



***Association of World Council related
Development Organization in Europe***

Brussels, 16 October 2003

Mr. Javier Sancho Velasquez
Council of the European Union

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Aprodev Middle East working group, I would like to thank you for having met us on 15/09/03 on the occasion of an Aprodev round of meetings with the Council and the Commission. We greatly appreciate your exceptional knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian context derived from your extensive experience on the ground.

One major concern, as development agencies, is that the EU conduct its external relations in the Mediterranean region in a manner consistent with its commitments to support sustainable development, human rights and the rule of law in third countries. Another related and equally substantial concern is that the EU ensure that its agreements with Israel are implemented in a manner that accords strictly with European Community law, the fundamental policies of the EU and the common legal engagements of the Member States.

Given that illegal Israeli policies continue to pose a major obstacle to our development work in the region, it has been extremely useful for us to be briefed on the Council positions and priorities regarding EU-Israel relations and on the Council's assessment of the current state of the implementation of the EC-Israel Association Agreement. As to the latter, we are following closely the efforts made by the Council to balance the imperatives of its political dialogue with Israel, the peace process, Quartet diplomacy and the EU's obligations to conduct its relations with Israel in a manner that ensures respect for human rights and

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related provisions of public international law. We regard the EU handling of the issues arising from Israel's misapplication of the origin rules' protocol and territorial clause of the Association Agreement as presenting a signal challenge to maintain a correct as well as an optimal balance.

In light of the above, we greatly appreciate your assurance that respect for rules, existing agreements and peremptory norms of international law will be the condition for any further expansion of EU-Israel relations.

The Aprodev agencies will seek to keep abreast of the progress made and problems encountered as the issues surrounding the application of the origin rules' protocol and the territorial clause of the Association Agreement are clarified and properly resolved. The Aprodev Agencies will inform their respective Foreign Ministers of the information received during this round of meetings.

We wish to express again our appreciation for the clarity and opportunity for helpful discussion which you kindly provided.

Yours faithfully,

Giovanna Lelli

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