



Message from M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, read at the launch of the Association prefiguring the France-Israel Foundation.

(Paris, 24 November 2005)

The forthcoming creation of a France-Israel Foundation is good news for all those committed to the friendship between our two countries.

When I met the Israeli Prime Minister in July this year I expressed to him my sincere hope that such a foundation could be set up. Indeed, between France and Israel there is a unique relationship in which the human dimension is essential. To see this, you need only think of the size of the Francophone presence in Israel and that of France's Jewish community, the third largest in the world.

But this relationship must now be extended into a new area. Now that both States hold a regular dialogue on all matters of common interest, and economic and cultural ties are growing ever stronger, there still isn't, between the two general publics and in particular our two countries' young people, the knowledge and understanding of each other befitting the quality and richness of the ties forged over more than 50 years between France and Israel.

So it is with great satisfaction that I greet the forthcoming launch of the Foundation. It will extend the public authorities' efforts to the two societies, dispelling the stereotypes and misunderstandings which too often take hold. It will support and take further the initiatives already flourishing in every sphere of economic, cultural, academic and scientific life in order to flesh out the friendship between the two countries.

So I offer every encouragement to those who are going to implement this great project of the France-Israel Foundation, which should come into being in spring 2006. Already, I am happy to grant it my high patronage.