

‘Raise the Zionist flag high’



French Olim Yoni Kempinski

Israel marked Aliyah Day yesterday (Thursday), Events celebrating immigrants to Israel were held across the country, including in the Knesset, during which MKs discussed the state of Aliyah.

Arutz Sheva spoke to Neria Meir, head of the Beitar World leadership, about his organization's activities in strengthening immigration to Israel.

Meir began by discussing his organization's activities to bring Jews to Israel from two main locations, France and the former Soviet Union, with an emphasis of encouraging young Jews to make aliyah "because we understand that the easiest people to integrate into Israeli society are young people aged 18-25."

The movement's activists promote a number of targeted programs aimed at helping immigrants in finding homes, employment, learning the language, integration into the IDF, and especially in vocational training in jobs in which they can be easily integrated. Beitar provides training for fields which match many of the professions of the immigrants from France, such as physical fitness training and culinary training.

"We have a big smile when we see the chefs from France and who needed to learn

cooking here, that they are the ones who work today in the leading luxury hotels in Israel,” Meir said.

“The first two years are critical to the immigrant’s decision to stay here, so it is important to give them quick courses of just several months so that they can quickly integrate into the labor market,” he explained.

As for immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Meir mentions the ideological background they come from, a background that is close to that of Revisionist Zionist leader Ze’ev Jabotinsky’s ideology. A number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union are capable of working in media-outlets which are desperate for Russian-speaking both Russian speakers and people with a strong Zionist national worldview.

Meir addressed the declining aliyah from France and the resistance to Israel’s calling for Diaspora Jewry to return to Israel.

“Aliyah from France has declined since 2015 and this is due both to local reasons in France and to negative information passed by those who have failed to overcome the difficulties of being integrated [into Israeli society].

“There are two great challenges in the Diaspora – assimilation and anti-Semitism – the issue of assimilation eats away at us every day, and the State of Israel should make stopping it a strategic goal,” Meir said.

Meir does not accept the diplomatic difficulties representatives of Israel face that prevent them from openly calling upon Diaspora communities to immigrate to Israel in what might be considered interference in the internal affairs of another state.

He said that this explanation is unacceptable: “We have to raise the Zionist flag high and do what the prime minister did in France in other places, to say that Israel is the home of the Jewish people and that they understand that the State of Israel is the source of the Jewish people’s strength. There is a great reluctance among Diaspora Jews to see what is happening with assimilation and the role of the state needs to be to create an active policy to deal with this issue.”

Coincidentally, the left-wing Meretz party confirmed that it has removed the word “Zionist” from its platform, de facto erasing the Zionist dream of aliyah as well.

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