



January 24th, 2023: 15:00 – 16:30 IL Time / 14:00 – 15:30 FR Time

Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8598317267>

Language: English

(Translation to/from French and Hebrew when necessary)

Summary of the 1st Meeting of the Steering Committee of the French-Israeli Conference on Municipal Cooperation 2024

Moderators:

Mr. Yoachim Mukuna-Berz – Project Coordinator at the FLAI & Conference Coordinator

Mr. Hicham Lahouiri - Assistant, International, Europe, and Crisis Department

PART 1 – Participants

Introduction and remarks in the following order:

Opening Remarks by elected officials:

- Simon Alfasi: Welcomed and thanked all the participants for their presence. Mr. Alfasi reiterated his commitment to strengthening relations between the French and Israeli local Authorities and his belief that holding the conference in Yokneam would largely benefit that goal.

- Lizzy Delaricha: Thanked all the participants for their presence and mentioned how glad she was to have all the different partners together on this call.

Ms. Delaricha also mentioned the very positive experience and memories she has from her participation in the 2019 Assises, which were held in Lyon.

- Alain Berlioz Curlet: Thanked the participants for their presence and shared his enthusiasm for the next French-Israeli Assises. French local governments involved in French-Israeli relations are very much looking forward to organizing this event.

Introduction of all other participants

Ms. Shiri Steinhardt-Sela, Head of the Foreign Affairs Division, FLAI

Ms. Anat Kaufman, Head of the Projects Department, FLAI

Mr. Eliav Blizowsky, Director of Foreign Relations, Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality

Ms. Ronit Ben Dor, Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Israeli Embassy in Paris

Ms. Rhuty Said, Head of the Projects Division, Israeli Embassy in Paris

Mr. Georges Diener, Director of the French Institute

Mr. Alain Berlioz Curlet, Chairman of the Israel working group of Cités Unies France

Ms. Virginie Rouquette, Director General of CUF (joined the meeting after the initial introduction)

Ms. Constance Koukoui, Manager at Cités Unies France

Ms. Lucyna Graviere, Head of International Partnerships, Region Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes

Ms. Aryella Rosenthal, Head of International Relations, Ashdod Municipality

Mr. Alain Levy & Danielle Printemps, Issy-les-Moulineaux Municipality

Ms. Anne-Claire Gaudru and Juliane Gourdin, International Relations Department, Toulouse Metropole

Ms. Mathilde Michel, Head of Cooperation, French Embassy in Tel Aviv

Ms. Therese Robert & Audrey Romain, International Relations at Belfort Municipality

[PART 2 – Logistic and technical requirements](#)

Decision on the precise dates of the Conference

Following the introduction round, Ms. Steinhardt-Sela gave an overview of the previous discussions regarding the organization of the French-Israeli Conference on Decentralized Cooperation. She mentioned:

1. The original plan of holding the conference in 2022, which was postponed following a request from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. The failed attempt to organize the first meeting of the steering committee around MUNIWORLD 2022.
3. That the month of May 2023 was originally mentioned as a potential date for holding the conference.
4. That the FLAI held an internal consultation with its legal division following a request of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to check availability for the last week of August/first week of September 2023 and in light of the fact that the Israeli municipal elections are scheduled in October of this year.
5. That the result of this consultation was a **strong recommendation by the FLAI legal team to postpone the conference until after the election to avoid putting Israeli mayors in potential legal trouble due to the strict legislation in place in Israel during election years.**

=> As such, Ms. Steinhardt-Sela updated all the participants that the decision was made at the highest level of the FLAI to **propose holding the conference in early 2024, during the month of February, and adjacently to the dates of the MUNIWORLD 2024 International Conference**, which would allow for the full commitment of the Israeli mayors and the deserved media coverage of the event.

Dates of MUNIWORLD 2024: 20-22.02.24

Proposed dates for the French-Israeli Conference on Municipal Cooperation: 18-20.02.24

Ms. Steinhardt-Sela then asked for the feedback of the French partners regarding this proposal.

- Mr. Berlioz-Curlet expressed his agreement with the proposal, mentioning that the time left would allow for the necessary preparations. He also stressed the importance of allocating the necessary resources in terms of manpower to the conference's organization.
- Furthermore, ***the proposal appeared to be acceptable to all parties on both sides***, and it was decided to continue working towards those dates while the CUF staff gets the dates approved internally by the organization's directorate and ensures there are no previous commitments.

* Intervention of Ms. Virginie Rouquette, Director General of CUF, who wished her best wishes for 2023 to all participants and highlighted the fact that she was glad to participate in a mostly observatory role at that stage.

PART 3 – Content

Ms. Steinhardt-Sela started by providing a tentative outline of the event in its new format adjacent to MUNIWORLD 2024:

Day 1: Opening gala event

Round-tables/Working groups

Day 2: Tailored tours

Closing plenary session

=> Continuation of the program at the MUNIWORLD 2024 International Conference TBD.

- Following Ms. Graviere's question, Mr. Alfasi and Ms. Steinhardt-Sela mentioned the fact that the FLAI would be honored to have French elected representatives of local governments and/or experts taking an integral part in MUNIWORLD 2024, potentially as speakers.
- Ms. Steinhardt-Sela also informed the participants that, since Mr. Alfasi will not be running for reelection in the upcoming Israeli municipal elections after 35 years as mayor, **he will be acting as Honorary President of the Conference.**

- Mr. Berlioz-Curlet and Mr. Levy warmly congratulated him for his 35 years as mayor and expressed their satisfaction regarding his role as Honorary President.
- It was decided to dedicate a separate working meeting of the Steering Committee to picking the event's main subjects; however, participants were encouraged to bring up specific topics which they would like to see at the conference in order for the FLAI staff to start mapping the relevant experts and content providers.

In addition to the potential topics mentioned in the meeting's preparatory document, several new ones were brought up:

- Ms. Ronit Ben Dor, from the Israeli Embassy in Paris, proposed to focus on **water recycling** as over 80% of Israel's water is desalinated, and France has faced a tough drought this previous year.
- Ms. Robert, from the Belfort Municipality, proposed to add the topic of **Women's status (with a focus on Health and in the Workplace) and the impact of tech on youth, and more specifically on culture and education.**

In addition, Mr. Diener, Director of the French Institute, stressed the importance of focusing on **Educational Cooperation, both at the schooling and academic levels.**

Part 4 – Moving forward

- **Holding a bi-monthly meetings of the Steering Committee (to be scheduled by Mr. Lahouiri and Mr. Mukuna-Berz).**
- **CUF has to get final approval regarding the proposed dates for the Conference in February 2024.**
- **The next meeting of the Steering Committee will focus on the Conference's main topics. Each participant is kindly asked to brainstorm potential topics until the next meeting.**