



Speech Parliamentary State Secretary Marco Wanderwitz

Liebling Haus Opening

German Federal Ministry of Interior, Building and Community

Press embargo until 19:00, 19.9.19 – Check against delivery

Mayor Huldai,

Ambassador Wasum-Rainer,

ladies and gentlemen,

Liebling Haus is open!

Welcome to the opening of Liebling Haus – The White City Center, a new hub of expertise on architecture and cultural heritage in Tel Aviv.

I am delighted to be opening this special building with you this evening and to celebrate a wonderful Israeli–German cooperation project.

The project – which is an initiative of the city of Tel Aviv, the Tel Aviv Foundation, and the Federal Republic of Germany – highlights in many ways the thriving connections between Israel and Germany. And for me as a representative of the German partner – the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community – it is of special importance.

With more than 4000 buildings in the modernist Bauhaus style, the White City of Tel Aviv is the only place of its kind in the world. A unique jewel!

The passage of time, the humid climate and salty air, as well as intensive use, have all taken their toll on the buildings. With our technical expertise and craft skills, we want to continue supporting the renovation of the White City, and thus preserve our shared heritage for generations to come.

This project is about shared Israeli–German architectural heritage, and the White City is an excellent example of this.



When the Nazis closed down the Bauhaus in 1933, they forced many of its teachers and students into exile. Some of them emigrated to what would become the state of Israel and worked as architects and urban planners, building the new town of Tel Aviv.

Many details and stylistic elements of the White City buildings are clearly influenced by a Bauhaus style adapted to the local climatic conditions.

Since that time, the German words for "Spachtel", "Kratzputz", "Waschputz", and others, have been firmly established in the Hebrew language.

Since the project agreement was signed in 2015, there have been many developments: exhibitions have been organized, a competition was held to renovate the Liebling Haus, lectures are given regularly, and a successful educational programme has been launched.

And last but not least, the Tel Aviv authorities renovated the Max Liebling Haus, which was made available for the new White City Center.

For at least one and a half years, the house was "open for renovation". And during this time, the Israeli-German projects experimented and worked together with carpentry, terrazzo, plaster and paint.

Now the transformation of the Liebling Haus is complete, and as we can see, it has been a resounding success.

The Liebling Haus is not meant to be a museum, but a lively building in which to develop strategies for preserving architectural heritage. It is also meant to encourage the sharing of knowledge between the two partners to find an appropriate way to handle this unique collection of buildings in the heart of Tel Aviv.

The Liebling Haus is also a kind of "explanation station". The exhibition space and research lab are intended to give Tel Aviv residents easier access to expert knowledge and make them more aware of the special value of the architecture of their city.

But ultimately it's about much more than that: it's about Israeli-German friendship. And this friendship can be strengthened and deepened by telling the story of Israel and Germany's shared architectural history.

Working together, making progress together – this has happened in carpentry workshops organized by the Berlin project "Zukunftsgeräusche" [sounds of the future] and the Berlin chamber of crafts and trades, and in the plasterwork and painting workshops in early 2019, which were possible thanks to generous funding from the Sto Foundation.

International understanding grows effortlessly between people working together on a building site.



Ladies and gentlemen,

2019 is the 100th anniversary year of the Bauhaus school, and now that the Liebling Haus is open it can continue to develop the ideas that originated with the Bauhaus and create new concepts to shape the world in which we live – in Tel Aviv and beyond.

It would be wonderful if, in the years ahead, many other joint projects could be realized with the city of Tel Aviv and the Liebling Haus – and if other buildings in the White City could be used for joint workshops.

I am sure this will be possible!

I wish the White City Center a bright and successful future with its new Liebling Haus, and I am sure that this Center will play a key role in preserving the White City, and in the continued cooperation and friendship between Israel and Germany.

When a project has been a success, there is every reason to celebrate. And so I look forward to a very enjoyable evening: Shalom aleichem!