

Children from Israel, San Marino Build Friendships Through Soccer

Hod Ben-Zvi and Giorgio Gasperoni

September 4, 2017



San Marino, San Marino—An Arab-Jewish soccer team comprised of sixteen children (8 Arab, 8 Jewish) from Israel visited San Marino from August 30 to September 4, 2017 to participate in a Soccer for Peace project. The delegation was accompanied by two coaches: Israeli parliamentarian Hon. Esawi Frej and UPF-Israel president, Mr. Hod Ben Zvi.

This is the third Soccer for Peace project that has been held since the start of the initiative in 2015. That year, the initiative, which was inspired by UPF-San Marino president, Mr. Giorgio Gasperoni, organized its first program in Torino, Italy.

The objective of the project is to foster friendship among Arab, Jewish and Sammarinese young people, through soccer matches and training together. In Israel, opportunities are rare for children to meet and build friendships with one another. Through the project, participants can expand their understanding of the situation in and the cultural treasures of other countries, as well as share their experiences.

In addition, Soccer for Peace seeks to provide youth, especially those from conflict-ridden areas, an opportunity to develop as future leaders of their nations. Through the education of true values of sports, young people can learn how to cooperate within a group and learn fair play. In addition, playing sports promotes good health and the unity of the mind and body, as well as offers young people the chance to channel their energy towards positive goals, and experience joy and be inspired.

On the first day of the project, August 31, the delegation attended a reception at the parliament of San Marino, hosted by the Captains Regent, the two heads of state of San Marino. In the days that followed, the children enjoyed a variety of activities, including professional training by the coaches of San Marino's national soccer teams, visits to historic areas, fun at an adventure park, ice breaker games and more. One

of the highlights of the delegation's visit was accompanying the national soccer teams of Northern Ireland and San Marino to a European qualifiers game.



Local media, including RTV San Marino, a television channel, and the newspaper La Serenissima – Il Giornale dei Sammarinesi covered the project.

The sponsors were the San Marino Football Federation (FSGC) and the San Marino and Israel chapters of UPF. The Israeli delegation was organized by Mrs. Adi Sasaki, president of the Israel chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization. The educational component of the project and care for the children was overseen by Mr. Gasperoni and Mr. Andrea Valogoi.

