

## Ofir Akunis

Minister of Science and Technology Ofir Akunis serves as a member of the Knesset for the Likud party.



Akunis began his activities with the Likud party in 1996 and became Deputy Media Advisor to Prime Minister Netanyahu later that year. He served in a variety of communications roles over the next twelve years, including Speaker for the Likud Party and Speaker for the Minister of Justice, until being appointed Deputy Director of Communications and Information for the Likud in 2008, where he served until his election to the Knesset.

### 18th Knesset

Ofir Akunis began his first term in the Knesset in 2009. He stood out as a particularly active MK, serving as Chairman of the Economic Committee and Deputy Speaker of the House. Among the initiatives he promoted were the opening of the cellular communications market to competition, the introduction of consumer protections, and the lowering of radio and television fees, resulting in dramatic savings for consumers. Among his other legislative efforts were a bill requiring a referendum to be held for any future political agreement regarding the future of Judea and Samaria, and a law to prevent any party boycotting Israel from benefitting from financing or services provided by the State.

### 19th Knesset

During his second Knesset term Akunis was appointed Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, acting as liaison between the government and the Knesset with the portfolio of the Advancement of Young People and Students.

He leads the "**Computer for Every Child**" project, which aims to reduce social disparities by increasing computer access for children living in the periphery of the country. At the start of 2014 he upgraded the project and started to distribute tablets to children from underprivileged neighborhoods.

In December 2014, at the height of the environmental crisis caused by a massive crude oil spill in Israel's Arava region, Akunis was appointed Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection. He oversaw both the immediate response to the disaster and the development of a program to rehabilitate the region, treat contaminated soils and restore damaged wildlife populations. He presented this program to the government within a record three weeks of the disaster, and it passed unanimously.

## **20th Knesset**

As a minister in the Communications Ministry Akunis led the effort to reform the Israel Broadcasting Authority to eliminate inefficiencies, abolish television fees, and include a wider range of voices from Israeli society, and spearheaded the legislative effort to establish the new Israeli Broadcasting Corporation. The IBC will be established in September 2016, in accordance with Akunis' proposal. He was appointed Minister of Science and Technology on September 3, 2015.

As Minister of Science, Akunis has placed an emphasis on improving access to science and technology in the periphery of Israel. He supports numerous projects aimed at this goal, such as the Lehava program for digital literacy, which provides computer and internet training and instruction to residents of underprivileged communities.

Akunis has also prioritized the strengthening of Israel's international ties in the fields of science and technology. In October he represented Israel at the Ministerial Meeting of the OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy in the Republic of Korea, and in December he signed two governmental agreements with China to increase joint research projects. This summer he will head a large Israeli delegation to India.

Akunis has also worked to strengthen local research and development, particularly in engineering and applied sciences. R&D serves as the infrastructure for the trailblazing inventions and research projects for which Israel has received widespread recognition, and will help Israel maintain its place as an innovative high-tech leader.