



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Dear Christine Plüss

Thank you for your email concerning the October meeting of the OECD Tourism Committee in Jerusalem. We appreciate the fact that you have taken the time to write to us. I am replying on behalf of the OECD.

The OECD was founded nearly 50 years ago with a mission to improve economic policy making in the interests of citizens of its member countries and of other countries around the world. Today, it groups 32 countries committed to providing the best possible education, health and employment opportunities for their citizens. Instruments such as the OECD Principles of Corporate Governance, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention help to create the basis for a fair and open global economy.

Israel was one of five countries invited by the OECD in May 2007 to open accession negotiations (please see the [Accession Roadmap](#) for reference, setting out the terms, conditions and process for accession). The others were Chile, Estonia, the Russian Federation and Slovenia. Candidate countries are first invited to set out their position on all OECD legal instruments. Each country is then reviewed by a number of OECD committees in a variety of policy areas (between 18 and 22 for the current candidates). These reviews assess the country's position on OECD legal instruments and the degree of coherence of policies with those of OECD member countries. On the basis of the results of these reviews and other relevant considerations, OECD member countries decide whether to invite the candidate country to become a member.

The accession process is often a catalyst for various reforms in the economic, social and environmental fields. For instance, the *Labour Market and Social Policy Review* focused on the situation of Israeli Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel and has had an immediate and high-level impact on policy discussions. Similarly, one of the major findings of the *2009 OECD Economic Survey of Israel* was that the education system needs to be improved to provide better opportunities for Israeli Arabs and to make learning more vocationally oriented for the ultra-Orthodox.



As in the case of all major decisions concerning the future of the Organisation, the decision to invite Israel to join was taken by consensus. In agreeing to invite Israel to join the OECD, the Organisation's members have taken the view that membership can help Israel advance on needed policy reforms in a number of important areas. OECD peer reviews can be an extremely useful method of informing the debate. As Israel becomes a member, this process of peer review will continue.

As you point out the 86<sup>th</sup> Session of the OECD Tourism Committee, followed back-to-back by a High-Level Roundtable with Tourism Ministers will take place at the International Convention Center in Jerusalem on 20-22 October 2010.

The decision to organise these meetings was taken following full consultation of the Committee, which includes representatives of all OECD members. The OECD regularly holds organises meeting outside its Paris headquarters and has previously held meetings in various cities in both member and non-member countries. For example, the Tourism Committee held meetings in recent years in Porto, Portugal; Namur, Belgium; and Riva del Garda, Italy.

Meetings of other international organisations have been held in the western part of Jerusalem. I would like to reassure you that the occurrence of such a meeting is naturally without prejudice to the status of the city.

I hope this helps to clarify the context and process of Israel's accession and the decision to hold the meeting in Jerusalem. Please do not hesitate to contact us, if you have further comments or questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Gooch' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anthony Gooch