On 17 March 1996 the Knesset (Israeli parliament) passed a law to set up two national authorities, one for Yiddish culture and the other for Ladino culture. Yiddish is a 1,000-year old language based on German with words and idioms from Hebrew, Aramaic and additional European languages. Ladino is approximately 500 years old and is based on Spanish, with words and idioms from Hebrew, Aramaic, Northern African languages, as well as Balkan languages and from other countries once under the domination of the Ottoman Empire.