

Emergency Plan for French Aliyah



An Historic Opportunity to Absorb a Massive Aliyah Wave from France: Guidelines for absorbing 120,000 immigrants

Executive Summary

According to market studies, candidates for Aliyah from France encounter obstacles in three main areas: (1) employment, (2) attainable housing, (3) community and culture.

Suggestions to handle contend with the challenge:

- (a) Create adequate and appropriate job supply
- (b) Construct residential neighborhoods and enterprise zones, including necessary communal and cultural infrastructure.

Recommendations

- Recommendation 1.** Establish an administrative oversight team in the Prime Minister's Office.
- Recommendation 2.** Establish a government commission to relieve barriers.
- Recommendation 3.** Establish business incubators to assist in the relocation of European businesses.
- Recommendation 4.** Tax Incentives and Salary Subsidies to Job Creators
- Recommendation 5.** Allocate land for accelerated real estate development.
- Recommendation 6.** "Shekels for Euros:" Create an investment fund for establishing infrastructure.

Quantitative Goals

- A. Create 30,000 appropriate jobs, through three business incubators established to relocate 1,500 European companies to Israel. The incubators will be established in proximity to the new residential neighborhoods.
- B. These employment opportunities will enable roughly 120,000 French Jews to make Aliyah over four years (30,000 families, four people on average per family).
- C. Establish three designated neighborhoods, including necessary communal and cultural services.
- D. Provide at least one billion shekels in funding to establish the neighborhoods and incubators through an investment fund established for this goal. **The money will be raised among the Aliyah candidates.**

Background

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of French citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike, seeking to immigrate to other countries, a reaction, in large measure, to the economic downturn and the deterioration of the domestic security situation. In 2014 alone, 7,000 French Jews immigrated to Israel. This is a relatively small number compared to the number of those who have expressed interest in emigrating. Our assessment, based on studies conducted by the European Union and Israeli immigration statistics, as well as a deep understanding of the field, is that the Aliyah potential from France numbers in the hundreds of thousands. A sharp increase in immigration has been noted in recent years and points to the potential for a massive wave of immigrants.

Despite strong connections to Israel and the increasingly worsening push factors at home, French Jews have a wide array of emigration options before them. Immigration to Israel is dependent on confidence in finding acceptable employment, improving their Jewish lives and providing quality education for their children. If Israel were equipped to provide these services, it would be possible to advance, for the first time in the history of Zionism, a large immigration wave from a prosperous country. This historic breakthrough would create the opportunity to implement mechanisms that could be used in the future to absorb additional strong immigrant populations from the West. This requires a government response appropriate to the challenge at hand.

The Challenge – Channeling the Migration Flow to Israel

Various Western countries (including Canada, Australia, and Great Britain) have identified a hidden opportunity in the growing economic crisis university graduates face in France. In recent months, these countries opened immigration services offices in their Paris embassies. Attractive immigration programs for appropriate candidates are advertised on exclusive campuses and on French television.¹ Switzerland, Great Britain, and Canada are approaching successful business owners offering them attractive incentives to transfer their French business activities there.² To channel the immigration flow to Israel, a concentrated effort is required to lift bureaucratic obstacles and initiate an action plan to attract business entrepreneurs and skilled workers to Israel.

In light of the international competition and the not yet appropriate Israeli response, there is a danger that more integrated Jews will prefer to assimilate and lower their profile, while affluent Jews and business entrepreneurs will decide to explore new opportunities elsewhere. Weaker groups without economic and cultural largesse will be the most likely to elect Aliyah to Israel.

Situation Report in France and Assessing the Potential for Aliyah to Israel

Studies published by the European Union point to the Aliyah potential of hundreds of thousands of Jews who feel a lack of security in France and are fearful of their children's future there.³ Despite the fact that many French Jews have expressed interest in immigrating to Israel, Israel has not yet succeeded in positioning itself as the immigration destination of choice. Only appropriate policy can bring about the desired change.

The French Jewish community should be a prioritized goal for an intensive effort to encourage Aliyah to Israel. It is large (various estimates show roughly half a million Jews and another half a million who are eligible under the Law of Return), and deeply connected to Zionism and Israel. In 2014, over 7,000 French Jews made Aliyah, compared to 3,280 in 2013 – a spike of more than 100 percent. Enrollment in youth programs such as “Taglit” increased in 2014 to 1,580 participants, compared to 103 in 2013 – a spike of 1,500 percent. The “Masa” program also noted an increase from 600 to 1,300 participants (75 percent of the program's alumni made Aliyah).

The unique push factors that may facilitate success in encouraging Aliyah from this community include: (1) the danger of Muslim terror; (2) Anti-Semitism and the lack of security Jews feel; (3) an economic crisis in France and a growing interest in emigration among the young general population; (4) failures in governance and the rise of populist, extreme right parties.

Historical Opportunity

Push Factors

The economic crisis, declining personal security, anti-Semitism, and legislation limiting Jewish practices are boosting emigration from Europe.

Pull Factors

- The Israeli economy is growing and creating jobs
- Willingness to consider a Jewish People effort to lower barriers to *aliya*.
- Vibrant Jewish national life

The Challenge

Channeling the emigration wave towards Israel





Employment and Emigration Urge (Non-Jews and Jews)



Sense of Crisis among French Jews

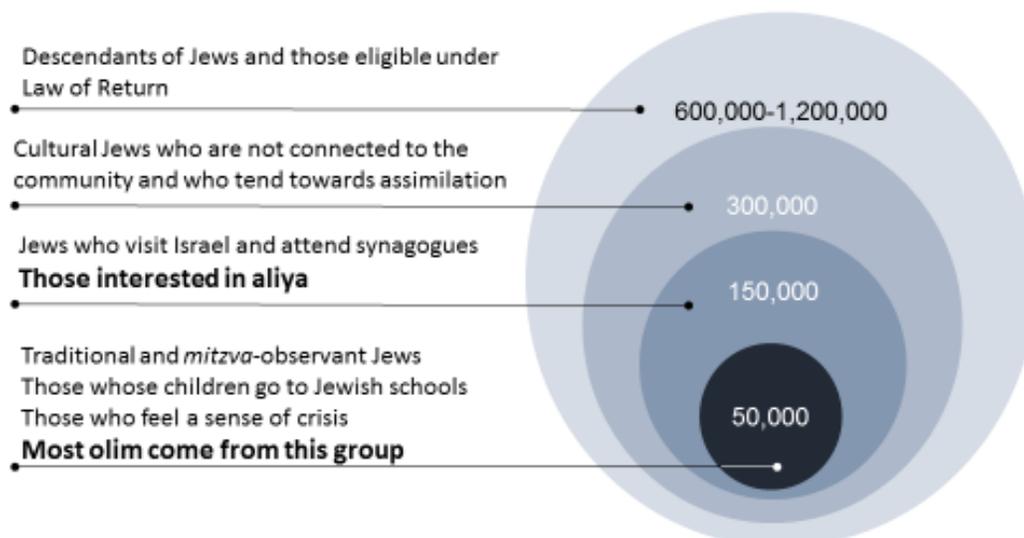


Two target audiences that require different intervention strategies:

- **Jews active in the Jewish community who feel a close connection to Israel** (members of the first and second circles in the diagram below) comprise about 200,000 people. For these Jews, a possible action strategy to transform their yearning for Israel into an operational strategy through: (1) accompaniment, assistance, and easing the bureaucratic processes involved in Aliyah – including providing accurate and up-to-date information, professional placement services, recognition of academic degrees (see Appendix 1), arranging appropriate service in the IDF, assistance in finding housing and appropriate education; (2) programs for Hebrew language learning and fluency.
- **Members of the wider community** (the third circle), who number about 300,000, **and those eligible under the Law of Return** (the fourth circle), who number around 600,000. For them, Israel needs to become an attractive option for young people looking to emigrate. The suggested ways to do this are: (1) make Israel and Israeli culture accessible to French Jews while they are still in France; (2) provide a range of educational tours and transformative experiences, such as professional networking tours and pilot trips to Israel; (3) specially designed integration programs for various professionals, e.g. doctors, nurses, engineers, etc.

Beyond Israel’s ethical commitment to help Jewish communities in crisis, investing in immigration from Western countries presents a significant economic and strategic advantage, considering the

The Jewish Community in France Groups and Subgroups



meaningful contribution expected to Israel's national resilience.⁴ The current situation in France opens a window of historic opportunity – to the potential immigrants and to the State of Israel.⁵

Recommendations for Decision Makers

Recommendation 1 – Establish an Administrative Oversight Team (*minhelet*)

The government will establish an administrative team **directly under the auspices of the Prime Minister**. It will promote Aliyah from Western Europe in general, and specifically from France. Within the context of its mandate, the administrative team will coordinate the efforts of various national and governmental agencies involved in immigration, and will oversee immigration and absorption efforts. Additionally, the administrative body will serve as a coordinating and operational umbrella for all issues and organizations involved in immigration, while redefining and upgrading the immigration and absorption spectrum through a computerized information management system.

Recommendation 2 – Establish a Governmental Commission to Relieve Bureaucratic Barriers

The government will appoint a governmental commission whose goal is to map the bureaucratic barriers that stand in the way of potential immigrants and then work to remove them, in order to increase the pace of immigration from France. The commission will partake in issues related to education, academics, military service and the connection to the IDF, employment, granting work permits and recognizing professional degrees, encouraging business and investment transfers, housing, and more. The commission should include the directors general of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, the Ministry for Jerusalem and the Diaspora, the Finance Ministry and the Economics Ministry, as well as the Director General of the Jewish Agency for Israel. **The commission will be headed by the Director General of the Prime Minister's Office.** (Appendix 1 relates to the topic of recognizing degrees, a main obstacle.)

Recommendation 3 – Establish Incubators to Assist in the Relocation of European Businesses

The government will allocate direct budgets to establish incubators through which European immigrants will be able to transfer their businesses to Israel. The allocations will be conducted according to instructions from the Economics Ministry described in the document "Technological Entrepreneurial Centers – Industrial Incubators" (Director General's Directive #8.12.6). Furthermore, factories and businesses from Europe chosen for relocation to Israel will be eligible to tax incentives according to the directives described in the Law to Encourage Capital Investment, Section 3: "Tax incentive tracks to an authorized factory."⁶ Businesses interested in relocation will be allowed to purchase expanded office services at subsidized rates. Three 10,000

square meter incubators will absorb French businesses for an initial incubation period. The incubators will provide consultation to European businesspeople interested in expanding their activities and creating jobs for new immigrants in Israel.

Explanatory note: Due to the fear concern that skilled populations will immigrate to competing countries, priority should be given to (1) business owners and commercial entrepreneurs who choose to transfer a large part of their business activities to Israel, in so doing creating thousands of jobs for native French speaking Aliyah candidates; (2) professionals who are in demand in Israel. Many of French Jewry's business owners are considering immigrating to Israel, and are seeking ways to relocate their businesses outside of France for tax purposes, or because of stringent employment conditions, etc. As previously noted, many countries are competing for this population, and offering attractive incentives and options to transfer business activities there. Following research we conducted, we estimate that, through the assistance of an adapted incentives plan, it is possible to bring to Israel 1,500 of 50,000 Jewish owned French businesses in a three-year period. These businesses would create 30,000 new jobs, appropriate to immigrants from France. The expectation is that opening the positions will lead to 120,000 French Jews making Aliyah to Israel (including their family members). Furthermore, it is possible to attract a considerable number of French businesses owned by non-Jews that would consider transferring their activities to Israel for purely economic reasons.

Recommendation 4 – Tax Incentives and Salary Subsidies to Job Creators

The government will open a program to encourage the employment of Olim, which will provide assistance and direct grants to the entrepreneur. Alternatively, it will provide tax breaks to companies and their profits/dividends. The incentives will be given on condition of employing immigrants. For example, a company that increases the number of immigrants it employs by 10 percent will receive an incentive in the form of a discount on company and dividend taxation. A program such as this can incentivize the opening of positions for immigrants in pre-defined enterprise zones such as Jerusalem, the Galilee and Negev. Additionally, it is recommended to focus efforts, for a short time period defined in advance, to initiate a placement program to ease the integration of French Olim into the Israeli work place.

Recommendation 5 – Allocation of Land for Accelerated Real Estate Development

The government will act to allocate lands to establish neighborhoods and commercial areas for companies relocating to Israel, in accordance with existing offer of lands. Accelerating planning procedures will allow the required real estate housing and business development to take place.

Recommendation 6 – “Shekels for Euros” Investment Fund for Infrastructure Development

The government will encourage the establishment of an investment fund aimed at developing and erecting infrastructure (housing solutions, business transfers, and community and cultural activities) for European Olim. The fund will be aimed at hundreds of thousands of potential immigrants interested in investing their savings in building the infrastructure that will serve their own Aliyah to Israel. The return on this investment will be granted in shekels and earmarked for the purchase of property in Israel. Encouraging investors will be guaranteed in accordance with bond rates and bond conditions intended for 70 percent of the amount of the fund with an interest rate above 5.5 percent (similar to pensions and bond issues offered by the National Insurance Institute) by authorized agents and local regulators. The advantage of the fund, in the recommended format, is in granting the opportunity for investors from abroad to recognize the fund as a local pension fund on the one hand, and give the investor the opportunity to fulfill the fund for investment in Israel on the other.

Additional Recommendations

Special treatment of two populations that are not included in the plan: the suggested plan does not provide an answer for every French Jew interested in immigrating to Israel. The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) is currently working on a complementary plan in order to take into consideration a weaker segment of the French population (estimated at 30,000 people) that resides (primarily) in mixed neighborhoods, alongside a hostile Muslim population, and suffers as a result. This population, considered a slum population from a prosperous country, requires a separate plan similar to past immigration plans for emergency Aliyah. In light of the precedence of Ethiopian Jewry rescue, rescuing and integrating this underprivileged population can reasonably be seen as an opportunity to engage the global Jewish Diaspora in the governmental plan.

A different population that needs to be taken into consideration is the assimilated Jews of France, who are eligible for Aliyah) the outermost circle the chart above. Direct outreach to this circle will require a special effort including conversion programs and cultural outreach to connect them to Judaism. The “Taglit” program, which has recently begun working intensively in France, is an effective way to reach this segment of the population.

The connection between the suggested plan and existing efforts of the State of Israel: The suggested plan complements a wide governmental effort funded by the State of Israel, with the support of the Jewish Agency intended for programs such as Taglit and Masa. Taglit, which brings youth for educational tours of Israel, significantly expanded its activities among the Jews of France. It is of particular note that 75 percent of the youth who participated in Masa from France

chose to immigrate to Israel. **The number of Masa participants can be increased by 50 percent or more if scholarship funding is expanded, to equivalent levels allocated to FSU Jews.**

Engaging world Jewry in support of the Israeli effort: In parallel to implementing the recommendations suggested in this paper, JPPI recommends a plan be prepared to assist the Government of Israel, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the American Joint Distribution Committee in drawing the support of world Jewry for the governmental efforts. In addition to the Aliyah of weaker Jewish communities from France as mentioned, we recommend a concerted, focused effort with respect to the social and cultural absorption of all immigrants, including renewing programs that proved their effectiveness with previous Aliyah waves.

¹ <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org>

² <http://www.ggba-switzerland>; <http://www.investuk.com>;
http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/france/commerce_canada/invest_services.aspx?lang=eng;
<http://www.international.gc.ca/investors-investisseurs/index.aspx?lang=eng>;
<http://www.rdquebec.com/>; <http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/citoyen/credits/recherche-scientifique-developpement/default.aspx?navigationaz=recherche+scientifique+et+d%C3%A9veloppement+exp%C3%A9rimental>; <http://www.rcgt.com/services/fiscalite/rsde/>

³ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/antisemitism-summary-overview-situation-european-union-2003-2013>

⁴ http://jppi.org.il/uploads/Russian-Speaking_Jews_25_Years_Later.pdf

⁵ Deloitte Information Technologies Israel Ltd., 2009, The economic impact of *NBN* Aliyah on the State of Israel

⁶ <http://www.moital.gov.il/NR/exeres/790E54CE-3040-4039-ADC3-3EAC1CBE5645.html>