

**Press Release**  
**Brussels, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Orthodox Church Liaison Office to the European Union**

**Deep concern over Egyptian Court decision regarding  
Saint Catherine's Monastery of Sinai**

As the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the European Union, we express our profound concern regarding the recent and unexpected ruling by the Ismailia Court of Appeal, which orders the seizure of the premises of the historic Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai.

For over 15 centuries, Saint Catherine's Monastery has been revered as a beacon of global religious, cultural, and spiritual heritage. This sacred site has long stood as a powerful symbol of peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslim communities. It is notably protected by a charter granted by the Prophet Muhammad himself in 613 AD, bearing his palm print and explicitly placing the Monastery under his personal protection.

The Monastery is not only home to invaluable Christian relics and manuscripts, but also to a mosque within its grounds, an enduring testament to interfaith respect and hospitality.

The court's decision raises serious questions about the protection of religious freedom and cultural heritage in Egypt. It appears to contravene commitments enshrined in the Association Agreement (AA) between the European Union and Egypt, which entered into force in June 2004 and serves as the legal foundation of their bilateral relations. This agreement establishes a framework for political dialogue, cultural preservation, and human rights protections.

At the most recent meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council in June 2022, new Partnership Priorities were adopted to guide relations through 2027, aligned with the EU's Agenda for the Mediterranean and Egypt's Vision 2030. To support this partnership, the EU is preparing a financial package of €7.4 billion for the 2024–2027 period.

Of particular concern is the timing of this ruling, which follows a high-level discussion between the Prime Minister of Greece and the President of Egypt on May 7, 2025, during which the protection of the Monastery was reportedly raised.

This court decision has already sparked strong reactions from religious, academic, cultural, and political communities around the world. We, as the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the EU, firmly and respectfully join in condemning this action. We call on the European institutions, Member States, and political parties to take appropriate measures to ensure that Saint Catherine's Monastery continues to operate freely as a spiritual sanctuary, a pillar of religious harmony, and a source of inspiration for all humankind.

We also place our trust in the Egyptian government to honor its bilateral and multilateral commitments, including those under its agreements with the Hellenic Republic and the European Union.

**For further information, please contact:**

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