

If Israel is excluded from the Eurovision Song Contest ESC 2026, this year's winner Austria will not take part in the competition. Germany will also not take part. This was announced by the governments and public broadcasters of both countries.

The notoriously anti-Israel countries Ireland and Spain, followed by Belgium and Luxembourg, had called for Israel to be excluded from the next ESC in 2026 due to the war in Gaza. Otherwise they would boycott the competition.

As a result, the European Broadcasting Union EBU – Eurovision, which organizes the ESC, commissioned an internal investigation, which should lead to a recommendation to the Board of Directors. The result and the decision by the EBU's top management are imminent.

The EBU had originally considered two options: either Israel withdraws voluntarily from the competition or it is excluded. However, a decision was postponed until internal clarification had been completed.

According to internal information, it originally looked like Israel would be excluded, but this now seems unlikely. After the opponents of Israel, the supporters of the Jewish state are now speaking out in the EBU – and they are the two most important countries in terms of hosting the ESC 2026.

Austria, which was due to host the 2026 competition as the winner in 2025, has announced that it will not do so if Israel is excluded from participating. Both the public broadcaster ORF and Austrian Chancellor Christian Stöcker have confirmed this.

For its part, Germany, the leading member of Eurovision and its largest contributor, declared that it would not take part in ESC 2026 if Israel was excluded. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said: "Excluding Israel from the Eurovision Song Contest would be a scandal. If that happens, Germany will not take part." This has since been confirmed by the German Foreign Office and the public broadcaster ARD.

This means that the EBU, as the organizer of the Eurovision Song Contest, is facing the most serious internal conflict in its history.

The fact that Israel has now accepted US President Donald Trump's peace plan and has begun withdrawing its troops from Gaza in return for the release of the last 48 hostages still being held by the terrorist organization Hamas offers a way out.



ESC 2026: Austria and Germany show solidarity with Israel

This offers those countries that have called for Israel's exclusion from the ESC the opportunity to withdraw their boycott threat without losing face.

The Eurovision Song Contest ESC will be held for the 70th time next year. Israel has been taking part since 1973 and has already won it four times.

The competition was launched in 1956, a few years after the end of the Second World War, as an event to unite nations. Switzerland and Germany were among the first seven participants at the time. One of the ESC's explicit principles is that it is non-political.