The games will take place at different venues, with the Final probably being held at the famous Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, which is now being refurbished.

About the Ambassador

The Ambassador is married to Moira Pinto Coelho, who is also a Career Diplomat and head of the Brazilian Cultural Section at the Embassy. Brazil allows married Career Diplomat couples to both work at the Embassies abroad, unlike most countries. In the beginning of his postings, his wife was not allowed to work in her Career Diplomat career in his posted country, for example when he was posted in Washington, D.C. The first big reception they gave at their home was for the arrival of Daniella Mercouri, Brazilian singer, last May. Dinners are held for the Diplomatic Corps as well as to host the local Brazilian community in Israel, as well as government

and business people visiting from Brazil. Brazilian National Day is September 7. The Ambassador, of course, socializes much with the Diplomatic Corps from the other other Latin American countries and with a good number of the Diplomatic Corps from all countries. The Ambassador and his wife enjoy socializing with their immediate neighbors in Herzliya Pituach, including the Australian, Spanish, Japanese, American and other Ambassadors. In addition the Ambassador is an avid golfer. The Ambassador and his family enjoy the high standard of life and quality of cultural in Israel and have adapted to life here very easily.

The Ambassador and his wife have two daughters. Laila, 24, who is in her last year of Medical School at Catholic University in Brasilia, Brazil, and is planning to come for her internship in Israel at one of the hospitals here. Their other daughter, Cecilia, 23 has just graduated from the Ceub Journalism University in Brasilia, and is planning to pursue a diplomatic career. Both daughters have already visited Israel twice, since the Ambassador was posted

here, and loved the Israeli beaches in the summer.

The Ambassador is an accomplished flute-player, he is continuously taking lessons and plays mostly classical music, chamber music, sometimes with piano accompaniment, mostly for friends. The Ambassador enjoys reading literary classics, as well as history. Now he is reading a book about the travel of Brazilian Emperor Dom Pedro II to the Holy Land where he stayed for the years 1876-77.

From the Ambassador's Resume

Ambassador Pedro Motta Pinto Coelho was born in Santa Barbara, Brazil. He attended the Instituto Rio Branco, the Brazilian Diplomatic Academy, and later went on to get a Law Degree. His first posting was at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, D.C., beginning in 1975, reaching First Secretary. He attained a Bachelor of Arts from George Washington University. He was at the U.S. Brazilian Embassy until 1980, when he was posted as First Secretary at the Brazilian Embassy in Asuncion, Paraguay. Ambassador



Ambassador Coelho and Moira Coelho.

Coelho attained a Master of Science in Political Science from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. in 1981. In the following years he was posted to numerous Brazilian political, economic, scientific, environmental, etc. missions and so on, all around the world.

He was honored with the Order of Air Force Merit, Brazil, Officer, and the Order of Naval Merit, Brazil, Officer in 1988. In 1994 he was posted at the Brazilian Embassy in Buenos Aires, Deputy Head of Mission.

In 1999 Ambassador Coelho was posted as General-Consulate in Lisbon, Consul-General. In 2003 he attained the First Class Minister, Ambassadorial Rank. In 2003 he became Director at the Department of Africa, in 2005 became Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs for Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Middle East. In 2006 he was assigned Ambassador of Brazil to Israel. The Ambassador had visited Israel before his posting here, in 2003, as Head of Department for Middle East and Africa, and in 2006 as Under-Secretary for Political Affairs on a diplomatic mission.

Culture

Brazilian dance, sports, music are very much appreciated in Israel. Last year the Brazilian Film Festival was held at venues in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa and other locations, with about 20,000 people attending. For Israel's 60th Anniversary this year the Ambassador wants to showcase more Brazilian culture and one focus is on bringing more Brazilian Chorinho music groups to Israel. Chorinho is contemporary to jazz, bringing together folk and popular music, African rhythms and Eastern European sounds.

In Conclusion

The Ambassador is hoping for a visit by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva this year to Israel. As well he is hoping for more high-level visits from Israel to Brazil in 2008. Ambassador Coelho's posting here in Israel has begun on a high point in economic, political, security, cultural and diplomatic relations between Brazil and Israel and with his hard work looks to be going from strength to strength. ●



Ambassador Coelho and Acting President Dalia Itzik.

Icon of Hatred

On Tuesday, January 9, the Global Research in International Affairs Center, in conjunction with the Interdisciplinary Center of Herzliya (IDC) sponsored a talk in English by Professor Richard Landes, Boston University about: **"Icon of Hatred: The Muhammad al Durah Affair, from Media to Internet to Courtroom"**

On September 30, 2000, Palestinian photographer Talal abu Rahmah filmed a father and son who appeared to be under fire at Netzarim Junction in the Gaza Strip. Charles Enderlin, correspondent for France2, showed the film on television claiming the Israelis targeted the defenceless pair, killing the boy and wounding his father badly. Enderlin also gave the tape at no charge to other stations around the world which, showed it extensively as an Israeli crime. The story became a global sensation, a symbolic image of the Intifada's struggle against a murderous Israeli army. Palestinian suicide terrorists, Muslims attacking Jews in Europe, anti-Zionists denouncing Israel

as a Nazi state, all cited the story as justification.

Despite extensive contradictions between Talal's account and the evidence of his own footage, most of which point to the strong likelihood that he staged the whole scene, the media accepted this version and has resisted efforts bring these doubts to the public's attention. But with investigators writing on the Internet the story took on a life of its own. Enderlin, in an attempt to suppress even these marginal voices, sued several of these cyber-critics for defamation. Despite early victories, his offensive turned against him last month when the court viewed some of Talal's raw footage.

Medieval historian Richard Landes has maintained the most extensively documented website concerning this affair, and has closely followed and reported on the Muhammad al-Durah story since it began. He will discuss the affair, its implications and impact, and will also show and analyze film clips, some of which have not been seen before publicly.



Take 6 of the "shooting sequence" in which the boy, allegedly already dead from a stomach wound, holds his hand over his eyes, raises his arm and looks out. Enderlin cut this scene from his news broadcast.



Banner at a demonstration in Paris, October 6, 2000. For the first time since the Shoah, cries of "Death to the Jews" were heard in public in Europe.

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Director of Agency "Art Sintez"
Lev Klotz



OSCE 2007 Mediterranean Seminar Held in Israel

Combating Intolerance and Discrimination, Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding

by Neil Sandler

The OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) held its first-ever conference in Israel on December 18-19 in Tel Aviv, focusing on fighting intolerance and promoting mutual respect, with representatives from OSCE's participating States and Mediterranean partner countries. Spanish Ambassador Carlos Sanchez de Boado, who chaired the OSCE Permanent Council (Spain held the 2007 OSCE Chairmanship) said "Racism and discrimination impoverish and violate our democratic rights" in his opening speech. He said "The OSCE contributes to promoting encounters that help avoid the erosion of democratic legitimacy, plurality and cultural co-existence – values that all form the mosaic of responsible decision-making."

The Seminar is an annual event for the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and is normally hosted by a Mediterranean Partner country. This year Israel offered to host the event and the participating States decided, as usual by consensus, to accept the offer.

The OSCE is an international organization which serves as a forum for political dialogue with the aim of securing stability in the region, based on democratic practices and improved governance. It is an ad hoc organization under the United Nations Charter, and is concerned with early warning, conflict prevention, crisis

management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Its 56 participating States are from Europe, the Caucasus and North America and cover most of the northern hemisphere.

Political direction to the Organization is given by heads of state or government during summits. OSCE's summits are not regular or scheduled but held as needed at the call of the Permanent Council. The last Summit was in Istanbul in 1999. The high-level decision-making body of the Organization is the Ministerial Council, which meets yearly. At ambassador level, the Permanent Council convenes weekly in Vienna, and serves as the regular negotiating and decision-making body. The post of Chairman-in-Office is held by the minister for foreign affairs of the participating State holding the chairmanship. The chairperson of the Permanent Council is the Ambassador to Austria of the participating State holding the chairmanship. From January 1, 2008, to December 31, 2008, the Chairman-in-Office (CiO) is Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ilkka Kanerva. The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation Miguel Angel Moratinos held the office during 2007.

The Aim

The aim of the Mediterranean Seminar in Israel was to assess the state of the

fight against intolerance and discrimination in the participating States and the Mediterranean Partners, and exchange ideas promoting these values in areas such as migration and gender using a variety of tools, such as media and education. The role of civil society was particularly emphasized, and there was, for the first time, considerable participation by Mediterranean NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations), who met the day before the Seminar and issued a set of recommendations.

Participation in the Seminar is voluntary and not all participating States and Mediterranean Partners do so for different reasons.

Israel is a Partner for Cooperation of the OSCE. As such, it observes the political debate in the Organization, and provides specific contribution through sharing ideas, experience and expertise in a number of areas, including, but not limited to, countering intolerance, integration of migrants, inter-cultural dialogue, anti-terrorism, countering desertification and soil degradation, etc.

The OSCE's Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. In addition the Asian Partners for Co-operation are Afghanistan, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Thailand.

The Mediterranean Partner's for Co-

operation are a mixed set of States. Not all of them have diplomatic relations with each other and three have not yet recognized the State of Israel. Nevertheless, they meet regularly and exchange views. And Israel presents joint positions on the role of the Mediterranean Partners in the Organization. This dialogue is reinforced by the annual Mediterranean Seminars. Israel attaches great importance to the OSCE conferences and meetings - in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Cordoba and Bucharest - that have placed combating anti-Semitism higher on the agendas of governments and societies.

Keynote speakers at the event included Chairman of the Knesset Education Committee MK Rabbi Michael Melchior, Minister of Welfare and Social Service Isaac Herzog, Participants from throughout the OSCE region also attended. Also speaking from Israel were Mr. Majalli Whbee, MK, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel and Ms. Colette Avital MK, Head of the Knesset delegation to the OSCE. In his speech at the Seminar Mr. Whbee said: "The time has come to cease using international forums to vilify Israel and to indulge in point-scoring which merely serves to postpone confidence-building in the region, and to publicly condemn those forces of hatred and violence which, ultimately, undermine everything they stand for."

There was a concluding statement by H.E. Ambassador Dan Ashbal, Israeli Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative of the State of Israel to the OSCE.

Jordan sent a Political Officer to the Seminar. Mr. Ibrahim Abu Shindi, Co-director, The Citizens' Accord Forum, Israel, of all participants contacted, was the only one to comment on why there was non-attendance by other Arab Partners for Co-operation. He said he guessed the reason was the political issues surrounding relations with the Palestinians.

Civil Society Preparatory Meeting

Before the Mediterranean Seminar there was a Civil Society Preparatory Meeting at the Hilton Hotel, Tel Aviv on December 17 sponsored by The Citizens Accord Forum between Jews and Arabs in Israel. It was held for organizing the NGOs in participation with the OSCE Mediterranean Seminar. The focus was stated as Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding.

In the closing of the Preparatory Meeting there was a presentation by Mr. Abu Shindi. In statements to the Diplomatic Club Magazine Mr. Abu Shindi said that the OSCE came to Israel for the Seminar because of this

annual seminar's focus on tolerance in the Mediterranean region. He said Ambassador Dan Ashbal made the decision and pushed for the Seminar to be held in Israel this year. He said the Citizens' Accord Forum prepared the issues to be discussed by NGOs from across Europe, Morocco and the United States. Dozens of NGOs came to Tel Aviv, the discussions were constructive and he believes the Civil Society aims are now in process. He hopes the OSCE will adopt as legislation the recommendations made by these NGOs. Mr. Abu Shindi said Ambassador Ashbal, Udi Cohen and he, all Co-directors of the Citizens' Accord Forum between Jews & Arabs in Israel, had represented Israel at OSCE Tolerance Seminars in the past. Mr. Abu Shindi said he was satisfied with the Seminar's outcome and only regretted that some of the Arab countries did not attend.

Giving closing remarks at the Preparatory Meeting was Ms. Jo-Anne Bishop, Head of the Tolerance and Non Discrimination, and Senior Advisor, ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), who also spoke at the Mediterranean Seminar. ●

Diplomacy on-line @@@

by Olga Tyonima

Nowadays the Internet has become an integral part of our life. If 10 years ago, in order to find a book we had to go to the library, or to visit an official organization to get information, today we just have to open our computers, connect them to internet and ...voila.. The entire world is in front of us in a small window. In the upper window we are looking through the freshest news, in the left corner our e-mail is opened, and we are reading about our friends, whom we left in other places while moving all around the world.

The more people read about the world, the more interested they are and the eager they feel about seeing it. The stronger their wish to see new, not visited places is. But what will a normal person do before going to a new country? Of course! Open Internet and read about the place he wants to visit!

So, The Diplomatic Club has decided to check what an Israeli can do who has decided to go abroad can find on the embassies' web sites, how convenient it is to use these pieces of information and what a traveler can learn from them.

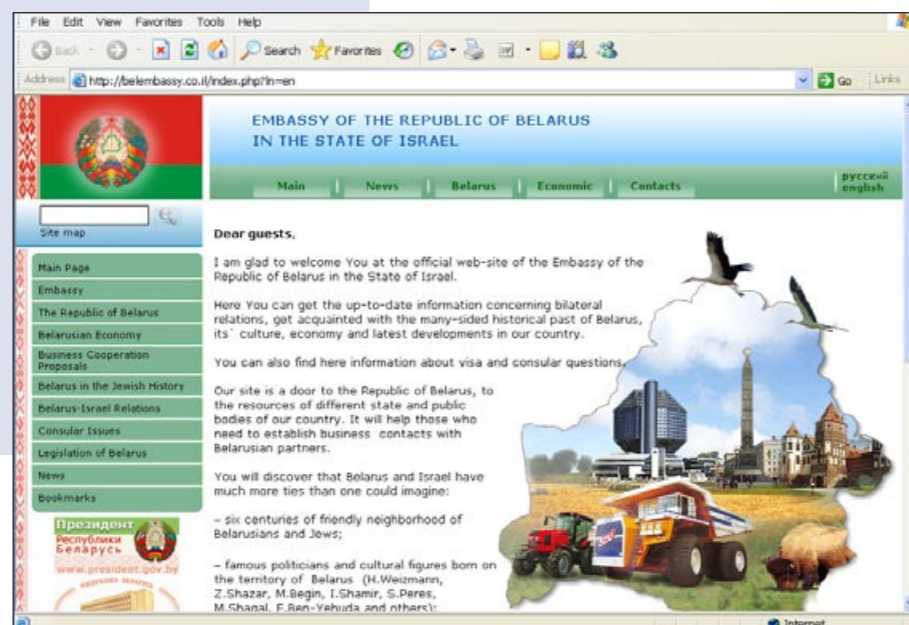
We choose 3 main criteria for analyzing a web site – they are a web site's simplicity and its friendliness for the user, informational value and languages that are used on the web site, the more languages that are used there, the more comfortable for users with different backgrounds it is.

So we will describe three embassies web sites for you: the **Belarusian**, **Japanese** and **Canadian**.

We will continue introducing other embassies' web sites in our following editions, because as usual The Diplomatic Club is trying to do its best to help you and to keep you updated.

Belarus

The Belarusian Embassy's web site is very friendly, it is written in Russian and English, it is very convenient to use it and it is very informative. The only thing, that people, who can read only Hebrew could find it difficult to use this web site. You can find out lots about Belarus, about its relations with Israel, you can find information how and where you can get a visa, how much it will cost and how long it will take you to get it. You can find some business and investment propositions.



Japan

The Japanese web site is very original and is decorated in a nice way. Information that you can find there is in English and Japanese. Also there is a nice online encyclopedia about Japan in Hebrew. The web-site is very comfortable to use and very informative, you can find information about grants, programs, read news, learn about Japan, find answers to your Visa questions, look through the links and find much useful and helpful information.

Canada

The third web site belongs to the Canadian Embassy in Israel. It is simply elegant and comfortable. Information you can get in English and French. On the web site you can find information about visas, trade, business, news, and what is very good and interesting is that students can find information about studying in Canada and getting a degree there.



Cost of living

Worldwide ranking - 2007

Moscow is the world's most expensive city for expatriates for the second consecutive year, according to the latest Cost of Living Survey from Mercer Human Resource Consulting. London is in second position, climbing three places since last year. Seoul moves down one place in the ranking to take third place, followed by Tokyo in fourth. Asuncion in Paraguay is the least expensive city for the fifth year running.

With New York as the base city scoring 100 points, Moscow scores 134.4 and is over two-and-a-half times costlier than Asuncion, which has an index of 50. Even so, the gap between the world's most and least expensive cities appears to be narrowing.

Mercer's survey covers 143 cities* across six continents and measures the comparative cost of over 200 items in each location, including housing, transport, food, clothing, household goods and entertainment. It is the world's most comprehensive cost of living survey and is used to help multinational companies and governments determine compensation allowances for their expatriate employees.

"There have been some significant changes in the rankings since last year. These are primarily due to exchange rate fluctuations - in particular, the weakening of the US Dollar and strengthening of the Euro," said Rebecca Powers, a principal and senior consultant at Mercer.

She added: "As companies continue to send employees on expatriate assignments, they must closely monitor changes in cost of living to ensure their expatriate compensation packages are fair and competitive."

Europe, Middle East and Africa

Moscow is the most expensive city in Europe and in the rest of the world, for the second year running, with a score of 134.4 (compared with 123.9 in 2006). "The appreciation of the Rouble against the US

Dollar, combined with ever-increasing accommodation charges, has driven up costs for expatriates in Moscow," said Yvonne Traber, research manager and senior associate at Mercer.

London has climbed three positions to second place in the ranking (score 126.3). "Steep property rental costs, together with the strengthening of the British Pound compared to the US Dollar, have contributed to the city's high ranking," commented Yvonne Traber.

Other costly European cities include Copenhagen in 6th place (110.2), Geneva in 7th (109.8) and Zurich in 9th (107.6). Oslo remains in 10th place with a score of 105.8 while Milan climbs two places to position 11 (104.4). Sofia in Bulgaria is Europe's least expensive city in 108th place with a score of 72.5.

The strengthening of the Euro has resulted in a number of European cities moving significantly up the ranking this year. For example, Stockholm has moved up from 36th position to reach 23rd place



Rio De Janeiro



New York City



Melbourne

(score 93.1) while Amsterdam has climbed from 41st position to 25th (92.2). Cities in Spain, Greece, Germany and the UK also rank notably higher this year.

Dublin rose two ranks to 16th place.

Yvonne Traber commented: "The relative strength of the Euro and other European currencies, including the Swiss Franc and the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian Krone, has pushed up the living costs faced by expatriates in many European countries."

Tel Aviv is the costliest city in the Middle East. The Israeli city ranks in 17th place and scores 97.7. Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates have moved down in the ranking this year. The main reason for this drop is that the UAE Dirham is pegged to the US Dollar. The majority of African cities covered by the survey come in the bottom half of the ranking.

The Americas

New York remains the most expensive city in North America but drops five places to position 15 (score 100). Other North American cities have dropped more steeply and only New York and Los Angeles (position 42, score 87.1) rank in the top 50 cities.

"The decline of most US cities in the ranking can be attributed to the depreciation of the US dollar against the Euro and other major currencies worldwide. The change reflects a reversal of the situation experienced this time last year, when the majority of US cities climbed the ranking due to the strength of the dollar," said Powers.



Toronto

Toronto, the most expensive city in Canada, has dropped 35 places to position 82 (score 78.8). Calgary and Vancouver have also tumbled down the rankings, sliding from 71st place to 92nd and 56th to 89th respectively. Ottawa remains the cheapest Canadian city in 109th position scoring 72.3. Canadian cities have traditionally rated favorably in the worldwide ranking. The new scores reflect a low rate of inflation and stable housing prices. In addition, while it has appreciated slightly against the US Dollar, the Canadian Dollar has depreciated nearly 13% against the Euro since last year's survey.

Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have dropped significantly in the ranking, but remain the most expensive cities in Latin America. Sao Paulo is now placed 62nd,

compared with 34th in 2006, and is followed by Rio de Janeiro in 64th place (position 40 in 2006). Although the Brazilian Real has remained stable against the US Dollar over the last 12 months, the Brazilian cities surveyed have been pushed down the ranking as they give way to European cities that are ascending due to the buoyancy of the Euro.

Globally, the least costly city is Asuncion in Paraguay for the fifth consecutive year (score 50). Other low-ranking cities include Karachi, Quito and Montevideo in 142nd (score 56.1), 141st (56.3) and 140th place (58.4) respectively.

Asia

Four of the world's top 10 costliest cities for expatriates are in Asia. Seoul ranks in 3rd place (score 122.4), Tokyo in 4th (122.1) and Hong Kong in 5th (119.4) - all have been pushed down one place this year.

Chinese cities have moved down the ranking this year. Beijing ranks 20th and scores 95.9, while Shanghai is in 26th place with a score of 92.1. Over the past 12 months, the value of the Chinese Yuan has decreased by around 6% against the Euro. This factor, together with a low inflation rate and stable property rental prices, has kept the major Chinese cities from moving up the ranking. Accommodation costs have not escalated because, while demand is increasing, the availability of high-quality rentals in these cities is also good.

In contrast, elsewhere in Asia, the cost of international-standard accommodation has pushed some cities up the ranking. For

example, sharp increases in house prices have contributed to Singapore climbing from 17th to 14th position. Rising property prices have also caused Indian cities to move up the ranking - for example, Mumbai has jumped from position 68 to 52 (score 84.9).

Australia

Wellington is the least costly city in this region in 111th place with a score of 71.8. Auckland climbs one place to rank 99th (score 73.9). Expatriates in Australia continue to face higher living costs than their counterparts in New Zealand. Sydney remains the most expensive city in Australia at position 21 with a score of 94.9. Melbourne occupies position 60, up 14 places from last year, and scores 82.5. Adelaide is in 96th place (score 74.7).



Beijing

The Wolf Foundation Prizes 2008



The Wolf Foundation Prizes Awarded since 1978, its recipients are selected by international juries. The prize in each area consists of a diploma and a cash award of US\$ 100,000 equally divided in the event of co-recipients. According to the annual rotation, no prize in Physics is awarded this year.

Agriculture

John A. Pickett Rothamsted Research, United Kingdom.

James H. Tumlinson Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, USA.

W. Joe Lewis US Department of Agriculture, Tifton, Georgia, USA.

For their remarkable discoveries of mechanisms governing plant-insect and plant-plant interactions. Their scientific contributions on chemical ecology have fostered the development of integrated pest management and significantly advanced agricultural sustainability.



Mathematics

Pierre R. Deligné - Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

For his work on mixed Hodge theory; the Weil conjectures; the Riemann-Hilbert correspondence; and for his contributions to arithmetic.

Phillip A. Griffiths Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

For his work on variations of Hodge structures; the theory of periods of abelian integrals; and for his contributions to complex differential geometry.

David B. Mumford Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA.

For his work on algebraic surfaces; on geometric invariant theory; and for laying the foundations of the modern algebraic theory of moduli of curves and theta functions.



Medicine

Howard Cedar and **Aharon Razin** The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

For their fundamental contributions to our understanding of the role of DNA methylation in the control of gene expression.



Arts (Music)

Giya Kancheli Antwerpen, Belgium.

One of the world's greatest composers, whose unique music is infused with unforgettable beauty.

Claudio Abbado Milano, Italy.

One of the world's pre-eminent conductors. A remarkable human being, whose music-making is imbued with passion, intellect and love.



Chemistry

William E. Moerner - Stanford University, Stanford, California, USA.

Allen J. Bard University of Texas, Austin, Texas, USA.

For the ingenious creation of a new field of science, single molecule spectroscopy and electrochemistry, with impact at the nanoscopic regime, from the molecular and cellular domain to complex material systems.



American Spirits Tasting Event

The Tel-Aviv's FAS (Foreign Agricultural Service) office organized an event, in conjunction with the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) and three leading local importers of American spirits, to promote familiarization of American quality spirits among Israeli media and consumers. The 3 importers: YD Enterprises, M. Akkerman and the Scottish Trading and Marketing Company. Ambassador Jones hosted a promotional spirits tasting and dinner at his residence on January 15, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. to promote familiarization of quality American spirits among Israeli media and consumers. The evening included a short presentation and film by DISCUS, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. Approximately 150 guests attended the event. The primary attendees were local food and life-style journalists, local public opinion leaders, Embassy personnel, and Embassy guests.

The first American president George Washington, who put down the Whiskey Rebellion during his first Presidential

term, went on to become early America's most successful whiskey distiller and since then American spirit producers have created a magnificent spirit industry, which today produces some of the high and premium bourbons and Tennessee whiskey all over the world, including the world-famous Tennessee Whiskey Jack Daniels, Woodford Reserve, Jim Beam, Wild Turkey, Four Roses and much more.

While the richness of this corn-based spirit makes it an ideal drink to sip slowly "on the rocks" (over ice) or "neat" (straight), Bourbon is also used in such classic cocktails as the Manhattan and the Mint Julep.

In 2006, the U.S. market share in Israel for all spirits imports totaled 5%, representing a value of \$1.7 million. In 2006, the market for American Spirits in Israel grew by 16% compared to 2005 levels. The driving force behind this growth is the worldwide bourbon trend, and this trend is expected to continue in the forthcoming years.

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Diplomatic Events

20 Thousand Visitors at the Agricultural Exhibition Northern and Central Arava R&D

Among them : Ambassadors, Palestinians and Jordanian delegations

20 Thousand People visited Northern and Central R&D (Research and Development Center) at the two-day agricultural exhibition, professional conference, tours and more, which was held at Yair Station near moshav Hazeva . This year the achievements of the Arava region in the field of water and desertification were displayed, in light of the advanced worldwide search for solutions to global warming, the expected water shortages in the coming years all over the world, and the developments made in these fields in the Arava.

The Arava region is used as a model for other areas in learning about the capacity for life and agriculture, quality of the environment and water utilization.

The produce of the Arava makes up about 60% of the fresh vegetable export from Israel, about 15% of the cut flower export, and about 90% of the export of ornamental fish.



R&D (Research and Development): The Northern and Central Arava R&D Center was established in 1986 as part of the Negev-Arava R&D, with the aim of addressing the developmental needs of the settlement in the national priority regions along the borders of Israel in the Negev and the Arava.

The activities of the R&D are funded by the JNF, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Production Boards, ICA and private donors

The main aim of the Northern and Central Arava R&D is to create development possibilities, and to increase the population of the region, while preserving its special characteristics.

Diplomatic Events

Israel's international tourism fair - IMTM 2008

Over 30 countries from around the world, and over 30 tourist sites in Israel, offered a wide range of attractions and presentations to the Israeli audience in two days of a worldwide tourism experience.

The 2008 tourism fair took place on February 5 - 6, in the Tel Aviv Exhibition Grounds

Israel's international tourism fair is a tourism, culture, and consumer event at one and the same time. A visit to the fair conveys a sense of round the world travel in the space of a few hours. Over 30 countries participated in this year's fair, including Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Georgia, Croatia, Ethiopia, Uzbekistan, Slovakia, Lithuania, Papua New Guinea, Mozambique, Belgium, Poland, Turkey, Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Austria, Morocco, India, Germany, Tunisia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Byelorussia, Sri Lanka and Korea. Many countries consider the fair to be of great importance, and have therefore even increased the size of their display and marketing activities so as to increase their prominence.

In addition to foreign countries, over 30 local Israeli tourist attractions represented, including airlines, hotels, vacation sites and places of entertainment.

IMTM is the central annual event of the tourism branch in Israel, and it is intended to encourage incoming, outgoing and domestic tourism in Israel, and increase cooperation with many countries around the world. The fair is being held for the 14th consecutive year.

Alongside the foreign countries, Israeli representatives are also participating in the fair – tourism associations from all around the country, airlines, hotels, car rental companies, and service providers in the field of tourism.



JETRO Sake-Tasting Event Held

Japanese restaurant owners, food journalists and beverage professionals attended a sake tasting event that took place in the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Israel on January 28. The event was sponsored by JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization).

Sake is a Japanese alcoholic beverage made from rice. In Japanese, the word sake (usually preceded by the honorific prefix o-) does not specifically refer to this specific beverage; rather, the word Nihonshu (translated as «Japanese alcoholic beverage») is used to distinguish it from other beverages. In English, the word sake never refers to anything other than Nihonshu. Here we are referring to "sake" as it is used in English.

Sake is also commonly referred to in English as «rice wine», but the characterisation implied is not accurate. Wine is made from the single fermentation of plant juices. Sake is produced by multiple fermentation of rice, which is more similar to how beer is produced. Also, outside Japan there exist other beverages known as «rice wine» that are significantly different from Nihonshu.



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Gali Berman-Baram: A Chef Named Desire

by Mira Bernthal

Whoever meets Gali Berman-Baram finds it hard to believe that behind the fragile and boyish appearance there is a woman whose whole life revolves around food. As a matter of fact, she never imagined that one day food will become a career for her. As a descendent of Argentines, lavish meals were always a part of her life, and whenever one of her family members celebrated a birthday, the most natural thing to do was go to the grill in the backyard, set on the fire, put on a few juicy pieces of Asado, and call all the family friends to join the party of wine and loss of senses.

But life – and this sounds much better in Spanish – turned out to be different than she had planned. After completing her duties in the Israeli Defense Forces, when her dream to become a dancer evaporated like many other childhood dreams, she started working as a delivery person for a large ready meals factory, hoping to save enough money for a big trip abroad. Just like the ballerinas' cliché, one day the chef was sick and Gali was asked to replace him in the kitchen.

"All of a sudden I found myself preparing food I had no experience with" she says, "while relying mainly on my intuition. But the action in the kitchen turned me on, and that is when I got the idea to do it professionally. On the other hand, it was my first useful lesson as to 'how not to run a culinary business': not to put the most important and sensitive part of the business – preparing the food – in the hands of a rookie like me".

The Jeanne d'Arc of Desserts

At this stage, Gali has an eighteen year long glorious career as a chef behind her, based mainly on her talent, her female intuition, and expertise gained over the years. The education programs and trainings she had received in France and England, with the best experts and in the best culinary institutes, provided her with the final touch.

Gali received her first and most important lesson while working at Keren, the famous gourmet restaurant, which was owned by Chef Haim Cohen and Irit Shenkar. Cohen immediately recognized the talent and passion in the young lady, who joined the restaurant as a trainee, and sent her after only 18 months to France, where she was trained in preparing personal desserts in the famous restaurant Moulin de Martiaux. Three months later Gali

came back to Keren and generated a revolution in the kitchen: in place of the cake-with-sauce, the dominating concept in the luxurious restaurant, as in most of the other restaurants and cafes in Israel, emerged new and complex desserts, based on the patisserie francaise tradition, combining at least three elements each.

The dessert revolution started by Gali at Keren – and, in fact in the other gourmet restaurants in the country, which rapidly imitated the successful concept – granted her the first prize in the first "Young and Most Promising Chef" contest organized by Carmel Winery and a training scholarship in Le Manoir aux Quatre Saisons, with the famous chef Raymond Blanc. Later she took another trip to the land of baguettes and croissants in order to be trained in classic confectionery and boulangerie, thus becoming one of the leading experts in the area of desserts and pastries in the country.

Keren was not the only restaurant to enjoy Gali's diverse culinary expertise and talent; she also worked with such top restaurants as Dixie and Yaron Kestenboum's FoodArt. As opposed to these restaurants, where she served as Chef patissier, in other restaurants, such as Tzel Tamar, Mor & Cinnamon, Mezzaluna and Montilio she served as culinary consultant, forming the menus, teaching the staff how to prepare each dish, and managing the operation.

Pampering the guests

During the past two years Gali has been serving as house chef in the workshops of Israel's leading chain of culinary centers, Spices, where she shares the kitchen secrets she has acquired over the years with the participants. "Before I came to Spices, all culinary workshops were made up of frontal education", she says, "and I convinced the managers that the preparation of food can only be taught by working hands on; ever since, the workshops include the active participation of the trainees".

Among her other occupations, in the last nine years Gali has been operating a catering business named after her, specializing in gourmet meals for special occasions. At first the company was a one man show, but today the company employs additional experienced staff members. Gali: "We specialize in events served at the client's home, based on a unique yet non-intimidating and non-complicated menu, tailored for the event and the client's needs. My motto is to



pamper each of the guests, including the client, even if the event takes place in his home".

Gali Berman Catering Chef carries out a gourmet event from A to Z – beginning with the cutlery and ending with the table design, while the client is responsible only for the location. Her catering business is prepared to make every culinary fantasy come true: a buffet meal, a finger party – serving a wide assortment of small dishes that do not require the use of a knife and fork (up to 250 people), or a sit down dinner – serving a meal to the table (up to 150 people). Gali: "In many of the events I combine active participation of the guests using the experience I have gained as an instructor in the Spices workshops. I ask the guests to roll up their sleeves, put on aprons, and prepare the dessert or the main course together with me. Obviously an activity such as this is reserved in advance by the host, but from my experience every event that combines active participation involves much more pleasure".

Pleasure is the key word

Pleasure is also the key word when it comes to all of Gali's personal activities. Since it is important for her to enjoy everything she does, she makes sure not to produce more than four catering events per month. "It's for the clients' good as well as mine and my husband's and two adorable daughters at home", she says with a smile.

Because of this pleasure she also found herself behind the pots and pans of two popular television shows as the house chef: Odetta, hosted by the Israeli Martha Stewart, Odetta Schwartz, and "As Delicious as it Gets" hosted by funny girl Rotem Abuhab. Gali: "I have been having the most fun in 'As Delicious as it Gets'. In the beginning of each show a limited amount of articles of food were placed before me, and 30 minutes later I would serve the most delicious and artistic dishes I could think of. The creativity I was asked to demonstrate on that show is in fact what makes working with food so charming and passionate for me".

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