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ICEJ WORLDWIDE



# ICEJ MARKS 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS

BY DAVID PARSONS,  
ICEJ VICE PRESIDENT & SENIOR SPOKESMAN

Israel today”, “remarked Dr. Bühler. “That Israel became the ‘Start-Up’ nation, and a leader in global research and development. We are here today to celebrate what God has done with the Jewish people, and also to affirm our stand and our support with the Jewish people for the years and decades to come.”

The Basel Conference also adopted a series of resolutions which noted the extraordinary successes of the Zionist movement over the past 125 years, but added that “the fulfilment of Herzl’s dream has come at great cost”, particularly in light of the Holocaust. The resolutions also recalled the key events and efforts over the ensuing decades which led to Jewish statehood and reshaped Jewish-Christian relations.

In late August, several hundred Christians along with Jewish officials and guests gathered in Basel, Switzerland, in the same Stadt Casino where the First Zionist Congress was held 125 years ago. It was in this venue that Theodor Herzl first convened Zionist leaders from Jewish communities worldwide in August 1897 to plan a future Jewish state.

and both the mainline and free churches of Switzerland, which together brought forward a powerful message of support and friendship to the nation of Israel.

ICEJ-Switzerland, under the leadership of René Emmenegger, arranged the gathering, which began three days of events celebrating 125 years since the First Zionist Congress. René managed to bring together an amazing tapestry of speakers from the Jewish community

ICEJ President, Dr. Jürgen Bühler, opened the conference and several experts on Herzl and the Zionist movement also spoke, before ICEJ Vice President of International Affairs, Dr. Mojmir Kallus, gave the closing address.

“I believe you can say today that those founding fathers of the State of Israel who met here in this very hall 125 years ago, they could have never imagined what is taking place in Eretz

Of special note, the resolutions expressly reaffirmed the ten points of the historic Seelisberg Conference, also held in Switzerland in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust in 1947, at which major Christian and Jewish leaders sought to enlist Christians more fully in the fight against antisemitism and to create a new foundation for Jewish-Christian dialogue going forward. The Basel Conference then added several additional points offered in the “spirit of Seelisberg”, which focused on the biblical and diplomatic grounds for Christians to continue supporting Israel today, with Jerusalem as its capital, and urged Christians to join the battle against modern forms of antisemitism and anti-Israelism.