

“Soccer for Peace” San Marino & Israel joint Project

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By Giorgio Gasperoni and Hod Ben Zvi

A delegation composed of 8 Jewish and 8 Arab young sportsmen from Israel has arrived at San Marino for a week of soccer training and fun. The delegation was accompanied by two coaches, an Israeli parliamentarian - Hon. Esawi Frej and was led by Mr. Hod Ben Zvi – president of UPF, Israel.

This is the 3rd round of this project that started in 2015 in a program held in Torino Italy as an initiative of Mr. Giorgio Gasperoni – president UPF, San Marino.

The objectives of the project are to bring a mixed youth (Arab-Jewish) team for friendly soccer matches with Sammarinese counterparts and have an opportunity to train together.

Thus, allowing the kids to meet and build friendships among themselves that are rare to find in the conflicted society in Israel. In addition, the local children expand their understanding of other nations situation and cultural treasures and offer their experience in a deeply rooted sportsmanship tradition.

The project was fully sponsored by the FSGC (Sammarinese Football Federation)



in collaboration with UPF's chapters in San Marino's and Israel and the delegation was organized by Mrs. Adi Sasaki – president WFWP Israel. The pedagogical aspects of the program and the parental care for the children was taken care of by Mr. David Gasperoni and Mr. Andrea Valgoi.

On their first day, August 31st, the delegation had an official reception at the Parliament by the Heads of State – the Captains Regent. On the following days, they enjoyed a variety of exciting activities that included among others: Professional training by San Marino's national team coaches, visit to the historic areas of the Republic, fun at the adventure park, evening ice breaking games and much more. One of the highlights of the visit was accompanying the national teams of Northern Ireland and San Marino on a soccer European qualifiers game.

Preparation for the International Game Prior the San Marino vs N. Ireland game Practicing together

The organizing committee's vision is that through education of true sports values, young people can develop group cooperation and fair-play. Other benefits are promotion of good health, mind and body unity, channeling the energy of youth

towards positive goals experiencing joy and inspiration.

This type of leadership training helps young people to learn ways of resolving conflicts and preventing violent behavior. The committee seeks to provide youth from conflict ridden areas with an opportunity to become acquainted as future leaders of their respective nations. And to do so tries to create a favorable and neutral environment for such process of reconciliation through sports. San Marino and Italy are seen both by Israelis and Palestinians as friendly nations, without prejudice and or taking sides. This project is part of the Middle East Peace Initiative and the global Peace Road project.

Extensive media coverage and additional photos can be found [here](#)

Photo selection can be seen [here](#)

Media (articles and TV interviews) Small selection of photos can be found [here](#).

Video with the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs of San Marino is [here](#)

Final Video on a small Football Tournament is [here](#).



Meeting the Heads of State - Jewish and Arabs youth delegation - Group photo in the Parliament Hall



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