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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

New York, 25 April 2014

Excellency,

I am writing to express the deep concern of the European Union and its Member States about some remarks contained in the recent ESCWA report *Arab Integration: a 21st Century Imperative* that were also echoed in the statement that Under-Secretary-General Rima Khalaf made at the launch of that report in Tunis.


We are concerned in particular about a remark contained in the report, and repeated by Ms. Khalaf in her statement, which accuses Israel of propagating "the concept of ethnic and religious purity of states, a concept that inflicted on humanity the worst crimes of the twentieth century". Such a statement is not only false and objectionable in substance, it also implies a totally unacceptable comparison between the democratic State of Israel and Nazism.

We therefore regret that a report dealing with such an important topic as Arab integration in the 21st century has been tainted by the inclusion of this and other troubling arguments. We would welcome a clarification that such views contradict the longstanding position of the United Nations.

The EU and its Member States would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our full support, collectively and individually, to the important goal of Arab regional integration. The EU is committed to actively supporting Arab integration both at a regional and sub-regional level, as demonstrated by our strong and growing cooperation with the League of Arab States, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council and by our own initiatives on the European Neighbourhood Policies and the Union for the Mediterranean. We consider that this could have been better acknowledged in the report.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours truly,


Thomas Mayr-Harting
Ambassador

H.E. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
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