

# INSIDE THE OECD: THE AMBASSADORS

**2023**



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Permanent Representation  
of the Republic of Poland  
to the OECD

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Edited by: Edyta Michelin, Expert from the Permanent Representation of Poland to the OECD

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Permanent Representation of Poland to the OECD

136, rue de Longchamp 75116 Paris

E-mail: [paryz.oecd.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl](mailto:paryz.oecd.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl)

Phone: +33 1 56 28 57 60

Web: <https://www.gov.pl/web/oecd-en>

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## **Foreword by Zbigniew Rau**

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Poland

Since the beginning of this decade, the global environment has undergone dramatic changes. Russia's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine has undermined the rules-based international order and generated an additional layer of uncertainty.

In times of instability, it is crucial to restore public confidence in the value of global economic co-operation and multilateralism. This calls for a globally oriented, strategic, and impactful OECD, where like-minded countries can work together to shape better policies for a better future, while also engaging with partner countries to address common issues and reduce distortions in the international economy.

Poland perceives the OECD as one of the pillars of a multilateral approach to solving global problems. The standards proposed by the OECD can help governments ensure a global level playing field, enabling mutually beneficial financial, investment and trade flows.

After 27 years of our membership in the Organisation, we strongly appreciate the OECD's role in enhancing the mechanisms of sustainable growth. We are no longer uniquely a recipient, but more and more a provider of interesting economic solutions. We are ready to share our experience in the successful transition from a centrally planned to a market economy and maintaining quick economic growth.

In the last thirty years, Poland was one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Today we often play a leadership role in regional and global policy debates, drawing on our experience in building the foundations of an economy, which is both productive and equitable.

Poland has supported the OECD in its immediate response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. We welcomed the launch of an initial accession dialogue with Ukraine. We supported the Ukrainian government and the international community in addressing the economic and social consequences of the war. We are ready to facilitate Ukraine's adoption of OECD norms and standards, and eventually, its OECD membership.



## **Foreword by Mathias Cormann**

Secretary-General of the OECD

The OECD is an international organisation committed to the development of better policies for better lives – by facilitating information and data sharing, high quality evidence based analysis and advice and international cooperation.

Our 38 Member countries share a strong commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, market based economic principles and a rules-based international trading system as the best foundation for preserving individual liberty and securing sustainable increases in economic prosperity and social wellbeing.

This is achieved through the work of our many policy committees and working groups, our data and policy analysis, our evidence-based policy advice, the multilateral dialogue and international cooperation we facilitate and through our standard setting work.

Ambassadors are important members of the OECD family. They play a pivotal role in helping the Organisation achieve its goals as a member-based organisation. Representing their countries, Ambassadors' primary role is to act as diplomatic envoys, serving as a critical communication channel between Member governments and the Organisation. They are responsible for conveying our Members' policy priorities, positions and concerns, helping to shape the conversation across the OECD on a wide range of issues.

Ambassadors are also key collaborators with their institutions and ministries, helping to coordinate Member government efforts to implement and adhere to the OECD's instruments and best practices. By actively engaging domestic stakeholders, Ambassadors facilitate the exchange of information, support capacity-building, and promote beneficial reforms in their economies.

But while the primary day-to-day job of Ambassadors is to represent respective Member views on specific policy issues, both individually and as a group they contribute a great deal more. Overcoming shared challenges requires shared solutions. Ambassadors' strong commitment to shared values and the aims of the Organisation helps foster a genuine sense of friendship and community within the group. Collegiality among Ambassadors reduces transaction costs, helps the Organisation navigate complex issues, and improves the quality and robustness of consensus based decision-making across the broad range of economic, social and environmental policy areas.

The OECD therefore relies heavily on the skills and expertise of Ambassadors to facilitate dialogue and forge consensus on a wide range of issues, including trade, taxation, digital transformation, environmental sustainability, education, employment, health, and well-being. The continual process of building and maintaining social capital among Ambassadors makes

consensus decisions more effective, efficient and durable than would otherwise be the case. This is particularly true of instances in which Council is called upon to provide clear and strong collective strategic guidance in furtherance of the Organisation's collective interests.

It also assists the Organisation coordinate domestic efforts to implement OECD instruments and best practices, helping to advance our global engagement with non-member countries. Ambassadors also work to help broaden our global reach and impact by promoting dialogue and fostering cooperation beyond the OECD membership, supporting our Regional Programmes and our work on sustainable development.

Underpinning all of these efforts, Ambassadors work in Council to support the Organisation's governance, transparency, accountability, and to ensure we focus on where we can add the most value for Members. By optimising the strength and the quality of economic development and growth, including through our strategy to advance gender equality. By supporting and driving ambitious action on climate change in a way that is globally effective, efficient and fair. By seizing all the opportunities for improving productivity flowing from the digital transformation of our economies, while better managing some of the associated challenges, risks and disruptions. By contributing to well-functioning global markets and a rules-based international trading system, which ultimately improves economic growth and living standards. And by advancing our standards and best practices through memberships and partnerships and a sound approach to development.

By leveraging the power of data and information sharing, evidence based policy advice on best practice and international cooperation, our OECD Member delegations, the many experts in our Member countries, our partner countries and our Secretariat will help build a better future – for people all around the world.



## **Austria and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Gerhard Jandl  
Permanent Representative of Austria to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to its membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

As a founding member of the OECD, Austria perceives this organization as playing an instrumental role in setting global standards and providing countries with excellent data and analysis. In today's world facing economic, political, environmental, and social challenges on a scale not witnessed for generations, we believe the OECD to be particularly well placed to provide a fundamental response to a world requiring multilateral solutions and new approaches.

### **2. What are Austria's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

The pandemic crisis has left deep scars to the supply and demand side of the economy, to public and private finances and to member states' price stability. At the same time, climate change, population ageing and distributional dynamics severely affect our economies. Member states, although under tight budget constraints, are poised to make substantial investments in future-oriented projects and new technologies, which require a reliable and robust evidence base for which the OECD has a proven comparative advantage in producing.

For all these reasons Austria's priorities in its relationship with the OECD certainly are the environment question and the contributions to mitigate climate change, the economic policy to help a global economic recovery, education to make pupils fit for the digital age, digitalization to help member States shape a positive digital future and, of course, taxation where the OECD has a reputation for being the global standard-setter.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Austria's domestic public policies?**

Against the background of a fragmented world, the works of the OECD that are particularly relevant to Austria's domestic public policies are in the following order: Its assistance to war-ravaged Ukraine to help its convergence with OECD standards; the enlargement of the OECD by new members sharing the same values, and all OECD initiatives aimed at promoting an inclusive and effective tax cooperation (including the Inclusive Framework on BEPS and the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes among others). The same is true for development cooperation issues (in particular ODA) dealt with by the DAC.



Along with this, the Austrian Economic Survey (OECD Economic Surveys: Austria 2023) this year will certainly be the highlight of our cooperation with the OECD and we are very much looking forward to interesting policy recommendations.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We very much hope that the enlargement of the OECD can move fast and that the new OECD Country Program for Ukraine can decisively help Ukraine's recovery and its EU and OECD accession ambitions. For Austria itself, the various OECD reports, recommendations and rankings in many different policy areas – from monetary and fiscal policy to social and equality questions, from education to energy items, from the labor market to health issues, from governance to vocational training – are extremely important and serve as an invaluable guidance for the administration and for decision makers.

#### **5. You took up your duties as Permanent Representative of Austria to the OECD on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

It is a great privilege to serve as the Ambassador for my country to the OECD, an international organization with a global representation. The exchange with colleagues from around the world and different backgrounds (career diplomats, finance and business experts, professors, etc.), is intellectually stimulating. I appreciate this a lot, and I appreciate the opportunity to jointly work towards "better policies for better lives", as the OECD motto states.

Representing my country's interests in OECD's activities that result in concrete outputs brings high satisfaction. Let me mention in this context also my new role as the co-chair of the "Friends of Small and Medium Enterprises", a subject important to us in light of the structure of the Austrian economy. Austria is furthermore extremely interested in a cost-efficient organization while maintaining high-quality outputs. And, generally speaking, as a previous Ambassador used to say, for an economist (like myself), the OECD is truly a candy store....

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Fields of cooperation with Poland in the OECD are broad and vary. What is most striking for both countries is the work of the OECD in regions bordering our countries. Supporting Regional Programs of the OECD, such as the Eurasia Competitiveness Program and the South East Regional Program, is a common and very important interest of our two countries. And we agree with Poland (and others) that supporting Ukraine which is suffering so much from Russia's war of aggression is of utmost timeliness and importance. It is imperative not only to help the Ukrainians in their immeasurable plight, but thereby also to send an internationally strong and unequivocal message backing our common values, in particular the respect for democracy, human rights, the rule of law, a rules-based international order, social justice and an open and transparent market economy.



## Canada and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Madeleine Chenette  
Permanent Representative of Canada to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

As one of the 20 founding members of the OECD, Canada views the OECD as a key multilateral forum through which members and partners form a like-minded community and collaboratively develop evidence-based policies and practices to advance sustainable and inclusive economic growth and address social and development issues with a view to improving living standards around the world.

The unique expert and Member driven committees and peer review processes are highly valued by Canada as these provide useful comparative analysis on OECD Members and Key Partners that inform Canadian policy development and measurement of outcomes. In Canada, the three levels of government and about thirty separate federal government departments/agencies are involved in OECD work. Canada is very active in the OECD at the committee level and Canadians currently chair several committees and working parties.

### **2. What are Canada's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Canada has always prioritized the work of the OECD in the areas of taxation and international tax co-operation; trade (in services, global value chains, measurement); productivity; science, technology and innovation; the environment; energy (through the IEA); and international development (through the Development Assistance Committee); and education and skills. More recent priority areas include inclusive growth, gender equality including gender-based budgeting and policy development, progressive trade (ensuring the benefits of trade are shared and dislocations mitigated), the digital economy in all its facets (with a particular focus on its measurement), and the transition to a low carbon economy. On the governance front, Canada has also traditionally ensured the Organisation has sound budgeting, management and operational practices. In that regard, Canada strongly supports the ongoing external evaluation of the OECD as a standard good practice and improved engagement of Members in the Organisation's overall direction, priority-setting and decision-making.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Canada's domestic public policies?**

In 2022, we notably welcomed the Canada Energy Policy Review, the OECD Open Government Scan of Canada, as well as the Annual Report on Competition Policy

Developments that are already informing our policy development. The last Global Plastics Outlook (2021) has also been very relevant to Canada's policy makers, and the 2023 OECD Economic Survey of Canada will be released soon, including a special chapter on Canada's transition to net zero emissions, which provides guidance on Canada's carbon pricing systems and on a number of key sectors (electricity, oil and gas production, road transport emissions, and buildings). Finally, let me highlight the 2018 report on Gender Equality in Canada, which informed the creation of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, transforming the former Status of Women Canada into an official department of the Government of Canada.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

In a time of great challenges and uncertainty, we value the OECD work to continue fostering a rules-based international order, economic prosperity while adapting our economies and communities to tackle climate change, as well as diversity and inclusion.

As international cooperation on climate policies is vital, in particular to address carbon leakage risks, we are supportive of the work done through the recently launched Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches. Since countries have adopted different policy mixes to reduce emissions, this will help establish a common basis for cooperation and can also be leveraged to support other initiatives such as the Climate Club that G7 Leaders agreed to explore and where inclusivity of countries beyond the G7 will be essential.

In line with Canada's priorities of feminist government and foreign policy, reducing gender inequalities and actively supporting the equal participation of women in all spheres of life also remains a key priority for us.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, we obviously see the OECD continuing to support post-war reconstruction efforts in the country, notably relying on the liaison office and with a focus on core priorities already included in the Organisation's existing Action Plan for Ukraine, as well as new priorities resulting from the war.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Canada to the OECD in November 2019. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

This is obviously quite a privilege to work on the most complex issues faced by our planet along with the brightest teams here at the OECD, such a strategic geopolitical multi-disciplinary organisation. Every day is full of learning and contributions and I enjoy every minute representing Canada, then bringing back home the best of this world. As co-chair of the Friends of Gender+ and of Going Digital, deep diving on these mainstreamed issues allows me to better understand what committees are working on and to appreciate the agenda's diversity for the benefits of all. Co-chairing also the Financial Sustainability Contact Group, I highly value working with members and the Secretariat on improving our governance and adapting our operating model to ensure a sustainable impact of the OECD. Such greatness, experience, strength and diversity in this multilateral community is impressive.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

The Canada-Poland relationship has a strong historical foundation that is rooted in the deep personal ties to Poland maintained by the 1 million strong Polish-Canadian community. Both countries enjoy close bilateral relations and benefit from excellent trade relations, with Poland being Canada's largest goods trading partner in central and eastern Europe. EU and NATO membership, coupled with Poland's resilience to the pandemic and global economic slowdown, as well as its vital role in efforts to deliver international aid to Ukraine, makes it a valuable partner and it is in our common interests to continue to work together in multilateral organisation like the OECD to develop effective responses to today's most pressing global challenges.



## **Costa Rica and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Elías Soley  
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

The OECD accession process represented a great experience for Costa Rica. Undoubtedly, it was a great opportunity to promote and consolidate necessary reforms in the country.

I have no doubt in stating that entering the OECD is one of the most relevant political decisions in contemporary history in Costa Rica. It shows that we are a reformist country, that it is moving forward and that it is willing to learn from others to strengthen its public policy and consolidate best practices.

OECD is a tool to improve our institutions, to bring our Public Administration performance to another level and insert its institutions into a process of continuous improvement, in which they are developed within a safe environment, facilitating an evidenced base decision process with efficient accountability mechanisms.

The accession process to the OECD has made it easier for us to begin to give a "cultural change", a change in the "mind set" of the public officials, leaving a mark in the design, implementation and evaluation of our public policy.

### **2. What are Costa Rica's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Costa Rica has found a very valuable strategic partner in the OECD on its path to development; in particular, in the design and implementation of policies that drive our development towards a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive model.

One of the main strengths to ensure Costa Rica's continued active participation in the OECD is that there is a well-organized and highly committed group of officials working on OECD affairs.

We want to focus on three main action areas:

1. The promotion of reforms aligned with good international practices. For which we structure an agenda of priorities for our country and focus on those directorates of the organization that can, effectively, help us promote the necessary reforms.

2. The active and constructive participation of Costa Rica in the organization. For which we are focusing great efforts on promoting the direct and active engagement of many Costa Rican public institutions in the processes and activities of the OECD working groups.

3. Costa Rica's leadership in the world. For which we prioritize our mission of becoming an instrument and a sounding board that helps to disseminate the message, recommendations and good practices of the OECD to the entire Latin American region; In this work, we hope to have the valuable support of the other Latin American countries that are members of the OECD, with whom we certainly share this relevant task to properly channel the dynamics of political and economic development in Latin America.

Costa Rica stands in the Latin American region as one of the most aligned countries with the OECD values (a country open to the world, with an open economy, solid democracy, leveled playing field); we want to exercise healthy leadership in the region, which we believed has been our history.

Lastly, but no less important, the commitment of the Government of Costa Rica is to continue working promptly and progressively in the implementation of all the pending post-accession commitments. We clearly considered that the post-accession commitments are a "confidence vote" the OECD has given to Costa Rica due to the reform spirit that characterized our country's accession process.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Costa Rica's domestic public policies?**

We consider OECD's reports and studies tremendously useful as they cover a wide range of areas of economic and public policies. Nevertheless, there are some recent reports that highlight for their particular relevance to further the regulatory reform process in the country in order to align with international best practices and policies, one example of these reports is the Economic Survey for Costa Rica 2023 that was launched last 6 of February.

Other examples are the recent RBC Policy Review of Costa Rica, OECD Integrity Review of Costa Rica and other reports issued during the last accession process related to corporate governance, public procurement, labor market, among others.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Within our list of priorities, we hope that in the short term the OECD can continue helping us effectively to carry out actions that allow us to aspire to achieve financial stability without affecting our economic growth, to promote trade, investment and innovation, inspiring us to build public policies that encourage production, stimulate our business environment and investment climate.

Likewise, we are very enthusiastic about participating in the OECD and receiving its feedback on important public policy decisions in education; decisions that will make it possible to combat unemployment and poverty effectively, but also allow Costa Rica to recover that

privileged place it had in the past, better investing the large of public money that is traditionally allocated to the public education sector.

Also, we recognize the enormous value of the Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Programme (LACRP), which supports the region in advancing its reform agenda and spreading the best international practices. As part of this efforts, Costa Rica offered to host the first LACRP Ministerial Summit of the environmental sustainability priority in 2023.

**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the OECD in August 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

It is indeed very satisfying to serve as Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the OECD, especially since I'm sure that in my country the governmental authorities and the vast majority of political sectors and civil society are aware of and support the participation in this Organization, recognizing the great value it has for making far-reaching decisions for our development.

It is essential and a great privilege to lead a wonderful team of committed professionals and to be able to collaborate from our Delegation so that this reformist spirit is maintained in our country and to facilitate actions that have the potential to positively impact areas such as those related to promote an structural reform education, improvement of productivity, tackling informality in an effective and progressive way, governance, taxation, fight against poverty and inequality, gender equality, competition, public employment, health, etc.

Being able to continue with the implementation of the structural reforms initiated during the OECD accession process is an objective to increase growth, economic resilience and reduce large income inequalities.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

We consider its very interesting Poland's development cooperation agenda with Eastern European partner countries and with MENA and Africa's partner for the following years. We believe some of the focused cooperation areas with these countries could also be extended with other LAC partners such as Costa Rica, where we share common interests and goals in fields related to Responsible Business Conduct, sustainable development with a special focus in cities and rural communities, and also related to formulate better policies to tackle deforestation, pollution and advancing with the climate change agenda.



## **Finland and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Pasi-Heikki Vaaranmaa  
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

We joined the OECD in 1969, and became its 22<sup>nd</sup> Member State. We wanted to benefit from OECD expertise in economic cooperation and policymaking. In retrospect, we gained one of the more important footholds in the “Western” institutional architecture. The cooperation within the OECD paved way for the later steps – the free trade agreement with the EEC in 1973, the EFTA Membership in 1986, and, of course, the EU Membership in 1995.

The OECD of 1969 was of course quite a different organization than the OECD of 2023. It has not only grown with 16 more countries joining since, but its “agenda” has become much wider than it was 50 years ago.

Like-mindedness is perhaps a more pronounced feature of the organization than it was in the old days: we are a club of democracies, promoting the shared values of open markets, rule of law, individual freedom and human rights. We benefit from working together. Through our standards, we have impact beyond our Membership. It is a great club to belong to.

### **2. What are Finland’s priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

We are still looking for expert advice for the reforms needed in our economy and in our society. We value highly OECD research and the possibility of peer learning – and peer pressure - among like-minded countries on similar level of economic and societal development. We have been focusing on issues such as digitalization, climate change and environment, trade policy analysis, and public governance, to name a few. Also, the OECD work on development cooperation is greatly appreciated. While an orderly but effective Green Transition is hugely important, it will be interesting to see where we go with Artificial Intelligence topics as well.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Finland’s domestic public policies?**

I suppose all countries mention the Economic Survey. And it is a real flagship product, which is carefully read by the civil servants and media as well. For us, the next is only due in 2024. And it goes without saying that we are awaiting the PISA results as eagerly as anybody else.



Few year back, I was personally involved in a report we commissioned on the impact of regulation on investment in Finland. There we got a host of recommendations as to how to facilitate investment into our country, some easier, some more difficult to implement. These kinds of reports are of high value to policy debates within and outside of the government. In my opinion, we should make more use of services trade restrictiveness index as well.

We are getting a new Government in the coming weeks. It is our intention to highlight as many OECD studies as we can that would be of use in the implementation of the new Government Programme, and if need be, commission some new ones.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

The more concrete the policy recommendations, the better. We have been studying, for instance, in the Trade Committee the impacts of subsidization in the competitiveness of our economies. I believe it would be high time to start to develop a policy response. If there are "good" Green Subsidies – those that can be applied in such a way that it does not distort international trade - we should look into it and adjust our policies accordingly, so as to avoid unnecessary subsidy races. Policy recommendations related to secure supply chains would be useful as well.

It will be interesting to see if the IFCMA paves way for climate action beyond the OECD. It would be crucial to get big CO2 emitters on board of reduction policies that bring the most effective results in the shortest amount of time.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Finland to the OECD in February 2023. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

Given the turmoil our world is in, the uncertainty in the market, the question marks about the evolution of the global economy, the need to find solutions to the increasingly complex challenges our interconnected societies are facing, the OECD, with its expert research, analysis and foresight is really the place to be. The OECD is a magnificent seat of learning – not just for governments as a whole but for individuals as well. The OECD gives one a really wide perspective in global affairs. The more we can relay that perspective in the domestic policy consideration, the more satisfied I am.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

On all fields we can pursue common objectives. In digital trade, for instance, Poland and Finland have been working closely together in the past. I would look forward to similar areas of cooperation.



## France and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Amélie de Montchalin  
Permanent Representative of France to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

France has strong links with the OECD, being one of its founding members as well as its host. This is also why the French language is one of the two official languages of the organisation. As you know France is part of the 18 countries which helped transform the OEEC into the OECD. At the time, the funds of the Marshall plan had been fully deployed and we were wondering about the future of economic cooperation in the aftermath of WWII. A crucial choice was made to build an international organization designed to promote economic and social progress through close international cooperation and dialogue. What better choice than Paris to promote this agenda of collective prosperity to build better lives for citizens!

From this time, France considered that the OECD was key to help tackle global challenges and regulate the world economy for the well-being of societies through sustainable growth. This is why all the decisions are taken by consensus, to keep this spirit of knowledge-sharing and constant improvement of public policies through analytical work and peer reviews. This said, the OECD has done also an excellent work to reduce inequalities and address inefficient policies, be it in the tax field, the environment, or to help designing adequate digital guidelines, which are particularly relevant if we consider the rapid changes of today's world.

I can give you two examples: in the development field, the OECD is the official accountant of the ODA in the world. On climate action, the OECD's commitment to the International Climate Action Programme to support countries' progress towards achieving greenhouse gas neutrality and a more resilient economy by 2050 can have a huge global impact. In our perspective, rich and developed countries have a responsibility to ensure sustainable development across the whole globe and the OECD enables its members to proceed in a more efficient and coherent way.

### **2. What are France's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

France intends to work closer with the OECD on climate-related issues and on the needed transformation of the economic system to make it more sustainable. The development of the International Program for Climate Action (IPAC) has been a great success and the OECD is following this path, with the ODA greening and the new Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches (IFCMA). But we believe more should be done. For instance, economic surveys should include climate and energy mix' indicators in order to have a comprehensive view on

the trajectories taken by the countries towards carbon neutrality and their impacts on public and private investments, manufacturing trends, jobs, education... In short, we value sustainable growth more than economic growth itself as we collectively realise that without collective actions and framework, we will bear dreadful consequences.

Moreover, France wants to pursue its efforts on tax and digital issues, which have seen significant progress in recent years with the two-pillar agreement to tax large multinational companies on an equitable and transparent basis. Although the work is challenging, France wants the OECD to maintain its progress and reach a final agreement.

Finally, we want the OECD to maintain its core values. Thanks to the quality of its experts on several fields, its peer review method and its decisions based on evidence and data, the OECD has gained a solid reputation and legitimacy to influence public policies in the right direction. France sees as a priority to use this expertise and knowledge to bridge the gap with non-OECD members and avoid any isolation and protectionist approaches. To succeed on the transition and decouple growth with fossil fuels, we will need the Global South and the OECD should help reaching out to our partners and engage in active cooperation and concrete projects.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to France's domestic public policies?**

The OECD's Economic Outlook 2022 for France provided very relevant projections of inflation, growth and unemployment which helped assessing and guiding domestic policies in these challenging times. The evaluation of our current policies and the recommendations made are valuable, including speeding up housing renovation and energy saving, ensuring broad access to continuing training for the low-skilled and long-term unemployed, and improving education from an early age to promote equity.

Besides, the PISA study (Programme for International Student Assessment) is very useful for France in order to measure the effectiveness of its education system by comparing the performance of students from different learning environments and social backgrounds. We are looking forward to the new PISA results, that should be published in December 2023, to analyse the findings after the COVID lockdowns during which France was among the countries to have let schools open the most, and draw new areas for improvement. We all need to improve and the OECD helps policymakers to be more effective.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We see that achieving the climate and environmental transition at the required speed will question many of our economic policies: how does boosting cleantech manufacturing and jobs in one country converges with open trade? How can we design effective public subsidies to spur innovation without hampering competition? Are States needed as commercial actors on key markets for the transition where private players are not emerging? How can we boost private investment in clean energy and transition in low-income countries when private investment gap for climate remains large in developed economies? The OECD needs to

continue its work on all of these questions which are essential to our collective success facing climate change and biodiversity loss. The OECD works for the COP28 as well as for the Summit for a new Global Financial Pact in Paris in June 2023 are generating high expectations from the French government and Presidency.

**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of France to the OECD in November 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I took up my duties in a very peculiar time, as 2022 marked the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. In a world back in a war time where sovereign territories are under threat, the OECD offers a very positive place of consensus-building, negotiation, mutual support and cooperation to avoid that difficult times increase further isolation and fragmentation.

The OECD has its roots back in the aftermath of WW2, was shaped the year the Berlin Wall was built and increase its footprint and visibility to the rest of the world in the 2000s. It has managed to remain relevant throughout these very different but challenging times. Today again, by standing united to support Ukraine in its rebuilding, reconstruction and reform agenda, and in giving policy instruments to other countries facing the consequences of this war, the OECD proves to be a fruitful organization in which to work.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

The French and Polish peoples share a lot together and they have been interlinked since the great migrations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today our two countries have taken action to welcome Ukrainian refugees and families. Working together on integration, labor market flexibility and energy security are of mutual interest for France and Poland.



## **Iceland and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Unnur Orradóttir Ramette  
Permanent Representative of Iceland to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Iceland has been a member of OECD since its inception over sixty years ago. It has always been regarded as a driving force towards increased prosperity of Icelandic society which has showed a remarkable economic growth since the establishment of OECD.

Sharing experiences and best practices with our peers and benchmarking our performance with other democratic market economies has been essential and contributes to improving our domestic policy making.

OECD represents multilateralism at its best. Decisions are consensus-based and rooted in shared values with strong moral clarity. Engagement by government officials in day-to-day work of OECD is quite impressive, given the very small size of the Icelandic administration.

What stands out in my mind is the flexible and multi-disciplinary role OECD can play for their member countries and beyond. OECD has helped and continues to help us navigate through multiple crises in recent years, cope with the climate transition, to make the best of the digital transition and make our economies more inclusive. No country can do all this alone.

It is interesting to note that the reasoning behind the Marshall aid, the precursor to the OEEC which later became the OECD, as well as the essence of the Convention on the OECD are still valid today. We agree that economic prosperity for all is an important element for peace in the world. We still agree that free trade contributes strongly to prosperity for countries, and we recognize that it should be fair and inclusive. There is no room for non-informed decision-making in this organisation.

### **2. What are Iceland's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Iceland's core priorities have always focused on the core work of the OECD, namely the economic situation, policy analysis, projections, and structural reforms. Iceland highly values the biennial Economic Survey and launched this year's edition on 20 June 2023 in Reykjavik with the Secretary General, Mathias Cormann. It provided an excellent opportunity to put the Icelandic economy, the current inflationary situation and government finances into global perspective.

There is a special focus on the economic implications of the strong increase of immigrants in Icelandic society in the Survey. The share of foreign-born immigrants now stands at 17,4%

and they have highly contributed to the 3,1% population growth in 2022. OECD has also been doing an in-depth country review on immigration to inform policy work of the Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs. This ministry is also benefitting from OECD expertise in disability mainstreaming and labour participation of the disabled.

In recent Surveys, Iceland has focused on innovation for the digital era, addressing the climate change and skills. These are all still relevant priorities as well as OECD initiatives reinforcing democracy and work related to well-being and inclusive growth.

Iceland is a strong supporter of mainstreaming gender equality in all of OECD's work and welcomes the new OECD Flagship report "Joining Forces for Gender Equality" and the new OECD gender strategy adopted at this year's Ministerial Council Meeting. In the past two years, Iceland and the Employment and Labour Directorate of OECD have joined hands in celebrating the International Equal Pay Day and we will continue this collaboration for the third time in a row this coming September.

The Mayor of Reykjavik, Dagur B. Eggertsson became the new Chair of OECD Champion Mayors Initiative for Inclusive Growth last year and he moderated the roundtables at the 6th OECD Champion Mayors Meeting in Brussels in June. Our delegation supports him in his role.

Finally, Iceland became a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2013 and since then DAC has proven to be an important venue for the exchange of experience and best practice, as well as finding solutions to new international development challenges. DAC standards and recommendations have improved the quality and effectiveness of Iceland's development aid and continues to do so with our second DAC peer review which was launched in Reykjavík on 5 June by Carsten Staur, the Chair of the DAC. International development cooperation is a key pillar of our foreign policy and our membership and participation in the DAC has played an important role and influenced Iceland's international development cooperation policy. Iceland's international development cooperation policy is currently being negotiated and drafted to be approved by the Parliament in the fall of 2023.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Iceland's domestic public policies?**

As mentioned above, in June 2023 we had two important publications: the Economic Survey of Iceland with a special chapter on immigration and the DAC Peer Review.

The Independent competition assessment of the country's construction and tourism sector in 2019 was an important contribution providing 438 recommendations to a more flexible environment for business, new employment opportunities, higher productivity, and stronger economic growth.

The PISA assessments are perhaps the most known output of OECD in Iceland, and our administration was particularly happy with the OECD's Review of Fisheries 2022 which was published late last year based on the work and priorities of the OECD Fisheries Committee (COFI).

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in not so distant future?**

It is of course important that OECD remains true to its Vision Statement for this decade, that was elaborated on the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the OECD in 2021. This Organisation must continue to develop evidence-based analysis that helps generate innovative policies and standards to build stronger, more sustainable, and more inclusive economies, inspiring trust, and confidence for resilient, responsive, and healthy societies, based on shared values and principles. The swift reaction of the OECD and its Council after Russia's unjustifiable and unprovoked attack on Ukraine shows that the values of the OECD remain strong, and that Council can act swiftly and effectively with its consensus-based decision making when needed.

We expect OECD to be an efficient and productive organization, capable of restructuring its activities for adequate evidence-based policy guidance, based on its members thematic priorities. OECD should continue to be exemplary for setting the standards on delivering efficiencies, among it cost efficiency, transparency, and high quality of its work.

We therefore expect a continuation of high-quality peer reviews on our development assistance cooperation and economy. The most recent reviews on our economy and development cooperation were launched in June this year and will without doubt be reference documents for the Icelandic government in the coming months and years.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative to the OECD in July 2020. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I sincerely enjoy working among so many talented and inspiring people and in different groupings of like-minded countries, where we aim for consensus and strive for excellence together. As a multi-hatted ambassador, I think that OECD serves us well for the thematic priorities my team defined shortly after my arrival, for all our work, both within OECD, in our bilateral work and in UNESCO. We try to be as supportive as we can to OECD within these thematic areas. That is our approach, and this is how we maximize our limited resources. An example of this is our celebration of the International Equal Pay Day in partnership with the OECD each September.

For Iceland, multilateralism, and rules-based order, is of utmost importance. Despite growing polarization in the world, OECD is still able to be a value- and consensus-based organisation and is a sought-after partner among numerous non-member countries. It is greatly important to preserve these features. In that spirit, Iceland made a constructive contribution to the membership process of current accession countries.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

We would welcome any cooperation with Poland.

In the Economic Survey of Iceland that was launched in June, there is a special focus on the economic impact of immigration. Since the mid- 2000s, Iceland experienced the largest

increase in the share of foreign-born population among OECD countries. Immigration plays an increasingly important role in the economy. Poles are about 1/3 of the foreign-born population which now stands at 17,4% of the total population (not counting the second generation of immigrants). The first generation of immigrants from Poland, in the nineties, were fisheries workers. Then construction and services workers, mainly in the tourism sector. It is widely recognized that the Polish diaspora has contributed significantly to the economic growth in Iceland. When Iceland faced serious financial difficulties in 2008, Poland did not hesitate, making special efforts to lend a helping hand. Iceland wants to ensure effective integration so that immigrants can reach their full potential for the benefit of all. Some key challenges are around housing and language learning. This is really a task since Polish and Icelandic are among the most difficult languages in the world. We could perhaps investigate cooperation in the field of immigration. Both countries have opened their doors wide open for people from Ukraine, we can certainly share some experiences. Also, Iceland opened an Embassy in Warsaw last year following increased economic, cultural and civil society bilateral activities, which brings about many new opportunities for cooperation.





## Italy and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Luca Sabbatucci  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD

### 1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?

Italy is one of the founding Members of the OECD. We fully support the mandate and scope of the Organization, which has strongly influenced our economic, social policies and the relaunch of our economy in the post-II World War period. From the 60s onwards, Italy actively participated in the life of the Organization and benefited from the discussions, exchange of experiences and analysis of public policies that the OECD promoted, as the most important forum for international cooperation aimed at advancing global, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Throughout the decades, the relevance of the Organization and of its unique toolbox – made up of multilateralism, evidence-based policy analysis and recommendations, standard setting, global policy networks – has constantly increased. In recent years, the OECD assisted its Member States, including Italy, in facing the economic and social consequences of the COVID 2019 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

Nowadays, in a different and changing global environment, the OECD continues being relevant for members and partner countries. Italy has always contributed to the debate aimed at promoting quality growth in open economies, while leveling the playing field at international level. Peer learning and exchange of best practices among like-minded countries facilitated the expansion of free trade and inclusive and sustainable development. Our Institutions and our companies, as well as our civil society benefit a lot from the active participation in Committees and working groups, sharing data, best practices and enhancing their capacity at international level.

We are convinced that the OECD has a special convening power in recommending best policies for creating the best conditions for a sustainable and resilient growth and Italy is proud to be part of this Organization.

### 2. What are Italy's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?

Italian priorities rely on the capacity of OECD to be at the center of the global debate about economic growth, financial dynamics and environmental and social development. The perspective offered by the OECD in its evidence-based analysis is of great importance to put in place national policies, thanks to the multilateral and multidisciplinary approach. The OECD cooperation with partner countries, as well as its contribution to the Global Fora (G7, G20, and APEC) plays an essential role in order to ensure relevance and impact of the Organization's mandate.

In the field of taxation, Italy's membership of the OECD allowed Italy to build, over time, a more and more efficient tax system, which represents a best practice at international level. Furthermore,

our country's participation in this international organization allowed our country to access the exchange information systems (Automatic and on request), an extremely useful means in combating the various forms of tax evasion.

Moreover, Italy is a convinced supporter of the newly launched "Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches". The idea of the Forum had its origins during a Tax Symposium held at the G20 Finance Ministers Meeting in Venice in July 2021, during the Italian G20 Presidency. We will continue to contribute to it, also with a view to our G7 Presidency in 2024.

We are also glad that trade is recognized as one of the organization's priorities. We need to strive for an open and rule-based system of international trade, one that helps contrasting protectionism worldwide, leveling the playing field, and ensures at the same time a green transition.

The activities of the OECD Centers in Italy further helped promoting the OECD at all level. First the Trento Center for local development that is celebrating this year its 20th anniversary of activities for the benefit of all OECD members and partner countries. In 2012, the Centre of training in Caserta was established with the support of the National School of Administration (SNA), aiming at carrying out training courses for public administrations in the Middle East and Mediterranean countries. Today we are glad to launch a second phase enlarging the geographic scope of the Caserta Center. Last but not least, I would also like to mention the first OECD Academy on Tax and Crime Investigation established in 2014 by the Organization in the Guardia di Finanza Economic and financial police School in Ostia (Rome).

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Italy's domestic public policies?**

I believe it is quite hard to make a choice among the different useful amount of reports and data produced by the Organization, which are very useful for different sectors and fields where our Public Administration operates. However, I will try to mention a few, being aware that such examples will not be exhaustive.

The Economic Outlook and the National survey are of great interest to analyze every member country conditions and the global economic situation: they are always source of inspiration especially for our Ministry of Finance, our Treasury, our National Bank Authorities.

We have always appreciated the work carried out by all Directorates and we are still grateful to the OECD for the insightful issue notes prepared for our G20 Presidency in 2021 in different fields.

At the ministerial meeting of the Public Governance Committee last November, the OECD demonstrated considerable ability to adapt its agenda, while also placing itself in continuity with the commitments made last June in the context of the Ministerial Council Meeting chaired by Italy. Thanks to the Trust Gateway established at the Global Forum, the new thematic survey "Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions" will find important follow-up after the publication, last June, of a first edition of the 2022 report.

Worth mentioning are also the valuable OECD reports on Plastics, Mental Health, the role of the Creative Industries and Culture on economic growth, and the major Trends in Global Tourism.

I would also like to highlight the importance of the Peer Review of Development cooperation, an important exercise that allowed to continue improving our national system designing more and more appropriate development cooperation policies.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

The OECD is indeed a unique multilateral platform for setting standards at global level and its exceptional convening role should continue helping Governments to respond to the most urgent challenges of enhancing cooperation and promoting better policies for our planet. We will therefore continue to rely on the OECD in the near future in many fields.

First, we believe that the OECD has to play a key role for Ukraine's reconstruction, which will require huge joint efforts. The OECD is a trusted and valuable player in this endeavor, especially to guide the process through transparency, reforms and accountability.

Second, we trust that the OECD will continue the work to translate into actions and practical results the commitments subscribed during the 2022 Ministerial Council Meeting chaired by Italy. In particular, among others, to enhance our capacity to ensure an inclusive, resilient and green growth and to develop a new OECD-Africa Partnership strengthening our dialogue with the African Union. Finally, following our joint efforts during Italy's Presidency of the G20 and of the OECD Ministerial Council, we will count on the OECD valuable contribution also for a successful Italian G7 Presidency in 2024.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD in November 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD ?**

After a long period of duty assignment in Rome as Director General and Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I had several opportunities to benefit from the OECD advice and services.

Today, as Permanent Representative to the OECD, taking advantage of the professional support of the Secretariat and of the excellent cooperation of my colleagues in the OECD Council, I finally have the privilege to build up strategies and priorities of the Organization in offering the policy advice to Member Countries and partners.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Italy and Poland, both active members of the EU, are linked by a long-standing history of cooperation and friendship in many different fields.

In particular, in the last year Italy and Poland have been among the major players in supporting Ukraine, as I could directly encounter being with my Minister of Foreign Affairs visiting Kyiv last August.

I believe such common experience will create new opportunities of cooperation in enhancing the OECD efforts in the reconstruction of Ukraine and of its public and private institutions.



## Japan and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador

Jun Shimmi

Permanent Representative of Japan to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Japan became the first Asian country to join the OECD in 1964. Next year, 2024, will mark the 60th anniversary of Japan's OECD membership. Japan's accession to the OECD some 60 years ago has three significant points. The first is the historical significance of Japan's accession to the OECD, as it marked the country's entry into the "developed countries," both in name and in reality. The second is the fact that accession has encouraged domestic reforms: the OECD membership has required capital liberalisation, which in turn has built further prosperity in Japan. The third significance is that, through the OECD, Japan has started to contribute to addressing the challenges of the international community in policy areas such as development, trade, taxation and labour.

This significance is not diminished today, nearly 60 years after accession. For example, in the area of promoting reform, the Prime Minister Kishida's Cabinet is currently tackling issues such as the energy transition, green transformation, a virtuous circle in the Japanese economy and measures to combat the declining birthrate. In addressing these challenges, it is still worthwhile for our country to make use of the OECD's objective data and expertise.

### **2. What are Japan's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Japan has been an active participant in OECD activities since joining in 1964. In addition to still being the second largest contributor to the OECD budget after the United States, Japan has recently been leading discussions in various areas, such as the digital economy, corporate governance, agriculture and quality infrastructure investment. Japan also plays a role in bringing an Asian perspective to the OECD, which has a large number of European member states.

This year, Japan will hold the presidency of the G7. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit, Japan would like to demonstrate the G7's strong determination to uphold the international order based on the rule of law. Japan also intends to openly discuss with the G7 leaders the global economy, including energy and food security, regional affairs, including the Indo-Pacific region, economic security, as well as global issues such as climate change, health and development. There is only so much the G7 can achieve alone in tackling complex cross-border challenges, and Japan looks forward to continuing to work together with the OECD.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Japan's domestic public policies?**

The analysis and comparison of country data and best practices compiled by the OECD remains useful for policy-making in our country. For example, the OECD is a standard-setter with regard to taxation systems, and its added value for domestic policy-making is significant. The OECD has made also many helpful outputs, such as advancing analysis of new issues of interest in Japan, including the impact of AI on the labour market.

With regard to energy, the policy recommendations made by the International Energy Agency (IEA), through its in-depth peer reviews of the energy policies of its member countries, and the annual publication of the "World Energy Outlook" are useful for the planning and implementation of energy policy in Japan.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Since the end of the Cold War, the globalisation of the international economy and society has progressed rapidly in the world. However, while the international community is currently enjoying the benefits, globalisation has reached a turning point, as we face its negative aspects, including the issue of inequality and global environmental problems.

It is clear that global challenges, such as sustainable recovery from pandemics, need to be addressed globally through enhanced international cooperation, and the OECD needs to effectively address these challenges in an impactful way. The development of broad international agreements in the OECD, for example, the agreement on international corporate taxation to deal with digitalisation, involves non-member countries outside the 38 member countries. Such consensus-building may be necessary for the OECD to make meaningful contributions not only in pandemic preparedness but also in areas such as climate change, migration issues and assistance to developing countries.

### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Japan to the OECD in December 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

Some 40 years ago, when I first joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, I was assigned to the OECD division. Then, at the end of the Cold War, the OECD's main mission was to promote the advantages of free markets in investment and trade. Since I arrived at the Permanent Delegation of Japan to the OECD as Ambassador in December last year, I have been attending various OECD meetings, including the Council meetings, and I feel that the range of policy areas covered by the OECD is broadening. With changes in the international economic and trade environment, economic security and economic coercion now need to be discussed, and geopolitical issues cannot be ignored.

In this context, I appreciate the regular and vigorous exchange of views, both formal and informal, between the ambassadors. Close cooperation is also maintained between the Secretary-General Cormann and the Ambassadors. In addition to this, reforms on corporate and management issues are currently undertaken within the OECD to further enhance the Organisation's relevance in the international community. Japan contributes to ensuring that

the OECD continues to fulfil its role in the turbulent international community in terms of not only its policy-making but also its governance.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

In 2022, the world was radically changed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The aggression had an impact on the whole world, not only on European security, but also on energy and food prices. The people of Poland, Ukraine's neighbouring country, have received many displaced Ukrainian refugees since the beginning of the invasion and have been extremely active in providing humanitarian assistance.

Based on the position that the security of Europe and Asia cannot be separated, in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Japan has cooperated closely with Poland, the G7 and other like-minded countries in the international community in terms of sanctions against Russia and support for Ukraine. As the chair of this year's G7 Summit, at the OECD forum, Japan will continue to support Ukraine as much as possible, in cooperation with Poland, through assistance to recovery and reconstruction.



## **Korea and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Il Whan An  
Permanent Representative of Korea to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Korea joined the OECD in 1996. This was an event of great importance for Korea. The decision to join the OECD came from Korea's strong motivation to participate in the international economic order, enhance its people's quality of life, and promote sustainable development by learning from the experiences of other OECD members. It was also a strong message to the international community that Korea was committed to contributing further to global cooperation and multilateralism.

Membership in the OECD helped Korea make informed policy decisions, which enabled a remarkable transformation into a prosperous and resilient society. Since the moment Korea joined the OECD, the Korean government has often consulted OECD standards as well as the best policies and practices of other members. OECD data and statistics have long served as a yardstick to assess Korea's progress. Korea's membership in the OECD will continue to serve as a guide for its path towards sustainable and inclusive development.

### **2. What are Korea's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Korea's priorities in the thematic work of the OECD range from taxation, trade, energy, SMEs and entrepreneurship to science, technology and innovation, climate change and environmental sustainability, education and skills development, and international development cooperation. Most recently, I am particularly keen on the OECD's roles in coordinating climate policies of different countries, establishing a data and information platform for ensuring global energy security, and fostering a dialogue on the important topics of the digital and global technology policy. I expect that these new efforts at the OECD will help the world recover from the recent series of crises in a more effective and sustainable manner and enhance resilience in the longer term. The OECD's strengths in generating data and evidence, as well as facilitating peer learning, should be fully capitalized upon.

Korea also attaches great importance to the OECD's partnership with non-members. In order to play the role of a global norm setter, the OECD needs to reach beyond its 38 members. Especially, the OECD should strengthen its focus on the Asia-Pacific region, home to about 60% of the world's population with its share of the global GDP at 44% and global GDP growth at 64% over the past decade. By engaging with this dynamic region, we will be able to further enhance the OECD's impact and relevance.

In addition, I believe the OECD as a whole should strive to improve its organizational sustainability and effectiveness and to remain fit for purpose. We should make sure that ongoing efforts such as external evaluation and corporate governance reforms lead to generating policy work of higher quality in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Korea's domestic public policies?**

The OECD Economic Outlook reports are generally of a great interest to various ministries as well as the media, as they provide a backdrop for policy making.

A number of reports with a global scope have provided useful policy implications for Korea, such as Tax Policy Reforms 2022, IEA World Energy Outlook 2022, Renewables 2022: Analysis and Forecast to 2027, The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions, OECD-FAO Agriculture Outlook 2022-2031, OECD Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation 2022, International Migration Outlook 2022, and Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Key Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions. These thematic reports are useful in capturing global trends and providing snapshots of various policy measures and impacts around the world.

With a spotlight on Korea, OECD Economic Surveys: Korea 2022, OECD Reviews of Pension System: Korea, and Adapting Regional Policy in Korea 2022 were particularly helpful, along with the working papers on Strengthening the Social Safety Net in Korea (2022) and Policies to Increase Youth Employment in Korea (2022). Faced with a rapid demographic transition, Korea is dealing with challenges of fiscal sustainability, insurance and pension system reforms, as well as balanced rural and urban development, among others. The recommendations in the above-mentioned reports will help Korea in devising policies to address such challenges.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so-distant future?**

First of all, we expect that the OECD will advance the recently established initiatives; for example, in the areas of climate change, energy, and technology, in order to achieve more tangible results. Secondly, we would like to see a more integrated and better coordinated approach across the Directorates to maximize synergies. For engagements with non-OECD members, we should capitalize on Regional Programmes and partnership strategies, which are well aligned with the OECD's work overall.

Policy makers and practitioners in respective member countries are often occupied with addressing immediate challenges, with not enough room for long-term thinking. Therefore, the OECD should play an active role in identifying looming challenges on a long-term horizon and guiding the members with adequate policy recommendations. Also, we would like to see the "how" aspect of the OECD's policy recommendations further strengthened based on a more in-depth analysis of successful policy cases and practices.

In so doing, it is also important that we make a serious effort to realign the OECD priorities in order not to overstretch the organizational capacity. While being agile to respond to new and emerging challenges, the OECD should also keep reviewing which areas of work should be deprioritized.



## **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Korea to the OECD in March 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

As the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the OECD, I have set as my goal to capture policy insights that are important for Korea's sustainable development from the wide range of the OECD work where major countries' best policy cases are discussed. Also, I am here to share Korea's experiences to contribute to other members' policy work.

In 2022, we went through the Economic and Development Review, which identified the important tasks for the mitigation of pressures on public finances including through a broad pension reform, the reduction of productivity gaps and labor market dualism, as well as youth employment.

The OECD-Korea International Policy Forum on Budgeting and the OECD-Korea seminar on long-term fiscal reforms for fiscal sustainability provided platforms to exchange various countries' efforts for fiscal reforms, including the establishment of fiscal rules.

These occasions were meaningful as I could play a role to deepen the dialogue among the member countries that share the similar challenges and distill important lessons for my country.

I also enjoyed the participation in the Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting, where member countries exchanged views with an aim of building a trusted, sustainable, and inclusive digital future. It is rewarding to be part of the OECD norm-setting process by sharing my country's experiences and learning from other members.

## **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

As the Dean of OECD Ambassadors, Ambassador Aleksander Surdej has actively and constructively contributed to the OECD agenda in diverse areas, and I see a number of potential areas for much strengthened cooperation.

Firstly, climate change and energy transition. In Korea and Poland, we see a relatively high level of dependence on fossil fuels for energy supply. Therefore, we could share policy solutions to ensure sustainable energy transition.

Secondly, demographic change. Korea and Poland are both ageing fast and need to mitigate the impact with various policy measures. It would be useful to exchange what policies have been particularly effective, including in the area of immigration.

Thirdly, SMEs and entrepreneurship. SMEs are the backbone of both countries, and the two countries share the importance attached to innovation and more competitive SMEs. We could have a closer look at policy measures that contribute to enhancing competitiveness of SMEs.

Last but not least, global partnerships. We could strengthen our collaboration for increasing the OECD's relevance to the global community. In particular, I ask for Poland's attention to the OECD Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP) as this region brings a growing influence on the global economy.



## **Latvia and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador

Indulis Ābelis

Permanent Representative of Latvia to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

The OECD accession process was a driving force behind many very important reforms in Latvia. To highlight some examples, the accession process has considerably strengthened the fight against corruption, which has had an immediate positive effect on economic development. The accession process was also instrumental to implement OECD best practices in state-owned enterprises. Latvia has continued to work with the OECD to implement reforms following the economic surveys, developing its medium-term education and skills strategy and participating in education surveys and reports, such as PISA, Education at a Glance, strengthening financial system, developing housing policies and going through digital transformation to name a few. Hence, the co-operation with the OECD has brought a considerable impetus to implement reforms and amend our policies based on evidence-based analysis and extensive expertise as well as best practice examples around the globe that we appreciate. Recommendations, guidelines and good practice of the OECD has helped to improve the quality and efficiency of development co-operation of Latvia. That has emboldened Latvia to expand the geographical scope of development assistance beyond our usual regions.

### **2. What are Latvia's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Benefiting from the OECD recommendations based on best practices and sound data is the main priority for Latvia. OECD expertise is particularly relevant in the areas of productivity, education quality monitoring, digital transformation, green transition, public governance.

Support to Ukraine is very high on Latvia's priority list and we are happy to see the active work that OECD is doing with and in Ukraine. Countries of Eurasia program highly value the cooperation with the OECD and we believe that this work should be continued and expanded.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Latvia's domestic public policies?**

OECD work on tax issues have made important impact on Latvia as it has done without doubt on many other countries. OECD Economic Surveys have been exceptionally helpful in efforts to achieve the overarching goal of sustainable and inclusive growth in Latvia. It lays out strategies for boosting productivity, increasing employment, making growth greener, and ensuring better access to economic opportunities for all. The work on the new Survey is

underway and we are very much looking forward to the results that will be presented in 2024. The OECD expertise is highly valued and sought after in Latvia also in science and innovations. The biennial OECD STI Policy Outlook provides valuable comparative data and analysis on global science, technology and innovation development. In addition to the excellent regular OECD reviews, we have asked the OECD for additional research in several areas that are particularly important for Latvia. For instance, digital transformation, housing policies, innovation governance.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We expect the OECD to continue to deliver the facts-based analysis and recommendations of best policy solutions that will assist its Members to further improve the living conditions for our society. OECD should continuously improve its analytical and survey work to ensure its relevance to the global economic challenges. OECD should continue on its strong engagement and support to Ukraine and deliver to it tailor made advice to help with reforms and policy development. We have benefited greatly from our membership to the OECD and believe that this opportunity should be extended to other countries who have worked hard and proved their readiness for the OECD membership.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Latvia to the OECD in September 2020. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

The OECD has a potential to bring great added value to Latvia, but it is true only when countries themselves choose to use the data and analysis available. In my role as Ambassador, I have the unique opportunity to promote Latvia's cooperation with this Organization and work with Latvian ministries and other institutions to determine in which areas OECD data or expertise would be particularly helpful. Latvia also has excellent expertise in many relevant areas and I encourage the sharing of it with our OECD partners. The like-mindedness and the sense of common aims and values of the organization and its members is an important source of satisfaction.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Our countries have both enjoyed the benefits that OECD accession and membership provides to our economies and development. This is especially true when it comes to implementing OECD recommendations and the following reforms – there is certainly room for collaboration around how to best utilize OECD's recommendations. It is important for us to continue our ongoing regional dialogue with Poland on issues of common concern and to strengthen economic cooperation platforms in order to improve solutions in energy, transport and digitization infrastructures. I also believe that we need to continue to combine our efforts in supporting Ukraine. We should continue to share our expertise and assist other partner countries in adoption of OECD best practices, with the goal of contributing to better policies and prosperity in our neighbor country communities, and more broadly.



## Lithuania and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Lina Viltrakiene  
Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Lithuania is a relatively young member – we joined the OECD in 2018. Our accession process was “unprecedentedly quick” – it lasted for 2.5 years. However, it was a transformative process, which supported a number of important reforms improving our policies in many fields ranging from public and corporate governance to higher education, social care and fight against corruption. No doubts, it was of key importance to use the momentum of the membership to continue or even accelerate these reforms started in more than 20 areas according to the OECD standards, recommendations and best practices.

Importantly, since the beginning we leveraged our OECD membership to attract foreign investors and specialize in the areas of creative thinking and innovative technologies. In the area of financial technologies, for example, this led to 263 of fintechs operating in the country at the end of 2022 making Lithuania the largest Fintech hub in the EU in terms of licensed companies, ranked as 3rd in OECD for corporate tax competitiveness.

Currently, membership continues giving us cutting-edge insights that our policymakers can use in their analysis and policy implementation. Lithuanian professionals of diverse backgrounds now have an access to countless numbers of OECD committees, high-level conferences, relevant statistical data and forward-looking expertise.

OECD provides benefit to Lithuania’s policy making through not only recommendations and policy advice, but also through international comparison. For example, the OECD data and analysis are referred as indicators in the Programme of Lithuanian Government. In addition, we value such OECD instrument as peer reviews, which not only allow learning from the best practices, but also raise competence of our experts, in more general terms. And vice versa, more and more Lithuanians are joining the OECD staff as experts and analysts to contribute to creating better policies for all. In 2023, 19 Lithuanians are working in 11 different directorates, while in 2019 there were only 2 of them.

Being part of the OECD allows Lithuania to create closer multilateral ties with like-minded countries and promote our shared values globally. The OECD stood by Lithuania when China started to use trade coercion against our country at the end of 2021. Since Russia started war against Ukraine in February 2022, in the OECD we all were united in condemning Russia and Belarus and eliminating them from all OECD activities; we worked hard together to strengthen our support and cooperation with Ukraine.

## **2. What are Lithuania's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Russia's brutal war against Ukraine spotlighted the importance of the OECD as a like-minded community standing strong together for shared values of liberty, democracy, rule of law, human rights and principles of open market economy. It is an obvious priority for Lithuania to support all the work of the OECD strengthening these values and building resilience to aggressive authoritarian regimes. The assessment and policy advices on mitigation of the economic consequences of the war, elimination of energy dependence on Russia, countering disinformation, and fostering economic security are the most important examples of this work in the OECD nowadays.

In 2022, Lithuania became a member of the International Energy Agency (IEA). It opened an opportunity for us to engage actively in common response to energy crisis caused by Russia. We joined the work of the IEA on green energy transition by sharing our data and experience, supported Ukraine's associate membership and contributed financially to the joint IEA work programme with Ukraine.

In addition, last year Lithuania joined and became 31 member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Improving the quality of our development cooperation policy is one of our priorities, which become even more topical seeking to provide support to recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine in a demand-driven, effective and sustainable way.

The OECD support to Ukraine will stay among Lithuania's highest priorities in coming years. Despite the war and extremely difficult circumstances, Ukrainians engage actively with the OECD, participating in experts and ministerial meetings, relying on OECD standards, recommendations and advice in their reconstruction plans. We need to ensure that the preparation, signature and implementation of the OECD Ukraine Country Programme would guarantee all necessary OECD support to Ukraine and would lead to the ultimate countries' accession to the OECD.

The enlargement of the OECD, including the ongoing accessions of Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru and Romania is of particular importance to Lithuania. From our own experience, we know how useful and transformative the process of accession is, and are ready to actively support the acceding countries.

## **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Lithuania's domestic public policies?**

Global Economic Outlooks prepared twice a year and biannual country specific Economic Surveys are important tools to contribute to shaping Government's actions regarding specific targets. The recommendations of 3 last Economic Surveys of Lithuania focusing on fiscal and financial policies, social policies, and digitalization strengthened and supported actions and structural reforms of the Government.

Lithuania faces the same challenges as most of the OECD countries: rapid digitalization and increasing digital divide, income inequalities, population ageing, urgent need to upgrade education systems to reflect the needs of today's economy, climate change and many others. Publications related to these topics, including "STI Outlook", "Employment Outlook", "Education at a Glance", "Health at a Glance", "Pensions at a Glance", PISA reports are extremely relevant for our country.

We seek to get the best use of the OECD best practices and standards by participating in both horizontal and bilateral projects in different areas of governance. Lithuania is among those OECD members who has the biggest number of bilateral projects with the OECD as a partner. Today we count close to 30 different bilateral project since 2020. They are covering different areas of policy making, for example: public governance, implementation of anticorruption strategy, improving effectiveness of innovation policy, reforming of all economy sectors towards climate neutrality by 2050, developing new approach to personalized services for vulnerable groups, strengthening the system of quality assurance of higher and vocational education, promoting culture and creative economy among others.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Lithuania expects the OECD to defend strongly our shared values and to demonstrate leadership in building resilience to authoritarian coercion, responding to climate, energy, food crisis, bringing a consensus on complex issues such as taxation, environment, putting forward relevant long-term solutions to the major economic, social and environmental problems the OECD countries are now trying to solve. The OECD should further contribute to the Members efforts by providing objective, reliable information, and evidence based analysis, as well as high quality policy advice.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the OECD in May 2019. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I feel committed and exited to put all my efforts to maintain Lithuania an active and constructive OECD member. Personally, I highly appreciate this opportunity to gain from and contribute to a high quality work of the OECD, cooperate in a wide range of economic areas, meet with so many professionals, learn and share my experience, and most importantly, feel being a part of the family sharing the same values and supporting each other in response to many challenges.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Lithuania and Poland are neighboring countries sharing years of common history and numerous common interests. We have strong economic ties and can join our efforts in contributing to the OECD high quality work in the areas of innovations and digital economy, cybersecurity and countering disinformation, environment, sustainable infrastructure, level playing field, energy efficiency and security of supply among others.

Facing the brutal Russia's war against Ukraine, we are already actively collaborating towards bringing together the OECD efforts to support Ukraine. Together we worked hardly on setting up and financing the OECD office in Kyiv. We are looking forward to collaborating further with Poland to help Ukraine recover and start actual accession process to the OECD. We should also continue support jointly the OECD contribution to the reforms efforts and stabilization of democracy in all countries of the Eurasia Competitiveness Programme.



## **Luxembourg and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Nadia Ernzer

Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Luxembourg, as a founding member of the OECD, has from the very beginning of the 20th century put a strong emphasis on multilateral cooperation, starting with the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union as far back as 1921, BENELUX as from 1944, the United Nations and its agencies, the European Community, Council of Europe, NATO, etc. In most of these, Luxembourg has been a founding member. Multilateralism is clearly inscribed in Luxembourg's DNA.

As a small, landlocked, multilingual country, our economy has traditionally been very open, which is why free trade under a commonly agreed multilateral framework is so vital to us. This existential importance of free trade and open borders to my country has once again been highlighted in the context of the COVID crisis. The OECD, as an organisation promoting free trade and open economies, is therefore a forum of paramount importance to Luxembourg. Moreover, the added value of OECD's analyses and standard-setting, based on data processed by a highly skilled and dedicated Secretariat and expert working parties, is of particular relevance to Luxembourg - as it probably is to many other small countries -, which rely a lot on OECD data, assessments and recommendations to formulate their national policies. The numerous studies we have commissioned at OECD as of late testify to this.

### **2. What are Luxembourg's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Luxembourg is particularly proud to have hosted the ministerial of the public governance committee last November (2022), which launched important reflexions on reinforcing the people's trust in public institutions. This is a precondition for any sound economic development, and particularly topical at a time where dis- and misinformation loom large and threaten the very foundations of our democratic societies.

My country is currently also following the OECD's work on climate change with great interest, and we are proud to have been the first contributors to the Integrated Framework on Carbon Mitigation Approaches.

The OECD's reflexions on digital economy, which were just highlighted by a very successful ministerial in Gran Canaria last December (2022), are of particular relevance for our economy.

And of course, as one of the few countries consistently allocating 1% of its GNP to public development aid, Luxembourg has always shown a great interest in the valuable work of the DAC. Africa plays a specific role here, as most of the partner countries of Luxembourg development aid are situated in Western Africa.

Let me also stress that as one of the first countries to officially have adopted a feminist foreign policy as from 2018, Luxembourg pays specific attention to the promotion of gender justice throughout the various work strands at the OECD.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant Luxembourg's domestic public policies?**

As already mentioned, Luxembourg has recently commissioned a series of OECD studies, which shows the value my government attaches to OECD assessments and recommendations. Last autumn (October 2022), we were extremely pleased that SG Cormann participated in the presentation of the study on how the Luxembourg government dealt with the COVID crisis - a first of its kind report, and extremely helpful in analysing which crisis management and prevention policies worked well in Luxembourg, and which ones remain to be developed. Other countries can also learn from these findings. PM Bettel at length referred to the outcome of this study in his state of the nation speech presented a few weeks later.

23 Luxembourg ministries and 19 public administrations participated in the OECD study on digital government services presented in September 2022, which formulated a series of useful recommendations on improving access to digital services to the population. We were delighted that DSG Kerri-Ann Jones came to Luxembourg in person for this presentation.

In the margins of the Public Governance Committee ministerial in Luxembourg on 17 November 2022, SG Cormann presented the latest OECD economic review of Luxembourg. Again, a useful exercise enjoying a high visibility in my country. This year's edition placed a particular emphasis on the environmental issues, and encouraged Luxembourg to rethink its model of growth.

Finally, just recently, on 23 February 2023, the OECD presented its skills strategy for Luxembourg, defining various priorities to improve skills policies in the country, with an emphasis on adult training, skills choices, talent attraction and retention, as well as skills data governance.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Luxembourg follows the accession process of the current candidate countries with great interest, as well as the development of OECD's relations with Ukraine. During the Responsible Conduct ministerial of 14-15 February 2023, Luxembourg's Minister of Economy Franz Fayot suggested that the OECD start a reflexion on economic growth models.



**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the OECD in August 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

Having worked for seven years in the EU institutions, I grew quite familiar with the workings of multilateral organisations and thus very much appreciate the quality of work, professionalism and dedication of OECD's staff, which I should like to thank for the warm and pleasant welcome they give new ambassadors.

The diversity of issues covered by OECD gives me particular satisfaction, from education to agriculture, from digital economy to fiscal issues: OECD covers an impressive range of topics that are relevant to Luxembourg's various ministries and administrations.

OECD also offers Luxembourg a forum to regularly meet and discuss with like-minded countries beyond the EU, which is highly valuable for a country with a limited diplomatic network. On a very personal level, I very much appreciate the atmosphere of friendship and solidarity between OECD ambassadors, and the relationship of kindness and trust with the OECD staff.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Both in the EU and in the OECD, relations with Poland are intense. We share a common European history, protect our shared interests and promote our European values. All these aspects are at the heart of our cooperation and interaction in OECD, which is particularly important in the current times where multilateralism and European values of democracy and human rights are under strain.



## **Mexico and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Sybel Galván Gómez  
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Mexico joined the organization in 1994, the first emerging market and first Latin-American country to become an OECD member. Our accession was determinant both for Mexico and for the OECD. It placed us in a unique position as a bridge between emerging and advanced economies, while the OECD began a new era from being "the club of rich countries" to become a more inclusive "club of likeminded countries".

Within the OECD, Mexico participates in a collective dialogue with the most advanced nations, where mutual learning and peer review processes help identify best practices, set international standards and design "better policies for better lives". The OECD does not command countries on how to implement their own policies but advises and helps them as they pursue reforms.

### **2. What are Mexico's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

The OECD's mottos "better policies for better lives" and "leaving no one behind" resonates with the priorities of Mexico within the organization. We have insisted that to achieve more inclusive and equal societies, we must invest in providing opportunities to all and, especially, the most vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous and youth.

Our flagship program *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro* matches youngsters with an employer to train and provide them with skills, while they are sponsored by the government. This program provides financial inclusion, social security, skills, community integration and local development, all at once.

We are fully committed to fight corruption and comply with the OECD Antibribery Convention. We support the work on digitalization and promote the creation of campaigns on digital rights, freedom of expression and the effects of misinformation on contemporary society.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Mexico's domestic public policies?**

The most recent example is the Telecom Reform, which resulted in an important decrease of the cost of communications, benefiting the population as a whole, but especially low-income earners.

The [Economic Survey of Mexico 2022](#), recommended the use of fiscal policy to smooth out our economic cycles and support growth during recessions.

Publications that highlight social aspects like [Under Pressure: The Squeezed Middle Class 2019](#) point out challenges at the household level in economic globalization and [A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility](#) provided new evidence on social mobility in the context of increased income inequalities and opportunities in OECD and selected emerging economies.

Mexico has greatly benefited from specific studies on Integrity and Skills strategy, that focused on the analysis of State and municipality anti-corruption policies and identified skills needed to build a better future and make people thrive in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Regarding governance, we seek to rebalance the senior leadership of the OECD. Of our 38 members, 4 are Latin-American and 2 more countries of the region have been invited to the accession process. We believe it is time to formally establish a senior leadership where all regions are adequately represented to include a DSG from Latin-America.

We will continue working to include a leading voice from Latin-America at the senior level of the organization, as we are certain it will bring benefits to all. Let's don't forget that the Latin-American region is the most likeminded region to OECD and that is an arm's length to the developing world.

Mexico has been asking to include gender as a pillar of the peer review process within the Economic Survey publications. Including a Gender Review under this exercise will be the best way to fulfill the mandate of gender perspective in the work of the OECD and among member countries.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OECD in June 2019. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

It has been a great honor to represent Mexico at the OECD. Although I took up my duties in June 2019, my history with this organization started way back. Between 2002 and 2012, I was Attaché of the Ministry of Finance at the Mexican Delegation and for 7 years, between 2012 and 2019, I was Mexico's delegate at the Working Party on Private Pensions. I was beyond honored and delighted to be appointed Mexico's Ambassador to the OECD, an organization that has been such a big part of my life all these years.

I have had the opportunity to participate in two very important processes in 2020. First, as part of the Committee tasked with the selection of the new Secretary General, and second, as one of two Ambassadors helping to draft of the New OECD Vision Statement, an effort led by the Dutch Ambassador.

Between 2019 and 2022, I was co-chair of the Regional Program of Latin America and the Caribbean and I am now the chair of the Evaluation Committee and member of the Evaluation Contact Group of the External Evaluation Exercise.

It has been the best professional adventure so far and, personally, I have met wonderful colleagues and built long-lasting relations.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Our diplomatic relations date from 1928. Since then, we have established a fruitful cooperation, economic and strengthened trade relations since 1997 with the Economic Association, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between Mexico and the European Community and its Member States.

Mexico is the third largest Latin American supplier in Poland and the main market for Polish exports in the region. There are currently 21 companies with Polish capital operating in Mexico.

As OECD members, we have further strengthened our ties and collaboration. Mexico will continue to support Poland on issues related to democracy and the rule of law, respect for international law, human rights, multilateralism, energy security and the free market. As strategic partners in Central Europe and Latin America we will continue to work together to achieve more in economic, academic and cooperation matters.



## **The Netherlands and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Jochem Wiers  
Permanent Representative of Netherlands to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

The Netherlands was a proud founding member of the OECD in 1960 and was also one of the driving forces behind the 2021 Vision Statement for the next decade. The OECD is valued in our country because of its evidence-based policy advice in a large range of policy areas. Thanks to the OECD's country and thematic reports, the Netherlands learns how it performs compared to its peers and how it can do better. The Netherlands also values the OECD's increasingly important role in setting international standards through "soft law", such as guidelines in key areas like tax evasion, anti-corruption, the digital transition, and responsible business conduct. This work is valued as it helps create a more level playing field for Dutch companies in global markets.

### **2. What are Netherlands's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Most of the OECD's work is highly relevant to Dutch policy-making, ranging from macro-economic work, employment and social affairs to education, health, environment and governance. But as a relatively small Permanent Representation we cannot add value on all these issues. We therefore work with five priorities based on what's important both to the Netherlands and to the OECD. I list them in no particular order and note that they are inter-related:

- a. climate and energy (with the IEA)
- b. trade, supply chains and economic resilience
- c. macro-economic challenges, inequalities and taxation
- d. digital and governance
- e. OECD and the rest of the world

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Netherlands's domestic public policies?**

There has been recent work in all of the priority areas just mentioned. The excellent work by IEA on energy technology futures and the recently started work on carbon mitigation approaches come to mind. The work on supply chains and on subsidies, and the work on taxation. The recently launched governance action plans, including one on combatting mis- and disinformation. And the important input the OECD is providing to both the G7 and G20.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We feel the OECD has the potential to become increasingly relevant in a challenging geopolitical and (geo-)economic environment in at least three ways: as a knowledge hub on the various transitions Members and others are simultaneously facing; as a club of like-minded countries working together to reinforce and protect their open, democratic societies with market economies; and as a forum for cooperation and coordination with a wider group of countries on the basis of mutual interests. The first is mostly about the OECD's strength as a centre for reliable data, analysis and knowledge of the complex interactions between transitions: think of the climate and energy transitions, green industrial policies, development, investment and trade, or think of agriculture, climate, water and biodiversity. The second is mostly about what we can do together to strengthen our positions in a difficult world: think of the OECD's recent work on governance, such as how to address misinformation, or its work on vulnerabilities in international supply chains. The third is mostly about how the OECD can also have a wider impact in the world, particularly in emerging and developing countries looking for reliable knowledge and useful international norms. Think of the two-pillar approach to address tax challenges, the AI principles or the due diligence guidance for responsible business conduct. My government will be expecting useful OECD work along the three OECD functions of knowledge hub, like-minded club and forum for wider cooperation. It will look especially keenly at the implementation of the two-pillar approach, OECD work on supply chains, and the recently launched Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Netherlands to the OECD in August 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I feel very privileged to represent my country in this organisation, which is at the same time a knowledge hub where I learn every day and a political animal where I can put my diplomatic skills to full use. It is a particular privilege to be able to work together with so many motivated professionals in the Secretariat, with such a diverse and talented group of fellow ambassadors and with my own team, which is small but also very professional and motivated. Finally, what's not to like about living and working in Paris? I am known among colleagues as the cycling ambassador and it's a fun, clean and practical way to get around.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Our countries work together closely as part of the EU-group within the OECD. As regards subject-matters that are of particular interest to both countries, I would tend to think of the growing interrelatedness of (geo-)economic policies with geopolitical and security considerations on which both our countries are quite active in the OECD. Furthermore, both countries have a lot of interest in the digital economy, in the nexus between climate, food and agriculture, and in labour migration. Finally, on a more personal note, I have been inspired by the Polish Perm Rep, the Dean of our group of Ambassadors, as he actively combines academic with political and diplomatic work and as he regularly organises cultural events.



## **New Zealand and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Caroline Bilkey  
Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

We've recently celebrated 50 years of membership of the OECD, and right from the beginning New Zealand has greatly appreciated the strong data gathering and analysis capabilities of the Organisation, and the exchanges of experiences and ideas that take place between Members.

Joining the OECD in 1973 was a strong statement of the direction in which we wanted to take our economy and society. As a young and distant nation, we recognised the importance of joining a group of likeminded countries committed to the principles of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and free and open economies.

At a time when those principles, and the institutions founded on them are under threat, the OECD is more important to us than ever. Working together as Members, and with those partners who wish to move closer to OECD norms and standards, we believe that the organisation can have a real impact on addressing the issues that confront us globally, by setting high standards and making demonstrable progress on the issues that matter to us.

### **2. What are New Zealand's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Our priorities remain strongly linked to the Organisation's core strengths: the data and analysis that helps to inform our policies, and the norm and standard setting work that enables us to set high standards, which others then look to follow.

As a small nation, New Zealand's prosperity depends on trade. Firms engaged in tradeable and export-focused sectors are more innovative, more competitive and pay higher wages. We highly value the OECD's expertise in this area, which helps inform many of the trade agreements we've developed with other OECD Members such as the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement. We welcomed the launch of the OECD's Trade Strategy - an important document that provides a guiding vision for the OECD's vital work on trade policy.

Agriculture has also long been a priority for New Zealand's engagement with the OECD – in fact, our membership of the Committee on Agriculture pre-dates that of our OECD membership. Again, it's the data gathering and analysis capabilities that we find so important. Given the relevance of this issue to New Zealand, I was very pleased to see us co-Chair the Agriculture Ministerial in November.

We were also delighted to act as MCM Vice-Chair during our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, with the focus on resilience, the Indo Pacific region and gender of particular importance to us.

Another strong focus area for us is aimed at raising the profile of indigenous policy issues. Working with a group of likeminded delegations, we wish to see indigenous policy mainstreamed into relevant areas of the OECD's work –such as trade, climate, education, and regional development. There are many other areas in which we need to be thinking more deeply about inclusion of indigenous and other minority groups.

Finally, we have always highly valued the work of the Organisation in development, particularly in its standard setting work. The particular concerns of the Pacific and of Small Island Developing States are key areas of importance for us. Like others in the Global South, these countries face extremely challenging times in light of the climate crisis among other issues, and the OECD has a strong role to play in supporting these countries in their sustainable development.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to New Zealand's domestic public policies?**

The previous OECD Economic Survey of New Zealand was released early last year. While it was put together largely on a virtual basis given pandemic restrictions, the analysis and recommendations have been useful for policymakers back home, particularly on the challenges and opportunities of the digital transition for our economy and people. The work of the OECD's WISE Centre has been useful as we develop our wellbeing approach and Living Standards Framework, and as we increase our focus on issues such as addressing child poverty.

Another key piece of work has been the OECD's Trade and Gender review of New Zealand, which is helping to inform our inclusive approach to trade. We hope that this report serves as a model for other Members who would like to prioritise women's engagement in trade.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We appreciate the focus on engagement with the Indo-Pacific and we were very pleased to see the Indo-Pacific Strategic Framework launched at this year's MCM. We're looking forward to working with other Members to develop a plan to operationalise the Strategic Framework, with the aim of launching at MCM in 2024. Given the growth and dynamism of the Indo-Pacific, it's vital for the OECD to accelerate engagement with the region. We recognise the diversity that exists in that part of the world, which means engagement will take different forms, but we would be very pleased to see the OECD increase its membership within the region. New Zealand is proud to continue to host the OECD's South East Asian office in our Embassy in Jakarta.

Other than that, we look forward to the OECD continuing its excellent work on those core areas which have always been so important to our delegation. For example, we think the Chief Economist Conferences held recently have been an excellent initiative, and we would like to see these continue on a regular basis. Economic security is an increasingly important part of our work, and bringing chief economists together to discuss these and other issues in a Chatham House setting is valuable.



Other examples include the Inclusive Framework on BEPS and the IFCMA, and we look forward to seeing both work-streams progress in the coming months and years, given the importance of tax and climate change.

We are also looking forward to our next economic survey. A first mission to New Zealand has just taken place, and our officials are working with the Secretariat on a report which will undoubtedly contain many useful insights and policy recommendations.

**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the OECD in April 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I am in the unusual position of being both New Zealand's Ambassador to France, as well as to the OECD. This makes for a busy schedule for both myself and my team at the Embassy, and we do need to focus on our key priorities. It is however very rewarding, and holding both roles enables me to make connections between the work of the OECD and the issues we discuss with the French government – whether that's about climate finance, development support for our Pacific neighbours, SMEs, or mis- and disinformation.

Representing New Zealand at the OECD allows me to draw on the many connections that I made during my time as director of the Ministry's Auckland office, including in local government and the business community. As a former Ambassador to Brazil, I find it very satisfying to see the OECD's increased outreach with the Latin American region.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

We have appreciated the Polish delegation's strong focus on supporting Ukraine. The people of Ukraine are fighting in defence of a number of the founding values of the OECD, such as democracy, free speech, and human rights, and therefore it's appropriate that the OECD support its rebuilding and reconstruction – these are obvious areas where the OECD can add value. New Zealand was therefore very pleased to announce a voluntary contribution to the OECD's Ukraine Country programme at MCM 2023.



## **Poland and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Aleksander Surdej  
Permanent Representative of Poland to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Poland joined the OECD in 1996, just a few years after the beginning of the post-communist transformation. The country and its political elites needed then to anchor the reform process in the Organisation which is based on the principles of an open-market economy and which, at the same time, offers support in designing pro-market institutions and pro-wellbeing-oriented public policies. For many years and still now, OECD membership has been signalling the commitment to the open-market economy and was perceived as a guarantee of remaining such an economy. The OECD has offered Poland not only general guidelines, but also extensive support in building regulatory institutions and designing policies that enhanced competition while protecting consumers. In the mid-1990s a special OECD program called SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) was launched to serve Central European countries in improving their public administration. Poland was one of its beneficiaries and has now become a source of expertise, as the focus of SIGMA has moved to other parts of Europe, including Ukraine. Thanks to our presence in the OECD, thousands of Polish administrators have participated in the activities of OECD substantial committees and learned from their peers.

### **2. What are Poland's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Poland supports the OECD and believes it has a positive role in stabilising the rules of the global economy while allowing for a variety of market based public policies. Our governments appreciate OECD-led efforts to reduce global tax evasion and to share global tax revenues more fairly. Poland sees a strong resemblance between the OECD's inclusive growth strategy and our country's solidarity oriented development principles which guide Poland's domestic policies. Our ministers visit the OECD regularly, stressing the importance of the work of the OECD for the implementation of our public policies oriented to sharing widely (socially and territorially) the benefits of the economic growth. Polish officials take an active part in the works of the OECD and attend OECD-organised events. Polish experts serve as reviewers when other countries call for it and such requests happen quite often. We feel that the OECD is our organisation, whose works we co-guide and co-manage, hence we feel responsible for its effectiveness, efficiency and continuous relevance.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Poland' domestic public policies?**

In February 2023, the OECD launched its subsequent Poland's economic review, "OECD Economic Surveys Poland 2023", this time focusing on policies to accelerate digitalization. Since digitalization is crucially important for productivity and the position of our country in global value chains, Polish decision-makers continue to study the report and follow all relevant OECD works in this area. Poland closely follows the OECD's work in the area of taxation and SDGs. The SDGs are important both for domestic policies (inward-oriented SDGs) and for Poland's increasing engagement in global development (outward-oriented SDGs).

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the near future?**

Poland would like to see the OECD continuously improve the quality and relevance of its work. As the global economy evolves under the impact of technology and other factors, new problems need to be examined and new themes addressed. We see thus the need to analyse the link between digitalization and taxation or digitalization and labour markets. The OECD also needs to support countries in their efforts to build economies on cleaner sources of energy. All members states perceive the need to balance economic growth with environmental protection, as we observe the signs of resource depletion and the reduction of biodiversity. To address such challenges there is a need for an OECD-like horizontal and multidisciplinary approach to designing and effectively implementing public policies.

### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Poland to the OECD in September 2016. What personal satisfaction do you get from 7 years of your work for your country and for the OECD?**

When arriving at the OECD, I knew I had been preceded by several distinguished Polish Ambassadors on whose works I could rely. Yet, I am hoping to add my personal mark. During this period I chaired the Evaluation Committee and for more than two years I served as Dean of Council of Ambassadors. I debated with late Donald Johnston (OECD's Secretary General from 1996 to 2006) about specificity of the organization. I enjoyed working with Secretary General Angel Gurría with whom I shared the care for the constant improvements of the relevance and usage of the OECD's work. I participated in the selection of the current SG Mathias Cormann whose leadership I recognize and support.

Being an international public policy organization, the OECD needs to care about the dissemination of its works, as the adaptation and implementation of policy recommendations is fully in the hands of democratically elected national governments. The effectiveness of the Organisation depends on efficient collaboration between the Secretariat and member states. In a complex economic environment, thousands of public and private actors make decisions, and OECD-produced data and standards help them coordinate their actions and avoid counter-productive chaos. Under my leadership, the Representation of the Republic of Poland to the OECD published 70 "OECD 360°" monthly bulletins that inform the Polish audience about the OECD's work and publications. We have published and launched three volumes of "Inside the OECD" devoted to the work of ambassadors, committees and regional programmes. We have produced several films promoting the OECD's work, and I, in person,

rarely decline an invitation to publish in Polish or French newspapers or to speak publicly about the OECD's work, when universities or media ask me to do so. With several other Ambassadors we also try to maintain an intellectual climate at the OECD that preserves its diplomatic form, while essentially remaining similar to open academic discussions.

## **6. In which fields does Poland cooperate with other members of the OECD?**

Poland is a responsible partner to all those who contribute to solving international policy problems. Our country cooperates with others in various formats, according to the nature of a given policy issue. In the OECD, we act together with countries that support the work of the OECD for Ukraine and in the Eurasia Regional programme. We also serve as a bridge to developing countries, animating the group of contacts with partners from Tanzania and Vietnam. Poland's diplomacy is present and active wherever we see an opportunity to implement solidarity-based policies while creating mutual economic benefits and contributing to the production of global public goods.



## **Portugal and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Manuel Lobo Antunes  
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Portugal as a country founder of the OECD has a long-standing relationship with this organization whose scientific prestige, so to say, is undeniable. For Portugal the work of OECD has been quite useful in three areas: helping us to know better ourselves, our progresses or shortcomings in many aspects of our economic and social development; as a forum for “peer reviewing”, allowing us to confront our development indicators with the ones of other Member States, so we can improve or change what is not working as intended; and finally, as a policy adviser body, inspiring our public policies.

### **2. What are Portugal’s priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Of course, individual priorities are not the same now as they were 60 years ago, but the general objective subsists. We aim at getting advice, policy recommendations and up to date information on the areas we see as of crucial importance. For Portugal, Education, Green Transition, Climate Change, Development, Public Governance, Labor Market, Digital Transition, are some of the sectors which we consider as a priority.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Portugal’s domestic public policies?**

The Economic Outlook reports and Education reports are indeed documents always attended with expectation and read with much interest. But by no means the only. In these fast changing world, indeed countries need as much information and advice as never before. For inspired and fact rooted policies.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We expect the OECD to continue to be a “centre d’excellence” for public policies and good governance, continuing to provide Member States with up to date information, solid analysis and sound recommendations.

### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the OECD in March 2022. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I took my current job in March 2022, at the end of a career that took me to different international positions. I had the chance to serve my country as a Permanent Representative to the EU and realize now the similarities existing on the institutional and procedural manner of working between the two organizations. Besides, both share areas of common interest and work. This is to say that my adaption to the OECD was quite smooth, I think. I'm glad to confirm how the OECD work can be useful to its Member States (and to the wider world), in its permanent search of "better policies, for better lives". In my view, any organization is what its Member States wish it to be. So if we want a "vibrant", dynamic organization, it's our responsibility to help OECD fulfilling its main missions providing it with the necessary tools and means. Once work is done, its up to Member States to make use of it for their own benefit.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Portugal and Poland, although geographically distant, have a close friendship and a mutual understating that flows naturally. Both countries ´names start with a "P", so Poland ´s delegations are always next to us in all international conference tables. It's the case in OECD Council. I would say that Science, Technology, Innovation are for sure three areas where I find scope for greater and enhanced bilateral cooperation, as much as exchange of good practices and lessons learned in many other sectors. I much admire the big progress Poland has made in recent years towards a vigorous and modern economy, an effort which is well known and praised in my country.



## **Slovak Republic and the OECD**

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
František Ružička  
Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the  
OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Slovakia's accession to the OECD in 2000 marked the first successful step on our path from totality back to free and democratic community. We benefited greatly from the OECD expertise in the process of both - economic transformation and successful integration to the EU and global economy.

If NATO is a guarantee for the national security and EU brings us freedoms, instruments and means to further uphold economic and social standards, the OECD is a guarantor of access to the high quality data, expertise, and economic cooperation.

Multilateralism is a substantive feature of the Slovak foreign policy. International organizations are key fora defining rules-based international system. OECD is an integral part of this architecture. It is also a gateway to the international fora such as G7 and G20, very important for a small open economy as Slovakia - to be in and on pulse of the global economic heartbeat.

### **2. What are Slovak Republic's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Undoubtedly, the imperative of today is Ukraine.

Slovakia believes that the OECD should play an important role in the future recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine. We contributed to the founding of the analytical desk for Ukraine, and to the establishment of the OECD Ukraine Liaison Office. We are very proud to host this office at the Slovak Embassy in Kiev.

In addition to the Russian aggression, there are many other serious challenges we need to tackle: global health crisis, turbulences and shifts in energy markets, current global economic trends (including vulnerability of markets, global trade system, value chains disruptions, disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence) and climate change.

OECD knowledge is fundamental for Slovakia in areas such as taxation, investments guidelines, pension system, education, healthcare, energy and food security and good governance.

OECD's data, analyses and best practices complements implementing the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Slovakia – including green and digital transition.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Slovak Republic's domestic public policies?**

Economic Outlook and Country Economic Survey are flagship publications for Slovakia. They reflect state of the economy and bring ways forward in addressing variety of the most pressing issues. Last Economic Survey (2022) was addressing the issue of population ageing with its fiscal, economic and social implications. The new Survey (2024) will focus on housing policy.

We are, or we have been currently working on:

- Environmental Policy Performance Review;
- Report on "Strengthening FDI-SME Linkages in the Slovak Republic". Slovakia was a pilot country in the project. It can help to strengthen the performance of SMEs, stimulate innovation and increase the overall competitiveness of local economies;
- Development Cooperation Report 2023;
- Economic Survey of the Slovak Republic.

As for the development, Slovakia hosted Tidewater (June 2023), informal meeting of development ministers of DAC members in Bratislava. Additionally, we are working with the OECD on several projects concerning implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

We consider OECD as the organization that is the bearer of shared values. This is particularly important in the current turbulent geopolitical context. From our point of view, there are three key pillars which may substantively contribute to the global role of the OECD:

- a) implementation of the New vision statement in the real policies and shaping our priorities till 2030. OECD must be the leader, a pioneer or voyager in a professional, data and fact based analyses for the future;
- b) new Global Relations Strategy – starting from the enlargement through relations with key players (G7, G20) to close cooperation with other International organizations;
- c) efforts of the Secretary General to modernize the functioning of the organization to make it fit for purpose;

### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the OECD in November 2020. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I see three levels of my professional engagement:

1. International – to be a part of the organization of like-minded countries that are confident and bold in pursuing their goals with a global reach;



2. National – representing Slovakia and the opportunity to navigate the necessary initiatives to improve the performance of our economy and well-being of citizens;
3. Individual – get wider perspective on global economic trends and developments;

In addition, serving as the chair of the Executive Committee empowered me to have a look into the “kitchen” of the work of the OECD while taking active role in shaping the decisions for effective, sustainable and modern organization.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

There is a broad scope of fields we are ready to cooperate and work on with Member States, including Poland.

Taking into consideration our historical, political, economic and societal closeness with Poland, we have many natural areas of cooperation – starting from structural reforms, effective use of European funds, energy, trade cooperation or cross-border development.

Very recent initiative is our neighbour, Ukraine. Slovakia and Poland along with Latvia, Lithuania and Romania provided financial contribution for establishing the OECD Ukraine Liaison Office and we are dedicated to continue in its support further.



## Republic of Slovenia and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Peter Ješovnik  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia  
to the OECD

### 1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?

Slovenia had first applied for membership to the OECD in 1996. As the organization was not open to enlargement at the time, it took us 14 years before we have reached our goal. The process of becoming a member of the OECD was transformative on its own and contributed to reforms and improvements in several areas. Our motivation from the very start was to learn from best practices in different fields, to be able to exchange experiences and to have possibilities for comparisons with other countries. The initial motivations are still valid today. Experts coming from line ministries highly value the possibilities that the vast pool of the OECD knowledge offers. It helps them in shaping domestic policies. Learning about policy options of different countries is a good basis for decisions on the choices that are best suited for the policy mix in Slovenia. In short, I am absolutely convinced that OECD motto »Better Policies for Better Lives« is most relevant for Slovenia participation in OECD nowadays!

### 2. What are Slovenia's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?

The fundamental guideline for Slovenia's operation in the OECD is the compliance of activities with the goals set out in Slovenia's fundamental strategic documents, such as the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia until 2030, the Slovenian Smart Specialization Strategy, the Resolution on the National Programme for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management for the 2023–2032 Period and most relevant for our work Guidelines for the activities of the Republic of Slovenia in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development until the end of 2025.

The central goal of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 is to ensure a quality life for everyone. It can be realized through balanced economic, social and environmental development that takes into account the limitations and capabilities of the planet and creates conditions and opportunities for current and future generations. At the individual level, a quality life is manifested in good opportunities for work, education and creation, in a dignified, safe and active life, a healthy and clean environment and inclusion in democratic decision-making and co-management of society.

In the guidelines, the key areas of Slovenia's cooperation with the OECD are therefore defined as:

- strengthening the knowledge-based society and creating high value jobs,
- competitiveness and productivity growth,
- energy and climate change,
- digitization and demographic changes, health,
- international taxation – where Slovenia is traditionally very active,

- international development cooperation - is an important element of activity in the OECD, which during the period of validity of the guidelines will be focused on the preparation and implementation of mutual review.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Slovenia's domestic public policies?**

Definitely OECD Economic Survey for Slovenia that was launched in June 2022, which covers the whole horizontal view of the most crucial areas. The Survey has three main messages that our decision-makers include when implementing key reforms and structural changes: (1) Fiscal consolidation is needed to reduce demand pressures. This does not rule out additional support for most affected households by the energy crisis. Nevertheless, additional support will have to be financed by cuts to other government recurrent spending. Such efforts should be implemented alongside structural reforms to prepare public finances for the fiscal challenges associated with population ageing. (2) Promoting productivity growth entails measures to raise investment in new technologies, particularly to foster the digital transformation of the economy. (3) Greener growth necessitates further efforts to reduce emissions in a cost-efficient manner by realigning incentives embodied in environmental policies. This calls for the introduction of carbon taxes in non-ETS sectors, notably the residential, commercial and industrial sectors, and the phasing out of exemptions from excise duties.

In addition, reports and works in other sectoral areas, such as those mentioned in the previous answer, are also relevant to Slovenia and used regularly by experts in their work.

As well as the OECD strategy papers and guidelines, that are being prepared for the Ministerial Council, which was held in June.

### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

OECD unites 38 like-minded nations of the world. Especially in these challenging times, our values are under several layers of threat. Some of them demand OECD to get stronger on the inside; some demand our stronger outreach to the outside.

In the first group, we need to get even stronger, resilient, relevant, persuasive, pertinent and especially more forward-looking regarding our values, views, and stability. OECD should develop a better understanding of how to assist member countries in areas such as democratic resilience, digitalisation, effective public administration, gender equality, diversity and inclusion. It includes also strengthening our economic resilience, energy and food security. Specifically, given that health reform is Slovenia's main priority, I would like to highlight an example of this kind cooperation. Slovenia succeeded with candidature for Health Ministerial due to Slovenia's intensive use of OECD data, information, recommendations, studies and results at national level, in the framework of the discussions and starting points for the ongoing health reform, which is a top priority of the Slovenian government. The topics to be discussed at the Health Ministerial are in line with Slovenia's priorities. Slovenia therefore consider to strengthen cooperation with the OECD and member countries in the PaRIS project and in the areas of health system financing and governance, quality and safety of care, health professionalism and digitalization, for which both legislative and system level changes are currently under preparation.

In the second group are challenges, which require global cooperation, such as environment and green transition, water, biodiversity, overall goal of reaching net-zero emission, cooperation in tax

matters, rule-based trade system. Regarding these issues, OECD should use its global outreach capacity to enhance efforts of its member countries in trying to achieve global consensus for tackling these challenges.

**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the OECD in September 2021. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

The Permanent representation of Slovenia to the OECD is the smallest amongst all the member countries. Regardless, I'm privileged to have a team of 4 vibrant diplomats and an enthusiastic assistant. We try to meet with as many Slovenian experts as possible attending different committee and working party meetings. Raising awareness in Slovenia about the OECD work is another priority that occupies us on a strategic level. Therefore, we have started publishing quarterly Newsletter which create value added within »Ljubljana OECD community«. As the chair of the Budget Committee I have learnt a lot about mandates and priorities of practically all substantive committees and through this exposure I value the work of the OECD even more. However, after spending two years as ambassador to the OECD I learned the pivotal role lies with »The Permanent Inter-Ministerial Working Group for OECD Matters at the Operational Level« while mastering fundamental questions like:

- consideration of strategic issues related to OECD membership,
- shaping the position of the Republic of Slovenia towards individual documents and other OECD matters,
- consideration of common OECD and EU issues and harmonization of positions,
- determining the annual priorities of the Republic of Slovenia in the OECD.

It is our job at the Permanent representation to play the role of the bridge between the Secretariat and the capital. Indeed, our role is to be all around the OECD playing-filed, which is a real challenge most of the time.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

I see the OECD global outreach, in line with the OECD Global Relations Strategy and the Vision Statement, as one of the fields of possible closer cooperation - to continue to foster the rule of law, rules based international order, democracy and human rights. It is in our common interest to deepen engagement with partner countries and regions of strategic importance even further, with a view to promoting high standards and best practices of governance, to stimulate inclusive and sustainable green economic growth and prosperity for all, as well as to address global challenges. Slovenia will continue to actively contribute to these efforts, to the South East Europe Regional Programme, the Eurasia Competitiveness programme and to OECD's work in support of Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, to name just a few. We also look forward to possible closer cooperation in Africa, in line with the Ministerial Council mandate to establish a mutually beneficial framework for cooperation, to work towards and OECD-Africa Partnership. We also see opportunities to cooperate with Poland on the DAC agenda, to contribute towards achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Agreement goals.



## Sweden and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Anna Brandt  
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Sweden was one of the founding countries of OECD in 1961 - in fact we were even one of the founders of OEEC as early as 1948 - and has ever since valued its relationship with the OECD. For a medium sized country, who does not have the capacity of numerous think tanks or foundations, the OECD is of great importance in providing statistics, comparable data and evidence-based analysis. In addition to being a global standard setter, it is also a platform for sharing experience of what policies work best to promote sustainable economic growth and development. This was important 75 years ago as well as 60 years ago and still is today. Through our membership we have gained insights into what works well or not concerning a broad set of socioeconomic policy making.

### **2. What are Sweden's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

There is broad interest in the Swedish government for OECD's work and around ten government ministries have direct working relationships with the organisation through its committee work. Our Parliament, the Swedish Riksdag, has an OECD network of Parliamentarians from different standing committees who participate actively in OECD's global parliamentary network. Sweden's general priority is for the OECD to be a standard setter of best practices in its core area of work. When it comes to defining what the core is, we prioritise the organisation's work to help members achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development. Climate change, the environment and energy transition (including working with the IEA); free trade and a rules-based international trading order; strengthened competitiveness, international taxation; public and corporate good governance and anti-corruption; digitalisation, education (not least PISA), employment and the labour market are some examples of areas of importance. As one of the few countries which has for many decades lived up to the UN commitment of allocating at least 0,7% of GNI to development cooperation, we highly value the work of the Development Assistance Committee, DAC. We also emphasize the need for the OECD to mainstream gender equality in all its data, research, analysis and policy advice to support members in optimal decision making.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant Sweden's domestic public policies?**

OECD's bi-annual Economic Review of Sweden is being conducted this year, which is of importance to us. This year's survey will, in addition to the general macroeconomic analysis,

focus on climate change and our policies to enable a green transition and to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. The work in previous years on digital transition, inclusive growth and migration/integration has also been appreciated. More recently, Sweden has highly appreciated the OECD's condemnation of Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and the strong support given to Ukraine through a country programme, opening the office in Kiev and starting the initial accession dialogue.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Sweden expects OECD to continue to be at the cutting edge in terms of multidisciplinary analysis, with an ability of foresight and to anticipate trends to help members prepare for future challenges. The dissemination of OECD standards and recommendations beyond the membership is important to us, so that OECD can continue to have impact on a global scale. Finally, we expect the organisation to continue to deliver effectively and be responsive to all its members, including small and medium sized countries.

#### **5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OECD in September 2018. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I have been privileged to serve as my country's ambassador and permanent representative at the OECD for the last four and a half years. This period has been very eventful and turbulent with the outbreak of Covid-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, with ramifications for the OECD. We have had a change of leadership and transition to a new secretary general as well as celebrated 60 years of existence. I can hardly imagine a more interesting time to be posted at this organisation. As an economist and a diplomat with more than three decades of experience from multilateral organisations as well as countries in several regions of the world, it has been rewarding to build on that experience to engage in so many areas of work at the OECD. We have accomplished several milestones together. I am thinking especially of the member led *60 Year Vision Statement*, the *Global Relations Strategy*, launching the ongoing *Independent External Evaluation* and deciding on *Enlargement* by inviting six new members to start their accession *process* to the OECD. For me personally it has been interesting to chair the Audit Committee, thereby gaining some insights into the nuts and bolts of the institution to help encourage further internal reforms. It has also been rewarding to co-chair the Ambassador's Friends of Gender Equality+ meetings, which I believe have contributed to improving gender equality at the OECD and in its work.

#### **6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Poland and Sweden, being EU members in the same region around the Baltic Sea, have excellent relations and much in common. There is scope for us to cooperate in all areas of OECD's work. If I were to highlight one area for increased cooperation, it would be our support to the work of OECD in the Eurasia region and especially in Ukraine.



## Switzerland and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Giancarlo Kessler  
Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Although Switzerland was not a direct beneficiary of the Marshall Plan, as a small open market economy we immediately recognized the interest and benefits of participating in the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) and its successor, the OECD. The aims, undertakings and actions enshrined in Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Convention of the OECD were very innovative in 1960 and are still valid today.

In fact, keeping each other informed and furnishing the OECD with the information necessary for the accomplishment of its tasks; consulting together on a continuing basis, carrying out studies and participating in agreed projects; and co-operating closely and taking coordinated action allowed the OCDE to become a first class source of evidence-based advice to member countries as well as a global standard setter.

Being member of the OECD we benefit from its advice but also defend our interest on the global scene. Improving public policies and sharing good practices expand our capacity to face economic challenges.

### **2. What are Switzerland's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

We consider the OECD's role in the global economic governance, next to the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), as important and as a priority. Furthermore the OECD plays a specific role with important Fora like the G20 and the G7. So, through the OECD, we can assure that that the point of view of small open market oriented economies is also taken into account.

In general all parts of our administration benefit from the OECD work. For us it is like having access to a global think tank that covers almost every aspect of our economic life. Having said that, Switzerland continues to follow with special interest trade, investment and fiscal issues, in particular from the point of view of ensuring a competitive environment.

The recent initiative concerning the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches (IFCMA), is also high on our agenda. First of all because we believe it can have a real impact on the way we approach the greening of our economies, providing us with best practices that can help us to face this challenge efficiently and effectively. Secondly, according to OECD publication on Effective Carbon Rates, Switzerland is the country with the highest Carbon

Pricing Score, therefore we have an interest that others also adopt equivalent measures to ensure a level playing field in the long run.

**3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Switzerland's domestic public policies?**

In general, we believe that all areas of OECD research are relevant to public policy. However, policy analyses on global trends that impact heavily the functioning of our economies and societies are of particular interest to us. New trade patterns, digitalization, artificial intelligence, carbon mitigation approaches are some examples. The OECD has, in this case, the role of a pathfinder that helps its membership to find the right way. Still, traditional products like the EDR continue to be relevant and niche products, like the study on "Enhancing Innovation in Rural Regions of Switzerland" provide valuable insights for our domestic public policies.

**4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

Switzerland, as Chair of the Global Strategy Group, launched the idea of a renewed OECD vision for the next decade. The Vision was approved at the Ministerial meeting in 2021. We just expect the OECD to realize what is foreseen in the Vision, in a nutshell, that the OECD will continue to support countries, within and outside the OECD, to develop policies together that promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, that accelerate a just transition, but also promote more resilient systems for future generations

**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OECD in February 2019. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

I find the OECD a very interesting and stimulating environment where knowledge and people with very diverse background come together to develop relevant policies. My colleagues, the OECD staff and myself try our best to contribute to the common endeavors. The work, based on statistics and evidence, help to create a collaborative atmosphere characteristic of the OECD.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

Poland and Switzerland share a strong interest in a forward-looking, proactive and innovative OECD. An organisation that does not shy away from reminding us of sound economic and financial policies, but which is also at the forefront in analysing new developments. Exchanging views on these issues is in the common interest of both countries.





## Turkey and the OECD

Interview with H. E. Ambassador  
Kerem Alkin  
Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OECD

### **1. What has your country gained thanks to membership in the OECD, both in the beginning and now?**

Türkiye has the privilege of being among the founding members of both the OECD and the OEEC. Türkiye's long standing engagement with the Organization has been and will continue to be a force multiplier in terms of prosperity and development of our country as well as solidarity among likeminded nations based on rule of law and free market economy.

Türkiye's accession to the OECD in 1961 coincided with the establishment of the State Planning Organization, a landmark government agency responsible for integrating a holistic vision for the sustainable development of Türkiye. Progressively other government agencies and ministries followed suit in cultivating ties with the OECD bodies. Now we have reached a state where almost all major national authorities are availing of the expertise and insight of the organization. This gives us the edge to implement our national strategies effectively as well as to advance multilateral cooperation at various levels and fields.

Nowadays emerging global challenges aggravated by economic uncertainties and political instability render OECD's projections and guidance even more critical for the economic growth and stability of our member countries.

OECD's contribution to the G20, APEC and UN agenda will continue to play a crucial role in promoting a constructive dialogue and cohesion among national policy makers.

### **2. What are Türkiye's priorities in its relationship with the OECD now?**

Promotion and dissemination of shared values and OECD standards is our strategic common objective.

Climate change, development, housing, infrastructure, digital transformation, taxation, immigration, energy transition, financial markets and İstanbul Centre are core areas of priority for Türkiye.

### **3. Which recent reports and works of the OECD are particularly relevant to Türkiye's domestic public policies?**

OECD Economic Surveys of Türkiye are fundamental reports ensuring coordination and synchronization of our public policies with the OECD.

The latest version of the Economic Survey of Türkiye, published in February 2023, provides comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the current economic challenges.

Policymakers in Türkiye have always taken the recommendations of these surveys into account and employed to the benefit of domestic decision-making processes. These surveys represent joint efforts by the OECD staff and policymakers in Türkiye in all phases.

Türkiye also contributes to the drafting of various reports and studies on trade, agriculture, environment, climate, gender equality, immigration working life, restructuring of the international financial system, housing, digital transformation, development, SMEs, local government and local development.

OECD Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) also provide evidence-based analysis and assessment of progress towards our environmental policy objectives. We attach importance to EPR reports, which provide targeted recommendations in order to improve our environmental performance. The EPR Report of Türkiye published in 2019, is considered as an important leverage for a greener, low-carbon economy and efficient environmental governance and management.

In the same vein we recognize the prospective role of the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches (IFCMA). This is especially crucial for us since we are in the process of developing an Emissions Trading System. We welcome the opportunity to share, learn and compare best practices with respect to the mitigation policies of peer countries through IFCMA Project.

#### **4. What does your country expect from the OECD in the not-so distant future?**

The OECD has an untapped potential to contribute to the revival of the Sustainable Development Goals. We expect OECD to dwell on a result oriented new development paradigm covering not only partner countries but also OECD members.

OECD needs to enhance dialogue with the "Global South," Africa and Asia and embrace the peculiar needs of the developing member countries. We expect OECD to provide specific guidance and tools that emerging economies could utilize in the areas of green & digital transformation, climate, and the development of new models and proposals to finance their investment needs. Absence of mechanisms to facilitate access to the financial resources at agreeable terms will eventually hamper the implementation of OECD recommendations.

Spiraling global debt is another bottleneck which requires a closer look in near future. Accumulation of the global debt jeopardizes our efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, green transformation, and digital transformation all of which are essential for the prosperity of our nations.

We also expect OECD to dwell on post-disaster recovery issues.

**5. You took up your duties as the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OECD in March 2021. What personal satisfaction do you derive from your work for your country and for the OECD?**

As a Permanent Representative coming from academic work, my two years in office has been very productive and rewarding. The intellectual richness and wealth of work of the OECD incentivizes me to further contribute to the work of the Organization. Growing agenda and relevance of the Organization both in terms of scope and background is a challenge as well as an opportunity to gain experience and insight into the current state of global issues and trends. This is especially conducive to my career as a columnist.

**6. In which fields would you consider cooperating with Poland at the OECD forum?**

We view Poland as a pivotal country who brings critical thinking into the OECD work and initiatives which is highly needed under present circumstances.

Our delegations conducted fruitful exchange of views during the drafting phases of Policy Statement of the Employment Ministerial adopted last year. We look forward to continuing consultations on gender related issues based on convergence of our views on gender matters.

There is scope for building dialogue on the areas of SMEs, corporate governance, responsible business conduct, immigration, regional development, post-disaster recovery and SDGs with special emphasis on Southeast Europe.

**Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland**

After 27 years of our membership in the Organisation, we strongly appreciate the OECD's role in enhancing the mechanisms of sustainable growth. We are no longer uniquely a recipient, but more and more a provider of interesting economic solutions. We are ready to share our experience in the successful transition from a centrally planned to a market economy and maintaining quick economic growth.

**Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General of the OECD**

Our 38 Member countries share a strong commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, market based economic principles and a rules-based international trading system as the best foundation for preserving individual liberty and securing sustainable increases in economic prosperity and social wellbeing.

**Aleksander Surdej, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the OECD**

All members states perceive the need to balance economic growth with environmental protection, as we observe the signs of resource depletion and the reduction of biodiversity. To address such challenges there is a need for an OECD-like horizontal and multidisciplinary approach to designing and effectively implementing public policies.