

**12<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic Forum  
Prague, 31 May – 2 June 2004**

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**Statement of His Excellency the Ambassador of Jordan in the  
special session on “Promoting co-operation with  
Mediterranean Partners”  
12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum  
Prague 31 May-4 June 2004**

The World Economic Forum held its spring session at the Dead Sea in Jordan between 15-17 May, 2004. For the second consecutive year politicians, economists and business leaders met over a period of two days and a half to discuss world economic and business trends pertinent to the Middle East. Nearly 1300 participants from fifty countries discussed political developments and economic trends in the Middle East region. While the subject of political and economic reform dominated the discussions, the issue of Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Iraqi situation were particularly present in the deliberations of the Forum. The Forum was an excellent opportunity for Jordan to present to world business leaders several important economic projects, such as the Aqaba Special Economic Zone and also allowed for Jordanian business men and women to meet their counterparts from all over the world.

Aside of these opportunities and contacts, there were some tangible benefits for Jordan. Several important agreements and initiatives were either signed or announced during the Forum;

1. A Free Trade Agreement between Jordan and Singapore was signed according to which zero customs will be achieved in ten years. Additionally, an Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement between the two countries was also signed.
2. A National Strategy for Tourism was announced in the presence of tourism experts from all over the world. According to this strategy, taxes in hotelier business as well as in other tourism sectors are to be reduced to attract more tourists.
3. One window shop for investors was announced whereby investors' needs and services are provided for directly with the aim of streamlining the activities and promoting investment.
4. Eamar, one of the largest land and property development companies in the United Arab Emirates Signed a multi-million project that aims to develop one of Amman's main inner city districts.
5. An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education and France Telecom whereby the latter will manage and finance the computerization of the Arabic language school curricula.
6. A Jordanian-EU grant agreement for €110 million for the years 2005-2006 was signed.
7. Jordan and Israel signed a trade protocol allowing for the accumulation of the rules of origin in trade exchange with the EU countries. This agreement will help

increase trade volume between Jordan and the EU, consequently would improve the Jordanian economy and its competitiveness.

As a manifestation of the success of this Forum in Jordan for the second consecutive year, it was decided that it will be held in Jordan again next year during 20-22 May 2005. In addition, the possibility of holding the WEF annually and on an alternative basis between Davos and the Dead Sea-Jordan was also suggested. The president of the WEF, Professor Klaus Schwab announced at the Dead Sea Forum a new initiative under the title of the “New Leaders” whereby 1111 young leaders under the age of 40 will meet to discuss global political and economic issues. Under this initiative up to 400 young leaders will be invited to participate in the next WEF in Davos to discuss a world vision for the year 2020.

The OSCE, in its quest to improve its economic cooperation with the MPC’s, may want to consider attending future World Economic Forum meetings in Jordan in order to gain a better understanding of the economic realities of the Mediterranean Region, particularly since nearly all MPC countries participate in this Forum. Additionally the OSCE might want to cooperate with the EU trade commissioner’s office to investigate practical and concrete ways towards enhancing its economic cooperation with the MPC’s