

Israel becomes associate member of CERN

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Israel has become an associate member of the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN), opening the way for full membership in 2013, a foreign ministry spokesman said on Sunday.

"The association agreement, valid for two years, was signed on Friday by the director general of [CERN](#), Rolf Heuer, and the ambassador of Israel to the United Nations agencies in Geneva, Aharon Leshno-Yaar," spokesman Jonathan Rosenzweig told AFP.

Israel previously held special observer status at the organisation, which is best known for its "atom-smasher," the so-called Large Hadron Collider which lies in a tunnel straddling the French-Swiss border.

It first joined the organisation in 1991 as an observer state, and became a special observer state in 2009, gaining the right to attend restricted sessions discussing the [Large Hadron Collider](#).

During the next two years, a team of experts will prepare recommendations for Israel to become a full member of CERN, which will need the approval of all 20 member countries.

Full membership will allow Israeli companies to bid in all CERN tenders. At present they may only bid for projects valued at up to 435,000 euros (\$600,000).

Israeli media have reported in the past that Israel has faced several hurdles in its bid for membership, including French fears that Israeli

access to CERN tenders could harm France's own hi-tech industry.

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