



*Association of World Council of Churches related*

*Development Organisations in Europe*

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Brussels, March the 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004

To the kind attention  
of the Honorable Members of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with  
Israel

**Visit to Israel of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Israel,  
March 2004**

Aware of the important role that the Delegation for Relations with Israel and its related parliamentary bodies may play in the current international situation, Aprodev, the Association of World Council of Churches related development organizations, would like to express some of its concerns on the occasion of your visit to Israel scheduled for March this year.

Among all Southern Mediterranean countries participating in the Barcelona process, the State of Israel benefits from unique preferential relations with the European Union. In addition to the EC-Israel association agreement and the agreement on good laboratory practice, Israel is the only non-EU Mediterranean country to be fully associated to the EC's Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development (the scientific and technical cooperation agreement), benefiting from the same advantages as countries which are candidate for EU membership. In addition to that, Israel's integration in the pan-European cumulation of origin system has become a major topic of discussion in bilateral relations, within the framework of "Wider Europe".

We support the intensification of commercial, political, social, cultural and scientific relations between the EU and Israel in the coming years, in line with the purposes of the Barcelona process and within the context of the EU commitments for the resumption of

the peace process. However, these relations must be founded on the parties' respect for the rule of law, internationally and internally. In this respect, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that Israel has adopted a number of public policies and legislations that do not conform to its obligation to respect peremptory norms of public international law and the law of treaties.

In particular, we would like to express our concern about Israel's violation of provisions essential to the accomplishment of the purpose of the association agreement:

- 1) With regard to the agreement's provisions on trade (protocol 4 on the "definition of the concept of originating products and methods of administrative cooperation" and protocol 5 on "mutual assistance between administrative authorities in customs matters"), Israel has systematically issued origin certificates for products wholly produced or substantially processed in its illegal settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Recent proposals by Israel's minister of industry, trade and labor Mr. Ehud Olmert to define geographical location of manufacture of Israeli goods exported to the EC, have remained without consequences;
- 2) With regard to the agreement's provisions on the respect of human rights (art. 2 of the agreement),

-externally, Israel commits material breaches of international humanitarian law in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (e.g. the Fourth Geneva Convention for the protection of civilian persons in time of war). In particular, we are deeply concerned about the "separation wall", which represents a grave breach of international humanitarian law, and we are confident that the European Parliament will urge the EU presidency to work on a united Council position fully supporting the work of the International Court of Justice in this respect;

-internally, Israel fails to respect the human rights of its Palestinian citizens (e.g. Israeli legislation and policies with regard to the absence of equality among Israeli citizens, citizenship, land ownership, the right to political participation, freedom of speech and expression, the rights to education).

We are concerned that the European Community and the European Union may be engaged in areas of cooperation with Israel that may involve them in unlawful Israeli practices. In order to avoid future deterioration of EU-Israel relations, we would like to recommend that you raise the issue of Israel's breaches of the association agreement and international humanitarian law during your meeting with the Israeli parliament and authorities and report back to the Committee on foreign affairs and the Committee on industry, external trade, research and energy.

We would like to express our appreciation for your decision, on the occasion of your first visit to Israel in May last year, to include in your agenda meetings with Israeli (Jewish and Palestinian) civil society organizations working for the respect of human rights in Israel and in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. We encourage you to do it again this

year, and hope that you will also take the opportunity to visit Palestinian areas affected by the “separation wall”.

We have informed our partner organizations in Israel about your visit, and remain at your disposal for any information you may need about civil society in Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

Yours faithfully,

Giovanna Lelli

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Aprodev is the association of the 17 major Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox development and humanitarian aid organizations in Europe. Its associated member organizations are ICCO (Netherlands), Department for Global Ministries (Netherlands), EED (Germany), Bread for the World (Germany), Christian Aid (United Kingdom), Church of Sweden (Sweden), Diakonia (Sweden), FinnChurchAid (Finland), DanChurchAid (Denmark), Norwegian Church Aid (Norway), Icelandic Church Aid (Iceland), Bread for All (Switzerland), HEKS/EPER (Switzerland), CIMADE (France), Hungarian Interchurch Aid (Hungary), Solidarité Protestante (Belgium) and EAEZ (Austria).