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**Chances and Hurdles of the
(new) Foreign Policy of the European Union
using the example of the European Role in the
Middle East Peace Process**

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**Europa-Kolleg Hamburg
Institute for European Integration**

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Chances and Hurdles of the (new) Foreign Policy of the European Union using the example of the European Role in the Middle East Peace Process

Hannah Schöberle*

Abstract

The European Union on its way towards the aim to become an international more powerful actor in the field of foreign policy has to overcome two main hurdles. Firstly, it has to overcome the hurdle “to speak with one voice” and secondly to find a common political direction that can be agreed upon. The most recent changes towards the Union’s foreign policy in the Treaty of Lisbon offer a chance to overcome these hurdles, but the success of this attempt can only be seen in its practical implementations. The Union’s commitment in the efforts towards an enduring and peaceful solution of the most complex conflicts of the Middle East, gives the EU opportunity to find out, whether the (new) foreign policy tools and instruments can make an impact and thus increase the Union’s chances to become a powerful actor in the international system. However, the current results, measured by this practical example, show, that the EU at the moment is not able to achieve this aim. Also at a regional level the EU, in spite of intensive diplomatic, meditational and economic efforts and the use of many elements of its foreign policy for the improvement of the region and the conflict situation, up to now could not reach its full potential. Nevertheless, current small results indicate the chance, that this comprehensive use of foreign policy tools and elements in the long run could contribute to a higher stability in the region and therefore at least strengthen a future role of the EU as an international actor with a regional focus.

key words: European Foreign Policy, European Union, Middle East Peace Process, International Relations

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
API	Arab Peace Initiative
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIVCOM	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
CPC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EC	European Community
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EU BAM Rafah	European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah
EUMC	European Union Military Committee
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
EUPOL COPPS	EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories
EUROMED	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
HR	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
MEQ	Middle East Quartet
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
nEFP	new European Foreign Policy
PA	Palestinian Authority

PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PEGASE mechanism	Mécanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion de l'Aide Socio-Economique
PSC	Political and Security Committee
SEA	Single European Act
TEU	Treaty establishing the European Union
TIM	Temporary International Mechanism
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations Organization
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (in the Near East)
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSC	United States Security Coordinators Team
WEU	Western European Union

1. Introduction

The EU is externally seen as a huge economic power but a rather complex and small political actor. Therefore, the EU has set itself the aim to become a more influential international actor and to provide peace, prosperity and security within its borders and abroad. In order to fulfil this, it has created the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which were lastly modified in the Treaty of Lisbon. But there are two main hurdles for the European foreign policy to become an international recognized success.

The EU is economically, politically and historically connected to the Middle East, a region in which enduring and so far unsolvable conflicts take place. Therefore, it seems to be a suitable 'playground' for the EU and its' (new) foreign policy (nEFP). Furthermore, the EU since 2004 has external borders (sea borders) in the Middle East via the borders of the Republic of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. So the EU is a neighbour of an area which is nowadays one of the biggest trouble spots in the world.

There is plenty of literature about the European foreign policy and also about the history and the social, political and economic developments in the Middle East. But as the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty has, at least in theory, changed the European conditions for an involvement and commitment in the Middle East and the possibilities for a role of the EU as a "political global player", it is necessary to have a closer look on these changes and their effects toward the EU and its foreign policy [as well as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)].

For this reason, it is the main focus and central research question of this thesis to analyse, whether the Union's commitment in the Middle East Peace Process gives the EU the opportunity to find out, whether the (new) foreign policy tools and instruments can make an impact and thus increase the Union's chances to become a more powerful actor in the international system. This further includes the questions, on how far it can be achieved to

overcome the hurdles and on the relations between the EU and the USA towards the MEPP as well as the European role in the MEPP.

On the one hand this thesis is based on a selection of literature by researchers in the field of foreign policy and the Middle East via an intensive literature research and on the other hand it is complemented by a variety of selected internet resources that shall provide the thesis with actual statements and discussions. Further, a special emphasis is put on the inclusion of the European self-view.

The structure of the paper consists of three chapters that each begin with a thematic introduction. Therefore, at this point only references are given. The first chapter (the EU-chapter), analyses the (new) foreign policy of the EU and the hurdles, which it has to overcome in its internal structure, and further highlights some aspects of the debate on the type of power of the EU.

The second chapter (the Middle East Conflicts and Peace Process-chapter) gives an overview on the very complex nature of the conflicts with a special focus on the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Israel-Palestinian Conflict and the attempts for a solution of these conflicts.

The third chapter analyses the practical example of European foreign policy using the example of the Middle East Peace Process and the role of the EU in cooperation but also in contrast to the USA.

The conclusion links the chapters and gives an evaluation.

2. Chances and hurdles for the (new) European Foreign Policy (nEFP)

Along with its continuous development within the process of European integration, the EU has established various external relations and so became an actor in the international system. On the one hand these relations only led to a strong influence in some policy fields, such as trade and this was according to its size of nowadays 27 Member states seen as a rather low impact. On the other hand this influence created an external demand to use and increase its power not only for its own benefit. For these reasons the EU has set itself the aim to become a more influential and powerful actor in the international system. In order to reach this aim, it has to overcome two main hurdles, the possibility to become a harmonious unity in foreign relations (become one actor) and to agree on a way to act (agree upon one type of power). Therefore it uses its foreign policy, which together with the transformations during the process of European integration consequently has been subject to many changes. With the latest changes in the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force in 2009, a new European foreign policy, as the most recent attempt to overcome the hurdles, was established.

As an outline of the new European foreign policy, this chapter firstly gives a short definition of foreign policy in general and shows the development and main elements of the new foreign policy of the EU. The development not only shows the extension of the foreign policy but also a change from loose cooperation and the use of the soft power elements to a new focus on common strategies, security and to some extent military means, which caused a debate on what type of power the EU actually refers to and will refer to in the future. That is why, in here some authors' argumentations in comparison with the way the EU sees itself are outlined. Finally some examples of the practical use of the foreign policy elements within the policy fields that concern international relations are given in order to use them as an indicator for the role of the EU in the Middle East Peace Process (chapter 4).

2.1. Becoming an international powerful actor - the aim

The EU has now succeeded about 50 years of European integration and currently consists of a complex institutional framework and 27 sovereign Member states.¹ It is one of the actors in

¹ Cf. Europa (2010), Europe in 12 lessons - Ten historic steps.

the international system.² Due to the process of European integration, it has created a peaceful European cooperation³, that not only acts in its internal sphere but also upholds many external relations, e.g. in the field of trade.⁴ On the one hand, these external relations serve the benefit and profit of the Union, but on the other hand the strength, which it has derived from them, also created an internal and external demand to take over responsibility for the actions taken within this international system and to contribute to its successful continuance.⁵ But until now this demanded power only could be reached in some policy fields, for example huge influence in the field of trade. The overall and especially political power of the EU in the international system so far has been considered as rather small.⁶

So the persistent aim of the EU is to become a more influential and powerful actor in the international system as a response to external and internal demands.

2.2. European foreign policy - the tool

In order to reach the aim of becoming an international influential actor, the EU relies on the tool of European foreign policy. But what is foreign policy or European foreign policy? In general, foreign policy comprises all interactions of a state with other states within the international system. Contacts can be executed via bi- or multilateral relations or participation in international or supranational organisations. The classical tools of foreign policy are diplomacy, agreements, alliances and membership in international or supranational organisations.⁷ The foreign policy of a state can be affected by internal factors such as national interests as well as by external factors, for instance threats, interests of other states and geopolitical (geostrategic) aspects. Within the foreign policy there is additionally the special field of security policy. It refers to the protection of (national) territory, especially at the borders. Security can be safeguarded with the help of specific tools, such as diplomacy, military measures, mutual respect and recognition, neglect of unilateral behaviour and

² Cf. European Commission (2009), External Relations - Bringing Security, Stability, and Peace.

³ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - Why: Key challenges and EU obligations.

⁴ Cf. European Commission (2007), How the EU conducts its external relations.

⁵ Cf. European Commission (2009), External Relations - Bringing Security, Stability, and Peace.

⁶ Cf. Fröhlich, Stefan (2008), p. 11.

⁷ Cf. Schubert, Klaus; Klein, Martina (2006), Außenpolitik.

cooperation within the field of security by the establishment of common systems (agreements, alliances).⁸

European foreign policy, although the EU is not a state, has many characteristics of this general definition. For example it also uses diplomacy, bi- and multilateral agreements, partnerships and alliances to interact with other international political actors within the international system. Further, its interests, aims and tasks are subject to external and internal influences, as mentioned in the general definition, as well as the response to the challenges resulting from its external relations as an actor in the international system.

Concretely, European foreign policy mainly consists of the policy fields of CFSP including the CSDP, external cooperation, enlargement policy [including European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)] and development, humanitarian aid and external trade policy.⁹

2.3. Acting as one actor and way of acting (power) - two hurdles for the nEFP

In order to have the chance to reach the aim of becoming a powerful internationally acting Union, the EU has to overcome two main hurdles. Firstly, it has to become one harmonious international actor and secondly it needs to commit itself to a (new) way to act.¹⁰

Concerning the first hurdle of the EU, in its development of foreign policy, it primarily had to face structural problems, caused by the tensions between its supranational and intergovernmental elements of its framework. Whereas supranational elements imply cooperation, in which sovereignty of the Member states is transferred to the community, intergovernmental elements contain a form of cooperation that preserves national sovereignty. That is why the field of foreign policy is a particular challenge, because it especially represents the Member states sovereignty.¹¹

The problem of the formal division between supranational and intergovernmental elements and competences has become more and more difficult in practice. By an increasing lack of coherency and consistency and the slowed down ability of decision-making by the practice of

⁸ Cf. Schubert, Klaus; Klein, Martina (2006), Sicherheitspolitik.

⁹ Cf. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (2009), Die Außenpolitik der Europäischen Union – Handlungsfelder - Themengrafik.

¹⁰ Cf. Kernic, Franz (2007), p. 9.

¹¹ Cf. Kernic, Franz (2007), pp. 41-42.

unanimous decisions in the intergovernmental elements, the Union could not efficiently become an international actor¹², up to the recent changes of the Treaty of Lisbon. In order to create a more corresponding framework towards coherency, consistency and efficiency, the Union step by step adapted its framework in the Treaty amendments, from the 1950's until today.¹³ Including the development of the CFSP and the CSDP, the subsequent amendments clearly show the efforts that had to be made to balance the tension between supranational and intergovernmental elements.

Secondly, the internal structural problems, mainly the division of competences, led to a variety of responsibilities for actions in international relations. The actors with whom the EU operates in its external relation, are mainly states that conduct their policy with a limited number of representatives (e.g. president, foreign minister) that usually are in office for several years. In contrast, the former foreign policy of the EU, e.g. under the Treaty of Maastricht, had several representatives in foreign relations, some of them with much shorter terms in office, and a responsibility depending on the policy field concerned. The representatives that could participate alone or in various combinations in foreign relations are the Commission, the High Representative for the CFSP and the Presidency of the Council. This complex structure and the various and quickly changing 'faces' were seen as very confusing for the states and made it very difficult for them to understand the European foreign policy.¹⁴ And thirdly, as the number of Member states of the Union increased, also the number of EU-Members in international organisations, e.g. the UN, increased. Though this implies a powerful position, the potential influence was not used because of diverging interests and positions expressed in those international organisations. For example it was impossible for the four big EU-Members in the UN-Security Council (at that time France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain) to develop a common standpoint on the issue on the Iraq crisis in 2003.¹⁵

¹² Cf. Kernic, Franz (2007), p. 60.

¹³ Cf. Europa (2007), Treaty of Lisbon - Efficient and modern institutions, available at http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/institutions/index_en.htm, (accessed on 9 June 2010).

¹⁴ Cf. Cameron, Fraser (2007), p. 15.

¹⁵ Cf. Cameron, Fraser (2007), p. 16.

So the first hurdle, to become one single actor, consists of the complexity of the institutional structure and internal division of competences and the complexity of the consequences for the practical conduct of foreign policy as well as the representation of various national and non-Union views of EU-Members that hold membership in international organisations.

The second hurdle, the commitment to a way to act, concerns the self-definition of the type of power of the Union and its Members. As can be seen by changes of the Treaty of Lisbon, the Union nowadays is not only able to use the tools of a civil power, but also recently strengthened its military capabilities. The idea to establish own military elements, such as battle groups and the participation in military missions abroad, like in Iraq, has been seen from many different positions of the Member states of the EU and experts. This led to a discussion about whether the Union has lost its image as a civil power and what it can or will become instead (e.g. military or super power, such as or in contrast to the USA).

The second hurdle is more important in a practical sense. If the Union can agree on one mutually accepted and supported way to act, “*to speak – and act – as one in world affairs*”¹⁶, e.g. as a civil power, it can become a more influencing international actor, that is not disturbed or distracted by diverging internal conflicts or actions.

In the discussion, in addition to the term “civil power”, also the terms of “soft power”, “hard power” and “smart power” are used. So it is necessary to give a short overview on the definitions of these terms.

H. Maull¹⁷ and Knut W. Kirste¹⁸ use the term “civil power”, which is *inter alia* based on the ideas of Norbert Elias on civilisation within societies, to describe “*civil power as a role model*”. They define three kinds of civil power. Firstly, “*civil power as power*”, which is an influential actor in the international system. Secondly, “*civil power as a role*”, is a specific foreign policy which is based on norms and aims to civilise the international system. And thirdly, they define “*civil power as a medium*”, a tool with which the aims of a civil foreign policy can be achieved.¹⁹

¹⁶ Europa (2010), Activities of the European Union - Foreign and Security Policy.

¹⁷ Professor of Political Science at the University of Trier, Germany.

¹⁸ Information and Liaison Officer, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO Headquarter, Brussels.

¹⁹ Cf. Kirste, Knut and Maull, Hanns W. (1996), p. 297.

Civil powers have the aim to transfer the process of civilisation from their society to the international system, that itself takes over the role of a global (international) civilisation, in which certain norms and values have to be followed. Therefore, they try to refrain from a solution of conflicts by the use of force against each other and instead are willing to give up parts of their sovereignty for the benefits of international organisations.²⁰

Their actions are based on the following characteristics:

- the preferentially peaceful conflict resolution,
- the creation of international rights and laws for the regulation of international relations,
- the “*intensification of multilateral cooperation*” and the “*establishment of possibilities of participation in decision-making processes that should broadly legitimate an international system based on the essential principles of freedom, democracy and market economy*”
- and the support of a socially balanced and fair international system.²¹

Civil powers do not promote violence as a first measure of conflict resolution, but preferably make use of political tools such as diplomacy and sanctions. Nevertheless, violence can be used by civil powers, notably as individual self-defence of a state, or as a defence of the whole international system. Following the multilateral approach civil powers rely on the cooperation among themselves within an international system that is also seen as a community of values, and as protector of these values. A use of violent (military) means by the community towards an actor, that does not respect the common values and the system, is thus accepted.²²

Joseph S. Nye Jr.²³ distinguishes between the terms “*soft power*”, “*hard power*” and “*smart power*”. In general he defines power as “(..) *the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants.*”²⁴ The tools that can be used for this influence are threat, inducement and attraction. While he considers threat and inducement, such as “*military and*

²⁰ Cf. Kirste, Knut and Maull, Hanns W. (1996), pp. 298-300.

²¹ Cf. Kirste, Knut and Maull, Hanns W. (1996), pp. 300-301.

²² Cf. Kirste, Knut and Maull, Hanns W. (1996), pp. 302-303.

²³ University Distinguished Service Professor, Sultan of Oman Professor of International Relations at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

²⁴ Nye, Joseph S., Jr., 'Soft Power & Leadership', *COMPASS*, p. 28.

economic”, as the tools of “*hard power*”, he defines “*soft power*” as the “*power of attraction*”, that depends on “*the ability to shape the preferences of others*”, instead of threat or inducement.²⁵ He additionally gives an example for the use of soft power that is very interesting in the context of this thesis. In his view, the use of soft power could have led to a solution of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict at an earlier stage:

*“Similarly, if Yasser Arafat had chosen the soft power model of Ghandi or Martin Luther King rather than the hard power of terrorism, he could have attracted moderate Israelis and would have a Palestinian state by now.”*²⁶

Further, in an interview with the “*Harvard Business Review*” in November 2008 on the way the next American government should respond to future global challenges, he defines “*smart power*” as a combination of the use of “*soft power*” and “*hard power*”. As an example he explains, that the residency of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan among the Taliban in the 1990’s, should have been solved by the use of hard power, whereas the nowadays crises in the Middle East should be subject to the use of soft power.²⁷

2.4. Development of the nEFP - attempts to overcome the hurdles

A first confer of competences concerning the field of foreign policy, was the creation of the ECSC in the early 1950’s. It successfully showed that the European states were able to give up parts of their national sovereignty in favour of the creation of a common supranational institution. But apart from this economic integration, the creation of a political integration (European Defence Community and European Political Community) failed at that time.²⁸

Almost twenty years later, in 1970 the European Political Cooperation (EPC), an intergovernmental political forum on the coordination of foreign policy outside of the legal framework of the European Community, was established. Its aim was to create a more harmonious representation in matters of foreign policy²⁹, by joint statements. But it was not

²⁵ Nye, Joseph S., Jr., 'Soft Power & Leadership', *COMPASS*, pp. 28-31.

²⁶ Nye, Joseph S., Jr., 'Soft Power & Leadership', *COMPASS*, p. 31.

²⁷ Nye, Joseph S., Jr. and Coutu, Diane (2008), *Smart Power: A Conversation with Leadership Expert Joseph S. Nye, Jr.*

²⁸ Cf. Jopp, Mathias (2009), p. 176.

²⁹ Cf. Hillenbrand, Olaf (2009), p. 421.

made for common actions and the principle of unanimity had the effect that a common position could not always be reached.³⁰ So the EPC was a rather tentative form of political cooperation.³¹

In 1987 the EPC became treaty-based in the Single European Act (SEA). At that time defence policy was also discussed, but according to the opposition of Denmark, Greece and Ireland not included in the Treaty.³² Nevertheless, it marks the starting point of the current focus on security and defence, instead of this, the security and defence of the community was safeguarded by the capacities of the Western European Union (WEU).³³ Moreover, the capacities of the Union's crisis management were extended, not only with civil but also for the first time with military elements, with the initial step of the integration of the WEU by the supplementation "Petersberg tasks"³⁴.³⁵ This first use of military capacities marks an important first step on the development of military powers in the field of defence and security, though later on it lost its importance with the establishment of the ESDP.

The ESDP was initiated by the European Council summit in Cologne in June 1999 and Helsinki in December 1999 ("Headline Goals"), with the aim to establish European battle groups, and hence become more independent from the NATO and the USA in that field.³⁶

Also with the entry into force of the Treaty of Nice in 2003 the CFSP was further enhanced, e.g. the wording concerning the WEU was replaced by the amendments of the ESDP.³⁷ Moreover, a set of new political and military elements was established or enhanced in order to give the Union a broader range to respond to crises.³⁸ Firstly, the temporarily established

³⁰ Cf. Eiselt, Isabella, Mokre, Monika and Puntcher Riekmann, Sonja (2005), p. 49.

³¹ Cf. Fröhlich, Stefan (2008), p. 83.

³² Cf. Jopp, Mathias (2009), p. 176.

³³ Cf. Eiselt, Isabella, Mokre, Monika and Puntcher Riekmann, Sonja (2005), p. 49.

³⁴ The Petersberg tasks, set out in a declaration of the WEU members in 1992, consist of three tasks, the "humanitarian and rescue tasks", "peace-keeping tasks" and "tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking" and they imply the provision of military forces by the Member states. Cf. Europa (undated), Glossary - Petersberg tasks.

³⁵ Cf. Auswärtiges Amt (2010), From European Political Cooperation (EPC) to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – A look back and forward - The Treaty of Amsterdam, p. 17.

³⁶ Cf. Jopp, Mathias (2009), pp. 174-177.

³⁷ Cf. Auswärtiges Amt (2010), From European Political Cooperation (EPC) to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – A look back and forward - The Treaty of Amsterdam, p. 17.

³⁸ Cf. Council of the European Union (undated), CSDP structures and instruments.

Political Committee³⁹ was changed into a permanent body (Political and Security Committee, PSC) with the Treaty of Nice. Its tasks were “to monitor the international situation in the areas covered by the common foreign and security policy (CFSP)”, “to contribute to the definition of policies” and “to monitor implementation of the Council's decisions”.⁴⁰ The CFSP and the work of the PSC were supported by several advisory bodies on civil and military issues in the field of crisis management such as the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM), the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPC) of the Council Secretariat.⁴¹ Moreover, in this Treaty the Council was provided with the right “to appoint a special representative with a mandate in relation to particular policy issues”.⁴²

Already at that stage the CFSP and the ESDP, with their respective variety of tools and elements, such as the committees and advisory bodies mentioned before, should guarantee a stronger and closer cooperation among the Member states in this field, and thus a more efficient and visible policy element in response to crises, conflicts and other international problems, such as international terrorism which became a severe international problem and an issue of public interest and concern, after the events of the 11th of September 2001 in the USA.⁴³

An example for the use of the tools and elements of the CFSP and ESDP towards those problems is the ESS, “A secure Europe in a secure world”, which was also developed in 2003.⁴⁴ It is a comprehensive description of the new “threats”, like terrorism, and a description of the strategy for response to these “threats”.⁴⁵ In 2008 it was supplemented by the Report on the Implementation of the ESS under the title “Providing security in a changing

³⁹ Agreed on at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999.

⁴⁰ Europa (undated), Glossary - Political and Security Committee (PSC).

⁴¹ For further information see Council of the European Union (undated), CSDP structures and instruments.

⁴² Article 18 (5) TEU Nice Version, *Official Journal C 83 of 30.3.2010*.

⁴³ Cf. Regelsberger, Elfriede (2009), p. 255.

⁴⁴ Cf. European Council (2003), A SECURE EUROPE IN A BETTER WORLD EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY, cover sheet.

⁴⁵ Oxford Research Group (undated), The Arab Peace Initiative - ORG Meeting on the Arab Peace Initiative, p. 5.

world”.⁴⁶ The development of the ESS was the result of an internal dispute among the EU Members about the military intervention in Iraq and its authorisation by the UN-Security Council at the beginning of 2003.⁴⁷ The strategy states that the EU has recognised the threats of “terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction, regional conflicts, state failures and organised crime” as well as the prior way to response via “Conflict Prevention, Rapid Response and Assistance on all stages of crisis”.⁴⁸ Furthermore it declares, that “Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world.”⁴⁹ Therefore, its aims are to grant peace and security in and outside its own territory and to help to create a more stable world order, based on cooperation and mutual recognition. The reason for its engagement is the responsibility derived from its self-definition as a “global actor”⁵⁰ indirectly affected by these challenges. The Union’s indirect concern originates from the fact that most of the threats take place outside the Union’s territory. The tools for this response are included in its external policy fields. Those are *inter alia* its foreign and security policy, with the tools of the CFSP and the common security and defence policy. Further, it comprises the external relations policy, including e.g. the ENP and development and humanitarian aid, with which the Union also promotes its core values, such as protection of human rights and the rule of law, and therefore serves as a role model for a stable, secure and peaceful cooperation among states. Moreover, these tools are supplemented by memberships in international organisations and regional partnerships.⁵¹

But concerning the efficiency of the ESS, the Union itself states in the Report of 2008 that it so far could not succeed the aimed goals and has to increase its efforts.⁵²

⁴⁶ Cf. Council of the European Union (2008), Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Cf. European Commission (2009), European Union in the World - Common foreign and security policy.

⁴⁸ European Commission (2010), External Relations - Why: Key challenges and EU obligations.

⁴⁹ European Council (2003), A SECURE EUROPE IN A BETTER WORLD EUROPEAN SECURITY STRATEGY, p. 1.

⁵⁰ European Commission (2009), External Relations - Bringing Security, Stability, and Peace.

⁵¹ Cf. European Commission (2009), External Relations - Bringing Security, Stability, and Peace.; European Commission (2010), External Relations - What.; European Commission (2010), External Relations - Why: Key challenges and EU obligations.

⁵² Cf. Council of the European Union (2008), Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World, p. 2.

*“For our full potential to be realised we need to be still more capable, more coherent and more active”.*⁵³

2.5. The nEFP - overcoming the hurdles?

The Treaty of Lisbon is the most recent attempt to overcome the two hurdles and to “*to speak – and act – as one in world affairs*”⁵⁴ as a response to a changing international system that has to face international security threats and the effects of globalisation.⁵⁵ Therefore, the new Treaty amendments not only consist of adjustments of the structure but also of the establishment of new elements and tools.

One of the main problems of the old structure, that proved to be not efficient enough to overcome the hurdles, were the fragmentation of the competences between the Council and the Commission and a weak role of the Parliament in the process of decision making. Additionally, due to the rotation system every half year there was a new presidency that could bring a different focus, so the continuance was put into question with every inauguration of a new presidency.⁵⁶ Since January 2007 the cooperation of the presidencies was enhanced by the so called “*system of Council 18-month programmes*”, in which three pre-established groups of those Member states, that will have the next three presidencies of the Council, develop a joint strategy programme and decide in which order each group will chair the Council within these 18 months.⁵⁷

Further, the Treaty of Lisbon is the Union’s response to the lack of continuance, coherence and efficiency of the old foreign policy and thus the most recent attempt to reach the aim of becoming a more influential international actor.⁵⁸ Therefore, the key elements of the new foreign policy are the general aims and basic principles and the elements and tools of the CFSP including the CSDP.

⁵³ European Council (2008), Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy. - Providing Security in a Changing World, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union - Foreign and Security Policy.

⁵⁵ Cf. Europa (undated), Treaty of Lisbon - Taking Europe into the 21st century.

⁵⁶ Cf. Stratenschulte, Eckart D. (2009), Wie geht es weiter mit der EU? Die institutionelle Reform.

⁵⁷ Cf. EurLex (2009), Council Decision of 1 December 2009 laying down measures for the implementation of the European Council Decision on the exercise of the Presidency of the Council, and on the chairmanship of preparatory bodies of the Council. In: Official Journal L 322, 09.12.2009, p. 28-34, available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:322:0028:01:EN:HTML> (accessed on 07. April 2011).

⁵⁸ Cf. Stratenschulte, Eckart D. (2009), Wie geht es weiter mit der EU? Die institutionelle Reform.

In general, the CFSP still has the institutional structure and core elements that were established in the former steps of European integration. Firstly, unanimity is still the main principle used in the voting procedure on decisions in the field of CFSP and thus preserves the intergovernmental structure of this policy field, although there is still the possibility to decide with QMV except in matters concerning military or defence. Secondly, the Commission is still the competent actor in the field of external trade, development and humanitarian aid and enlargement.⁵⁹ And thirdly, while in general the power of the European Parliament has been strengthened with the Treaty of Lisbon, in the field of foreign policy it still has only advisory functions.⁶⁰

One of the most important changes that have been introduced by the Treaty is the establishment of the Union's legal personality.⁶¹ It now enables the EU to conclude contracts with third countries, have delegations abroad and hold memberships in international organisations. Further, there is the enhanced office of the High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), who now also holds the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council and is Vice-President of the Commission.⁶² With this new combination of offices, he builds an interface between the intergovernmental and the supranational elements.⁶³ His responsibilities within the Commission mainly concern the field of external relations. He acts on behalf of the EU within political dialogues with third parties and represents the EU and its position in international organisations and conferences.⁶⁴ This revision should enhance the representation of the EU abroad, grant greater coherence and thus give the Union's foreign policy a stronger position in the international system.⁶⁵ In the near future, he will also be assisted by a European External Action Service (EEAS), whose staff of about 6.000- 8.000 persons⁶⁶ will be recruited from institutions of the EU.⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Cf. Dembinski, Mathias (2010), pp. 11-13.

⁶⁰ Deutscher Bundestag (2009), Die gemeinsame Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik nach dem Vertrag von Lissabon, p. 2.

⁶¹ Cf. Europa (undated), Treaty of Lisbon - The Treaty at a glance.

⁶² Cf. Dembinski, Mathias (2010), p. 9.

⁶³ Cf. Katsioulis, Christos (2008), Europäische Außenpolitik auf dem Prüfstand. Auf halber Strecke zum globalen Akteur?, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Cf. General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (2009), ~BACKGROUND~ The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / The European External Action Service", pp. 2-3.

⁶⁵ Cf. Europa (undated), Treaty of Lisbon - The Treaty at a glance.

⁶⁶ Cf. Dembinski, Mathias (2010), p. 12.

The European Council, now one of the seven institutions of the EU, still defines the political guidelines, but now it also includes the HR in its work. The tasks of the President of the Council are the preparation and chairing of the Council's meetings. According to the problem of consistency, with the new Treaty the term of the President's office of the Council was prolonged to a period of two and half years.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, he must not hold a national office, so that he is not distracted in his work for the Council and in that way can create a better platform for the decisions need to be taken.⁶⁹

Further changes concern the CSDP, the former ESDP. Most important, extensions of the Union's military capacities that should be provided by the military capacities of Member states⁷⁰ and the possibility for enhanced cooperation were made. Firstly, Member states should assist each other, if their national territories are threatened by "*armed aggression*"⁷¹, in accordance with "*the specific character*" of some of the Member states⁷² and the Membership in the NATO⁷³. Secondly, Member states that are willing and able to go beyond the common cooperation, are given the opportunity to build up a "*permanent structured cooperation*"⁷⁴.

On the basis of the new CSDP, the EU now has extended its battle groups to a size of 1.500 soldiers each, in order to respond quickly to the corresponding challenges and to fulfil its set goals. Two of them are kept on a permanent basis and can be sent abroad if needed for peacekeeping missions.⁷⁵

2.6. The nEFP and types of power - experts and EU views

Experts in their analysis have related the terms of power, mainly civil power, to the elements of the Union's foreign policy and its practical use. In order to analyse the type of power of the EU, W. Wagner and G. Hellmann in 2001 as well as M. Dembinski in 2002 and C. Fraser in

⁶⁷Council of the European Union (undated), Agreement on the European diplomatic service.

⁶⁸ European Council (undated), The European Council - an official institution of the EU.

⁶⁹ Cf. Dembinski, Mathias (2010), pp. 9-15.

⁷⁰ Article 42 paragraph 3 TEU, Lisbon version, Official Journal of the European Union C 306, 17.12.2007.

⁷¹ Article 42 paragraph 7 TEU, Lisbon version Official Journal of the European Union C 306, 17.12.2007.

⁷² Article 42 paragraph 2 TEU, Lisbon version. Official Journal of the European Union C 306, 17.12.2007.

⁷³ Article 42 paragraph 2 + 7 TEU, Lisbon version. Official Journal of the European Union C 306, 17.12.2007.

⁷⁴ Article 42 paragraph 6 TEU, Lisbon version. Official Journal of the European Union C 306, 17.12.2007.

⁷⁵ Cf. Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union - Foreign and Security Policy.

2007 tried to explain the character of the Union's foreign policy as a civil power with the use of different political theories, *inter alia* of the field of international relations, such as liberal institutionalism, realism, federalism, functionalism and constructivism as a basis for interpretation. But they all came to the conclusion, that with the creation and adjustments of the CFSP since the 1990's, nowadays each theory can find a proof or contradiction for its approach in these recent developments as well as in the given future perspectives.⁷⁶ For example M. Dembinski argues that, from a realistic perspective the reasons for the Union being a civil power were the result of the total reliance on the military power of the NATO and the USA, after the failure of its own attempts to become a political and military power in the 1950's. As the ESDP (now CSDP) also is built as an addition to the NATO and other defence mechanisms, the EU is still a civil power.⁷⁷

Also the German Federal Foreign Office still defines the EU as a civil power. It argues that the aims laid down in the ESS in 2003 are those of a civil power and that the Union states that military capabilities should only be used if there is no alternative means.⁷⁸

Regardless of the discussion, the EU declares itself in various statements as a user of "*soft power*". For example in the field of enlargement, it attracts and has attracted its neighbours and other countries by the successful European integration process and its prosperity and offers them without use of force to commit themselves to the common values of the Union.⁷⁹ But since the Union has aimed to become a more influential international political actor, and has developed a compassing security strategy to respond to global challenges, e.g. terrorism, it also uses hard or military elements of power. Therefore, it nowadays defines itself as a "*smart*

⁷⁶ For further information see: Cameron, Fraser (2007), pp. 19-21; Wagner, Wolfgang and Hellmann, Gunther (2003), pp. 8-15.; Dembinski, Mathias (2002), *Kein Abschied vom Leitbild Zivilmacht*, pp. 15-21.

⁷⁷ Cf. Dembinski, Mathias (2002), *Kein Abschied vom Leitbild Zivilmacht*, p. 15.

⁷⁸ Cf. Auswärtiges Amt (2008), "Friedenspolitisches Handeln vor dem Hintergrund regionaler und globaler Herausforderungen".

⁷⁹ (2007), *Die EU in der Welt. Die Außenpolitik der Europäischen Union*, p. 4.

power”⁸⁰ as stated in a speech by Olli Rehn in 2008.⁸¹

*“Now our common foreign and security policy is in another league. (...) Consolidating the Union’s foreign policy requires a combination of soft and hard power. That is to say, in addition to soft power, we should use all the ‘traditional’ foreign policy tools and economic resources.”*⁸²

The Union also uses soft power tools, such as diplomacy in the CFSP.⁸³ At the same time diplomacy is also one of the elements that characterise a civil power, but the EU does not clearly state, that it considers itself as one, but it is clearly distancing itself from a military power.

*“Threat or use of military force cannot be allowed to solve territorial issues - anywhere.”*⁸⁴

In 2010 M. Dembinski, while analysing the changes of the Treaty of Lisbon, further adds the view, that the amendments made in the Treaty can lead to a chance for a better representation towards the international system, but the increase in bureaucracy can produce a stronger “*path dependency*” and “*less flexibility*” for instance via a stronger emphasis on common rules, but internal.⁸⁵

2.7. External Actions – examples for the practical use of the tools

Next to the tools of the CFSP and the CSDP the new foreign policy includes the policy fields of external trade, European Neighbourhood Policy, development, humanitarian aid and enlargement. The practical use of the elements of the nEFP, is shown in the following sections.

As a huge international trade power with a share of 20% of the world’s export and import the EU upholds various bilateral trade agreements and partnerships and cooperations with regions, states and other actors all over the world. As trade is one of the earliest successes of the process of European integration, the EU has the aim to foster international trade, a

⁸⁰ Delegation of the European Commission to Japan (2008), Smartening the EU's soft power.

⁸¹ Olli Rehn was Member of the European Commission responsible for Enlargement from 2004 to 2010.

⁸² Rehn, Olli (2008), Speech - The EU - from civilian power to premier league security policy player?, p. 2.

⁸³ Cf. Europa (2010), Activities of the European Union - Foreign and Security Policy.

⁸⁴ Council of the European Union (2008), Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World, p.2.

⁸⁵ Cf. Dembinski, Mathias (2010), p. 9; 15.

liberalised world market, and to share and increase this success with other countries. The Union's two biggest trading partners are the USA and China. Moreover, it is trying to establish closer cooperations with Russia, who, together with its smaller Neighbours, is very important for the Union's access to the energy resources oil and gas. But the European-Russian relations have been recently disturbed by the Russian conflicts for example with Georgia and Ukraine.⁸⁶ This access to energy resources is very important for the Union's aimed independency from the supply of such resources from more southern areas, like the Middle East.

The EU further has succeeded or is trying to establish partnerships and cooperations with countries of Asia and Latin America *inter alia* with the ACP countries⁸⁷ via the Cotonou Agreement, since 2000^{88, 89}.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is the most important foreign policy tool for the Union's engagement in its periphery. It addresses the European Neighbours at the Mediterranean Sea, with whom the EU initially in 2004 started to create a more prosper, stable and secure Mediterranean area. Although it does not exclude the possibility of Membership, the ENP is not part of the European policy of Enlargement. Among the 16 ENP Members there are also the parties of the Middle East Peace Process, namely Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.⁹⁰ The ENP is based on bilateral agreements with each Neighbour, such as Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) or Association Agreements (AA) and Action Plans⁹¹. The latter so far agreed on with 12 of the 16 countries, including Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but not Syria. Next to these agreements and plans it further includes multilateral cooperations in form of the Union for the Mediterranean (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, EUROMED)⁹², the

⁸⁶ Cf. Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union - External Trade.

⁸⁷ Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

⁸⁸ Cf. Auswärtiges Amt (2006), Relations to the ACP countries - the Cotonou Agreement.

⁸⁹ Cf. Europa (2010), Activities of the European Union - External Relations.

⁹⁰ Cf. European Commission (2010), European Neighbourhood Policy - The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy ?.

⁹¹ "(...) *an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities of 3 to 5 years.*" European Commission (2010), European Neighbourhood Policy - The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy ?.

⁹² For further information see: European Commission (2010), External Relations - The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Black Sea Synergy⁹³ both since 2008 and since 2009 the Eastern Partnership⁹⁴.⁹⁵ The EUROMED initially started as the Barcelona Process in 1995⁹⁶ and was reintroduced in 2008 with a stronger focus on political and security issues such as “*more balanced governance*” and “*increased visibility to its citizens*”.⁹⁷ One of its six prior aims is the “*civil protection initiatives to combat natural and man-made disasters*”.⁹⁸

The development of the ENP is documented in “ENP Progress Reports” published by the Commission on a yearly basis.⁹⁹ As the ENP aims at stability, prosperity and in particular security it corresponds to the general principles and aims of the EFP.

The Union’s engagement in development aid, as the world’s biggest donor, has the aim of “*Helping others to help themselves*”. It therefore uses for example its trade power via special trade agreements to foster the development of poorer markets and grants aid “*in the form of non-repayable grants*”. In 2008 the amount, spend for public aid, was about 49 billion Euros. Additionally, the EU is the founder of several development and self-development projects that are aimed to better the life conditions for people in the third world by facilitating their access to e.g. “*food and clean water, to education, health, employment, land, social services [and] infrastructure*”.¹⁰⁰

Another sector of European aid is the field of humanitarian aid. This commitment primarily should help people that suffer from actual crises and conflicts (including aftercare in “*forgotten crisis zones and areas of post-conflict instability*”).¹⁰¹ The help is coordinated by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), established in 1992.¹⁰² The ECHO has an annual average budget of about 700 million Euros. In 2007, next to Africa (55%) and Asia and Latin America (21%), the third biggest amount of humanitarian aid

⁹³ For further information see: European Commission (2010), External Relations - Black Sea Synergy.

⁹⁴ For further information see: European Commission (2010), External Relations - Eastern Partnership.

⁹⁵ Cf. European Commission (2010), European Neighbourhood Policy - The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy ?.

⁹⁶ For further information see: European Commission (2009), External Relations - The Barcelona Process.

⁹⁷ European Commission (2010), External Relations - The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

⁹⁸ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

⁹⁹ Cf. European Commission (2010), European Neighbourhood Policy - The Policy: What is the European Neighbourhood Policy ?.

¹⁰⁰ Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union – Development.

¹⁰¹ Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union - Humanitarian aid.

¹⁰² Cf. Europa (undated), Glossary - Humanitarian aid.

(16%) was given to the Caucasus, Middle East and Mediterranean regions, as emergency aid in respond to the needs caused by the actual conflicts and crises of those regions. The most important tools of European humanitarian aid are “*emergency aid, food aid, and aid for refugees from conflict areas and those displaced within a country or region at war*”. In contrast to development aid, humanitarian aid is normally granted for a period of six months.¹⁰³

As the Union states, in general, it “*is open to any European country which is democratic, has a market economy and possesses the administrative capacity to handle the rights and obligations of membership.*” But due to its current size of 27 Member states, the membership perspective for further candidates, applicants and others, who expressed a desire to join the EU, has been linked with the Unions capability of the acceptance of new Members. For now the Union focuses on enlargement in the area of the Western Balkans.¹⁰⁴

Although these memberships would move European borders closer to the conflicts of the Middle East, that region so far is not planned to be part of the Enlargement process.

¹⁰³ Cf. Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union - Humanitarian aid.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Europa (2010), Gateway to the European Union – Enlargement.

3. The Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) – conflicts, region, actions and actors

The Middle East Peace Process has a far reaching background and complex structure that makes it impossible to refer to each and every detail from the 1920s until today. In order to stay in the context of this Master Thesis the first part of this chapter briefly shows the origins of the nowadays conflicts and structure of the Middle East, without taking much into account the religious-based issues used in this conflicts and the concerns of other states, peoples and minorities than those of the parties of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, which are the core conflicts of the Middle East. Moreover this initial part focuses on the various attempts for a peaceful solution of the conflicts, outlining who are the key actors and what has been reached so far. Also in this part the development of the MEPP is summarised, while highlighting the most important steps and some important details, in order to show the complexity.

Complementary, the final part of this chapter includes an overview of the status quo and the latest developments of the MEPP within the given extent of research in this Thesis.

This Chapter builds the basis for the further analysis of the role of the EU in the Middle East Peace Process. It already points out the historical, political and economic connections between Europe and the Middle East since the beginning of the 20th century and further indicates some similarities in the development of these two regions, with regard to the process of European integration, given in the second chapter.

3.1. The Conflicts in the Middle East - the background of the MEPP

In 1922 at the end of the Ottoman Empire its provinces in the Middle East fell under the responsibility of the appointed Members of the League of Nations. Among these provinces were today's countries Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the territory of the region Palestine, which is today's issue of the dispute between the state Israel and the Palestinian areas, Gaza (Gaza Strip) and West Bank.

While Lebanon and Syria fell under the French mandate, Palestine and Jordan were handed over to Great Britain. Therefore, both great powers which had already during the World War I speculated on their part of this region so far had reached their aims, as the Middle East in those times was highly important for trading via the Suez Canal and for its resources of oil for example in Iraq and Iran. Thus, the division of the former Ottoman Empire's provinces into territories under the mandate of the appointed Members of the League of Nations roughly had already the shape of the nowadays Middle East.¹⁰⁵

For Great Britain the mandate was a big challenge, which occurred to be both a blessing and a curse at the same time. A newly established European movement founded at the end of 19th Century, the so-called Zionism, set itself the aim to establish a Jewish state in the "Holy Land", and so in the British mandated territory of Palestine. Already at that time, when Great Britain took over responsibility for Palestine, immigration of Zionists into that region had started and caused first tensions between the Jewish immigrants and the mostly Arabic residents. On the one hand these tensions were the reason why Britain could keep its mandate; a mandate that was very important for Britain in order to achieve its economic and strategic interests in the Middle East and to overtrump its allied competitors such as France and the Soviet Union. But on the other hand, solving an escalating conflict or even war would be much too costly for the former Empire. Nevertheless, the first escalations did not start until the end of the 1920s, after a chain of events.

On this account, Britain pursued a bipolar diplomatic policy from the very start. While it supported the Arabs already during the Ottoman Empire, to become more independent from the Empire but under the custody of Great Britain also made promises to support the Zionists' movement. The intention therefore was not only the aim to keep both sides calm, but also to gain a lot of sympathy from both parties and its other supporters, e.g. from the supporters of the Zionists in the Soviet Union and the USA.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 74-75.

A very controversially discussed example is the “Balfour Declaration”¹⁰⁶ of 1917, which by its wording can be interpreted as satisfying compromise by each of the parties to its own advantage.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the British efforts to prevent an escalation failed for a couple of reasons. First, the racism against Jews in Europe during the Nazi regime¹⁰⁸ and the World War II¹⁰⁹ brought further massive immigration waves to Palestine, not only supported by the Zionist movement but also in the beginning by Great Britain. Besides, the Zionist movement also found more and more support in the USA. In order to reach its aim of a Jewish state in Palestine, the Zionists bought up land, in which only Jewish people should live and work and thus created a first Jewish-Zionist territory. Consequently, these actions led to increasing unemployment and homelessness of Palestinians and thereby intensified conflict. One of the first violent escalations started in 1928 at the Western Wall in Jerusalem and spread to several other cities. After one week Great Britain managed to stop this riot. As a result, nearly 250 people were killed, not only in the riot itself, but also mostly Palestinians during the British settlement of the conflict.¹¹⁰

The ongoing tension and the threat of another escalation brought up first ideas to separate the conflicting parties through the division of the territory of Palestine into two parts and the realization that there must be a stop of the Zionistic immigration. Thus the Zionistic movement and the increasing problem of land and homeless Palestinian workers should have been solved. But the suggestion made in the 1930’s was strongly objected by both sides.¹¹¹

During the World War II, Great Britain was occupied with its own warfare. The result for the Palestine Region was a weakened Britain, trying to hold its power over the conflicting parties that were in the position to rely on other supporters as well. On the Jewish-Zionistic side there was the strength of the growing community in Palestine itself and an increasing international

¹⁰⁶ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 69.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 65-72.

¹⁰⁸ 1933-1945.

¹⁰⁹ 1939-1945.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 76-83.

¹¹¹ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 77-81.

support, also due to the anti-Semitic crimes of the World War II, while the Palestinians could rely on the support of the Arab League.¹¹²

In 1947, Britain ended its mandate and thus handed over the question on whether a partition would be a possible solution of the conflict and how this territorial separation could be reached. The UN came up with a plan that would give 56% of Palestine to the Zionist movement which only holds a population of about 30% of the region of the former British mandate. The plan was supported by 33 UN Members, while 13 opposed and 10 stayed neutral. One of the neutral states (abstention) was Great Britain, while the USA and the Soviet Union gave their approval.

Even though the plan was thought to solve the problem, it made things worse. The consequence of the British withdrawal from the mandate and the ideas of the UN was the proclamation of the State of Israel, on the territory proposed by the plan of the UN in May 1948 and a territorial war between this new state and its Arabic neighbour countries Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon as well as the ongoing fights between the Israelis and the Palestinian residents.¹¹³

The UN and its Members hesitated to interfere in this violent conflict, not only for the fear of making it worse but also for various own strategic interests such as competition against the other allies and ambitions for more power in the international system. One of its results, which made the basis of the nowadays conflicts, was the still highly discussed but not solved problem of Palestinian refugees. The refugee problem was a consequence of the partly violent dislodgement of about 300,000 Palestinians during the war in 1948. Most of these refugees fled to the areas of Palestine that were not under the control of the now Israeli state and to the Arabic neighbour countries. Further, Israel could defend its establishment of a state benefitting from the competition for power and influence among its Arabic neighbours, which among other things led to a half-hearted motivation to attack. Israel also specially profited from the Jordan (at that time Transjordan) ambition for regional power through the annexation of the Palestine territory. In 1948 there was a non-aggression contract made between Israel and Transjordan that stated that Transjordan would stay out of the conflict and therefore gain

¹¹² Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 81-83.

¹¹³ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 89-95.

the Palestinian territory that was thought to be given to the Palestinians in the plan of the UN. Another important fact was that Transjordan was highly dependent on Great Britain, which held control over its military command. So Israel was more or less indirectly supported by Transjordan and Great Britain.¹¹⁴

The end of the war in 1949 was reached through an armistice agreement, signed by Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, Syria and Israel. The settled borders later on were called the “Green Line”. While Israel gained 78% of the former Palestine, the rest was equally shared between states of Egypt (nowadays Gaza) and Transjordan (nowadays West Bank) on the one side and the Palestinians, who live(d) there, on the other side.¹¹⁵

The decades afterwards, from the end of the 1940s until the 1990s, which is the starting point of the nowadays Middle East Peace Process, can be summarized as follows.

Israel could gain more and more strength, especially in military capacities. This is mainly a consequence of the support from the USA, whose reasons were the competition with the Soviet Union in the cold war and the fear of further Soviet influence and power in the Middle East and the sympathy of Americans for the Israeli state. The Soviet Union was a strong supporter of Egypt. But nevertheless, Israel’s neighbours were weakened by strong mistrust and competition among each other and internal instability through several changes of government. This focus on national priorities prevented them to build a strong alliance against the Israeli-American alliance. Further Britain was still an actor in that region that tried to pursue its own interests, but was distracted by its ongoing loss of influence in its colonies.¹¹⁶ Between 1948 and 1990 there were several territorial wars and conflicts between Israel and its neighbour states (the Arabic-Israeli Conflict) and the Palestinians (the Israel-Palestinian Conflict). The most important events were the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956¹¹⁷, a dispute between Israel and Egypt with British and French interference, the June War (Six-Day War) in 1967¹¹⁸ in which Israel fought against the Palestinians, Egypt, Jordan and Syria and could expand its

¹¹⁴ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 91-98.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 98-99.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp.102-116.

¹¹⁷ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 106-107.

¹¹⁸ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 108-116.

territory and in which period the Palestinian Nationalism,¹¹⁹ with the idea of a Palestinian state independent from the interests and influences of the Arabic states of the Middle East, emerged under the leadership of the PLO¹²⁰ that at that time resided in Jordan. Further there was the war of 1973 (Yom Kippur War)¹²¹ between Israel, Egypt and Syria on the Southern Sinai Region (including Gaza) and the Northern Golan Heights. And finally the Lebanon War (Israel's Invasion of Lebanon, from 1978-1982)¹²², in which Israel invaded the south of Lebanon in order to destroy the bases of the PLO that attacked Israel from there since it had moved there in the 1970s.¹²³ Even though the UN stationed a peacekeeping troop, the UNIFIL¹²⁴, in 1978 and created a security zone, the “*Blue Line*’, *the international border between Israel and Lebanon.*”¹²⁵, the violent conflict went on until 1982, when Israel removed its troops from Lebanon¹²⁶, except the Israeli protection zone, which it kept occupied until 2000.¹²⁷

Moreover, this initial period of the background of the MEPP (1948-1990) already included the first attempts of a peaceful conflict solution. Among the attempts by the League of Nations there was UN-Resolution 242 passed in November 1967, which is still the basis of nowadays peace talks. Its basic principle was “land-for-peace” (for further explanation see the citation below). This resolution was highly disputed, because of its similarity to the wording of the Balfour Declaration and the resulting varieties of interpretation among the conflicting parties.¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 117-120.

¹²⁰ The Palestinian Liberation Organisation, founded in 1964 with the initial aim to better the situation of the Palestinian refugees, but from 1969, when the Fatah Member Y. Arafat became its leader, there can be two sections distinguished under the roof of the PLO. Firstly the political actor PLO and secondly the military sector of the Fatah, which was founded in 1958 with the aim to put up a violent resistance against the occupation of Palestine. Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp.108; 118-120.

¹²¹ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 122-126.

¹²² For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 131-140.

¹²³ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 102-140.

¹²⁴ United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon: „Originally, UNIFIL was created by the Security Council in March 1978 to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Lebanese Government in restoring its effective authority in the area. The mandate had to be adjusted twice, due to the developments in 1982 and 2000.“ United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (undated), Monitoring cessation of hostilities and helping ensure humanitarian access to civilian population.

¹²⁵ Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 191.

¹²⁶ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 131-140.

¹²⁷ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 160.

¹²⁸ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 112-116.

“In essence the UN Security Council, under the influence of the US and the UDSSR, came up with a document that was loose enough in its wording to make everyone happy (more or less). The Arabs were asked to recognize and get along with Israel, and Israel in turn is supposed to give back ‘territories occupied.’ For Israel that meant some of the land, for the Arabs that meant all of the land, for the Security Council that meant all of the land, and for the US that meant pretty much most of the land.” (..) The Palestinians, in 242, are reduced to a ‘refugee problem.’”¹²⁹

Even though this resolution and the peace talks were an important step, because it was the first time all the conflicting parties met at the same time to talk about peace, the various interests and interpretations prevented them from the agreement on durable solutions.¹³⁰

Another attempt to settle the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict were the first Camp David talks (Camp David I), which started in 1978 and ended in 1979 with a signing of two agreements between Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the official representatives of the Palestinians, the PLO. These agreements were mainly lined up by the support of the USA. The key issue of these talks was the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories of Gaza and West Bank, seen as attempts of a territorial conquest. Its result was a still valid peaceful solution of the conflict between Israel and Egypt. But the agreements did not include a final solution on the territory of Gaza and West Bank, nor were the other key issues of the conflicts addressed. While Gaza has been the subject of dispute between Israel and Egypt, the West Bank was still target of Jordan plans of annexation. Further key issues were *inter alia* the status of the Eastern part of Jerusalem, which was occupied by Israel and claimed by both parties of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the dispute on the territory of the Golan Heights. So again this attempt did not touch many of the sensitive parts of the conflicts and therefore could not reach an overall settlement.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 115.

¹³⁰ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 112-117.

¹³¹ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 126-130.

3.2. Starting point of the MEPP - a rollercoaster ride for peace

The most important peace negotiations, the so called Middle East Peace Process, took place in the 1990s after the end of the Gulf-War (1990-1991)¹³². Its results were firstly concluded in the Madrid Conference (1991-1993)¹³³ and secondly in the Oslo Accord (Oslo I, 1993)¹³⁴ and Oslo Interim-Agreement (Oslo II, 1995)¹³⁵.¹³⁶ Within these peace negotiations between the State of Israel and the Palestinian representatives some important agreements could be reached. Firstly, the parties officially recognized each other and secondly, they agreed on an interim period of five years, in which Israel should remove parts of its military troops from West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinians should establish their autonomous structures (elections of the Palestinian Authority) and both parties should continue negotiations about a final solution of the conflict.¹³⁷ So in Oslo II Israel and the Palestinians for the first time managed to agree on something like an initial strategy for a peaceful solution of the conflict, signed by the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat¹³⁸ and the Israeli representatives Yitzhak Rabin and Simon Peres. Nevertheless, it was obvious that this agreement was highly dependent on the continuous motivation of both parties to fulfil their given statements. In other words there was plenty room for own interpretations, e.g. under the influence of a change in the political structure, that relativised the chances for peace.¹³⁹

In the following years several events happened, that affected the implementation of the Oslo-agreements in a negative way. In 1995 the Israeli politician Y. Rabin was killed by a Jewish student for his engagement in the MEPP and the recent agreement. One year later the Palestinians for the first time elected the representatives of their administration, the Palestinian Authority. The first elected President was Y. Arafat and his party the PLO. So at first on the side of the Palestinians they could take a step towards autonomy or even founding of a state. Meanwhile, on the Israeli side the agreement, to their opinion, did not only include the withdrawal of their military capacities from the occupied territory, but also the

¹³² For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp.149-150.

¹³³ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 151-153.

¹³⁴ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 153-155.

¹³⁵ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 155-158.

¹³⁶ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 149-158.

¹³⁷ Cf. Asseburg, Muriel S.G. (2007), pp. 6-7; Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 151-158.

¹³⁸ Leader of the PLO from 1969 until 2004. Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 119.

¹³⁹ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 154-158.

opportunity to create a new network of security structures, such as checkpoints, fences and walls in order to separate itself from the Palestinian territories West Bank and Gaza. From the perspective of the Palestinians these actions seemed to create two isolated sanctuaries of autonomous Palestinian areas. Further, Israel connected its illegally established settlements in the occupied, now Palestinian territories, by the building of new roads all over the place. This not only occupied further land but also made it very difficult for the Palestinians to create a functioning autonomous area and infrastructure.¹⁴⁰

“Despite autonomy or self-administration, it quickly became apparent that less freedom was offered under the Oslo agreements than the previous form of occupation.”¹⁴¹

Due to controversial proposals for a solution and different interpretations of the agreements as well as several smaller disputes and provocations, the tensions between the conflicting parties increased so that the peace process could not be driven any further at that time. Consequently, the attempts to talk and find compromises, first between Israel and the Palestinians in Camp David II¹⁴² in 2000 and second between Israel and Syria in the same year failed.¹⁴³

3.3. Recent developments of the MEPP - deadlock or recovery of the peace process?

Since 2000 the situation in both of the core conflicts escalated more and more. Although constantly there were further attempts of peace negotiations and plans on how to reach a peaceful solution of the conflict, the Middle East Peace Process is comparable with a ride on a rollercoaster, with many ups and downs as can be seen in the following summary of the events of the last decade (2000-2010).

In the Israel-Palestinian Conflict, the dissatisfaction with the outcome of the peace negotiations on the side of the Palestinians resulted in the Second Intifada (Intifada II)¹⁴⁴, which was triggered by a provoking action of the leader of the conservative Israeli party

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 159-170.

¹⁴¹ Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 159.

¹⁴² For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 164-169.

¹⁴³ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 159-170.

¹⁴⁴ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 169-175.

Likud, Ariel Sharon, when he visited the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem. In September 2000, the starting point of the second Intifada, the resistance against the occupation, escalated into heavily violent fights between the Israeli Army and the Palestinians.¹⁴⁵

“What started with the implements of the First Intifada - stones, bottles, and burning tires – very quickly escalated into the exchange of automatic-weapon fire between IDF [Israeli Defence Force] and the Palestinians (police, and even more so, paramilitary groups).”¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, the violence of Intifada II was intensified by several political events. Firstly, in the USA G. W. Bush took office as the new American President from the former President B. Clinton in 2000 and secondly, in Israel A. Sharon became the new Prime Minister in February 2001. A. Sharon was known for his nationalistic beliefs and being not in favour of a peaceful solution of the conflict by the establishment of two autonomous states. As he could rely on the support of the USA, that also put the full blame of the Intifada and the damage caused on the Palestinian leader Y. Arafat, the conditions of further successful peace talks got worse. Thirdly, also there were reduced chances for peaceful negotiations on the side of the Palestinians, as their resistance became more and more dominated by religious or secular movements that established the practice of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. Israel responded to those practices with targeted assassinations of the leading members of those movements but also with the destruction of the houses they were assumed to live in.¹⁴⁷ Fourthly, linked to the consequences of the attacks on 11th September 2001 in the United States and the subsequently declared war against terrorism, Israel reoccupied the Palestinian territories. It placed the Palestinian leader Y. Arafat under house arrest, until his death in 2004, destroyed much of the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority and civilian houses and started to build a huge wall at the border to the West Bank that should protect Israel from further attacks originating from there. The building of the wall was strongly opposed by the UN and is still a key issue of the current conflict.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 169-175.

¹⁴⁶ Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 171.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp 169-174.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 174-178.

Throughout the ongoing conflict, since the Intifada II of 2000, in which the parties continuously blamed each other for the damages caused, several attempts for further peace negotiations and solutions, such as the “Clinton Plan” and the “Taba Statement”¹⁴⁹ in 2000 and the “Road Map” in 2003 were made, but could not be implemented.¹⁵⁰ Instead Israel underwent a unilateral step, by withdrawing from its military occupation of Gaza. The plan was established in 2004, but the action was taken in 2005. It included a clearing of 21 settlements in Gaza and four in the territory of West Bank, but it continued the control on the air space and sea territory of Gaza as well as the entrances to Gaza. So after the withdrawal Gaza was isolated and dependent on Israel or rather UN relief organisations.¹⁵¹

“Malnutrition levels were being compared to sub-Saharan Africa, with unemployment at over 50 percent, and nearly everyone relying, to varying degrees, on support from international aid agencies.”¹⁵²

Nevertheless, attacks against Israel were carried out from Gaza. In 2006 again some political changes lead to another escalation of the conflict. Due to his health problems, the Prime Minister of Israel, A. Sharon, had to hand over his office to Ehud Olmert. On the Palestinian side, despite American financial efforts to support its moderate competitors, the Hamas, a party which has the aim to continue with the resistance, surprisingly won the elections to the dissatisfaction of the international political area. As a consequence, the USA and the EU linked their financial aid for the development of the infrastructure, but not the humanitarian aid for the Palestinians to the fulfilment of three conditions, the “*recognition of Israel’s right to exist, renunciation of violence, and acceptance of previous peace agreements.*”¹⁵³ After no compromise could be reached, even though some European states and Russia tried to enter into negotiations with the new Hamas-government, the violent attacks on the Israeli and the Palestinian side continued and escalated into a warlike situation in from June until November 2006, when Israel started an military operation in Gaza. The reason for the Israeli attack was the capture of an Israeli Soldier, Gilad Shalit, whose whereabouts is still part of the nowadays

¹⁴⁹ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 172-173.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 169-184.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 184-187.

¹⁵² Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 185-186.

¹⁵³ Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 188.

issues of the conflict. The consequence of this new escalation was not only a further destruction of the infrastructure in Gaza, but also the arrest and death of many people on both sides.¹⁵⁴

A Council resolution, which demands the end of the Israeli military offensive in Gaza and the release of G. Shalit, was blocked by the American veto in the UN-Security Council in July 2006.¹⁵⁵

By the end of 2007 a dispute between the internationally supported (mainly by the USA and EU) Fatah and the criticised Hamas, shown by violent fights among the followers in Gaza, led to a breakdown of the fragile government of the two parties. Since then Gaza is unofficially led by Hamas, while the West Bank remains under Fatah government. After the official reestablishment of the Fatah government, the USA and the EU continue to support the Palestinians with financial aid again.¹⁵⁶

From 2008 until 2010 the rollercoaster ride of peace went on to go up and down from ceasefire and new peace initiatives to further escalations and vice versa, as can be traced for example by the statements of the European institutions and the Middle East Quartet on the developments of the Middle East Peace Process¹⁵⁷ and the current news.

At the 2921st External Relations Council meeting, from the 26th until the 27th of January in 2009, the Council declared its appreciation on the recently reached ceasefire between Gaza and Israel and emphasized the need to respect the UN resolutions and international humanitarian law in order to reach a constant break of the fights. Further, it stressed that, in case such a calming down could be reached, it was willing to assist the peace process through prolonging its peacekeeping assistance for example at several checkpoints.¹⁵⁸ In the conclusion of the statements of the 26th of January, the Council states its willingness to

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 187-191.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. euronews (2006), US vetoes UN Gaza resolution.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 194-198.

¹⁵⁷ For further information please see: European Commission (2010), External Relations - What's new?.; European Commission (2010), External Relations - Documents.; European Commission (2010), EU positions on the Middle East peace process.

¹⁵⁸ Council of the European Union (2009), Council Conclusions on Middle East Peace Process - 2921st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting Brussels, 26-27 January 2009.

closely cooperate with the other members of the Middle East Quartet and regional actors and to support the peace process with the following measures, on which it develops a schedule.

*“In response to the current crisis the European Union will focus its support and assistance on the following: immediate humanitarian relief for the population of Gaza, prevention of illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition, sustained re-opening of crossing points (...) rehabilitation and reconstruction and the resumption of the peace process.”*¹⁵⁹

In another statement, from the 2985th Foreign Affairs Council meeting at the end of the year (2009), it expresses its concerns about the stagnation of the peace process through the failure of reaching new negotiations and welcomes the attempts of the USA and the Arab Peace Initiative.¹⁶⁰

The most recent event, which caused huge media attention in Europe and internationally, was an Israeli attack on six aid ships chartered by international humanitarian activists, but mostly from Turkey, in order to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, avoiding the Israel-controlled land way through the territory of Israel. During the attack several people were injured (some reports also state killings) and many arrested, even though most of them were not kept for long. The attack was followed by international criticism against Israel from the UN and the international community, including the European states and some of Israel's opponents and caused civil protests and demonstrations, also in European countries.¹⁶¹ Meanwhile the conflict between Israel and Palestinians is continued violently, mostly at the borders of Gaza.¹⁶²

Nevertheless, towards the ongoing initiatives of peaceful solutions, e.g. by the Middle East Quartet, a compromise on the so-called final status issues that enable a two-state solution, which still is the core subject of the nowadays peace attempts, could not be found so far,

¹⁵⁹ Council of the European Union (2009), PRESS RELEASE 2921st Council meeting General Affairs and External Relations External Relations Brussels, 26 January 2009.

¹⁶⁰ Council of the European Union (2009), Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process. 2985st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting Brussels, 8 December 2009.

¹⁶¹ Cf. euronews (2010), Israel under pressure over aid convoy raid.; euronews (2010), Turkish aid activists deported.; euronews (2010), Israeli raid provokes fury in Turkey.; euronews (2010), Israel transfers flotilla aid to Gaza.; euronews (2010), Criticism mounts over Israel's flotilla raid.

¹⁶² Cf. euronews (2010), Israeli forces kill five Palestinian militants.

which the HR C. Ashton for example concludes in her speech at the League of Arab States on the 15th of March 2010.¹⁶³

The five final status issues are the question on the boundary lines between Israel and its neighbours and the Palestinian territories, the status of Jerusalem, the question on the future of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the right of return for Palestinian refugees and finally the distribution of water resources, which are already very scarce in that region.¹⁶⁴

Also in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, there was another escalation in 2006. From July until August the conflict between Israel and its neighbour Lebanon intensified once again, after an attack on Israeli bases by the Shiitic extremist organisation Hizballah¹⁶⁵ from Lebanon. In consequence, Israel responded by a broad military offensive, that not only hit the extremists but also caused losses among civilians (estimated 850-1,200 people killed¹⁶⁶) and civil infrastructure. In the end none of the conflicting parties could be declared as the winner, even though Israel had to face failure through not succeeding to defeat the militarily less equipped Hizballah by the use of its military superiority, which had proved itself essentially advantageous in the recent wars.¹⁶⁷ Also in the Arabic-Israeli Conflict there is still no overall solution agreed up upon. While Israel made peace with Egypt and Jordan, it is still conflicting with Syria and Lebanon.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ european union (2010), Speech by HR Catherine Ashton, at the League of Arab States A Commitment to Peace – the European Union and the Middle East Cairo, 15 March 2010, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/113352.pdf (accessed on 8 June 2010).

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Auswärtiges Amt (2009), Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

¹⁶⁵ For further information see: Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 160-161.

¹⁶⁶ Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), p. 192.

¹⁶⁷ Cf Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry, pp. 191-193.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Auswärtiges Amt (2009), Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

4. The new role of the EU in the MEPP

This chapter on the new European Foreign Policy and its influence on the Middle East Peace Process deals as a practical example of what can or cannot be aimed for and achieved by the new European foreign policy. Therefore, in the first section the European reasons, interests and aims for its engagement in this region are given, in order to analyse in the second part of this chapter, with which tools of its foreign policy the EU tries to reach its goals. Additionally, this chapter examines briefly the question whether the chances and hurdles addressed in the first chapter, are reflected in this context. For example are there controversies between American and European Middle East policies or does this issue rather causes internal European controversies, e.g. with regard to the operation of EU peacekeeping forces in the Middle East?

4.1. Interests and aims - reasons for EU engagement

The European Union is one of the international actors who strongly support the Middle East peace process. This engagement is not motivated by pure altruism, but has its origins in an interlinked history and serves the various European strategic interests and aims. The latter for instance can be found in the fields of economy, policy and security. For example in the field of economy the EU nowadays is more independent from the oil resources of the Middle East than in the 1970s, because of the extended use of alternative energy resources such as atomic and green energy as well as the stronger utilization of the oil sources of other areas, such as the North Sea and Africa. Despite this recently grown independency, the economic bounds of the EU towards the Middle East are still valid. Even today the EU has strong economic interests in the Middle East, that as a region still can be characterised by its wealth of oil resources, mainly the Arabic states and a high capacity for innovation, mainly Israel.¹⁶⁹ At present time the EU upholds political and economical relations with all regional actors of the conflicts. All these economic and political agreements build up a strong connection between Europe and the Middle East. So one of the most important reasons for the keen interest of the

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Wolffsohn, Michael (2005), pp. 3-4.

European Union in solving the conflicts of this area is the preservation of its relations and their extension for the wealth of oil resources and innovation that region can offer the EU.¹⁷⁰

Since 2004 the EU also enlarged itself, e.g. with the accession of the Republic of Cyprus, very closely to the borders of the Israel-Palestinian and the Arab-Israeli Conflict.¹⁷¹ For that reason, the EU is one of the main supporters of the aim of a more stable area in the Middle East. But relations and trade cannot be successfully performed with interferences via the conflicts that lead to instability. That is why the EU has to deal with the progress of the Middle East Peace Process first, in order to enhance its relations and make use of its tools for solving of further problems in this area.¹⁷²

The political interest of the EU towards the MEPP is linked to its general aim to gain more political influence in the international system. It is the chance for the EU to make use of its newly enhanced tools and thus prove its (new) power. Therefore, the EU seeks closer cooperation with the USA and the other actors of the Middle East Quartet and promotes its own mediator position and its further possibilities of conflict and post-conflict capabilities.¹⁷³

4.2. Key positions towards the MEPP and the solution of the conflicts

The EU is of the opinion that the dissolution of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict should be reached by a “*two-state-solution*”. Therefore, it promotes the establishments of an Israeli as well as a Palestinian autonomous and democratic state on the basis of the territories before the war of 1967 and in accordance with the international agreements such as the UN resolutions. Concerning the main questions of the conflict the EU expresses a diplomatic but nevertheless clear position. For example on the question of the status of the rights of the Palestinian refugees, it states that it will agree on a solution found by the conflicting parties itself. Further, it expresses its concerns about the ongoing increase of Israeli settlements within the Palestinian territory and Israel’s misinterpretation of its right to protect the state granted under international law. Moreover it underlines the need to include the issue of Jerusalem in the

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Wolffsohn, Michael (2005), pp. 3-4.

¹⁷¹ Cf. European Commission (2006), EU/ PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN, p.1

¹⁷² Cf. European Commission (2010), The EU and the Middle East Peace Process.

¹⁷³ Cf. Council of the European Union (2009), Council conclusions on Middle East Peace Process 2951st External Relations Council meeting Luxembourg, 15 June 2009.

peace negotiations.¹⁷⁴ Beyond, it encourages peace negotiations between Israel and further countries of that region, such as Syria and Lebanon, with which Israel is conflicting likewise in the Arab-Israeli Conflict.¹⁷⁵ For that reason, it also respects other contributors' attempts, e.g. the "Arab Peace Initiative (API)"^{176, 177} This position of the EU towards the Middle East Peace Process was recently repeated by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in a press-release on the website of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in March 2010. According to their statements, it is still the most important European task in the MEPP to push forward constantly the efforts on further establishing and keeping up the negotiations among the conflicting parties. The subjects are the status of Jerusalem and the two-state-solution as well as the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians, especially in Gaza. Therefore, the EU should firstly preserve and foster the relations it has established so far with Israel and the Palestinians and secondly deeply cooperate with the other strong actors of the MEPP and the Quartet, mainly the USA.¹⁷⁸

4.3. Examples for the political and practical engagement - use of the nEFP

In compliance with its wide range of foreign policy tools, the EU takes actions in many different fields in the Middle East. On the basis of a small selection of examples for the political, economical and also military engagement, this use of nEFP and its tools is shown in the following sections.

4.3.1. EU engagement in the Middle East Quartet

The Middle East Quartet consists of the USA, Russia, the EU and the UN. It had its first meeting in Madrid in April 2002 and in 2002 aims at a closer cooperation regarding the actions in the Middle East Peace Process. In this way, the Quartet as a stronger international political weight can increase the force on the conflicting parties to negotiate about peaceful

¹⁷⁴ Cf. European Commission (2010), EU positions on the Middle East peace process.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. European Commission (2010), The EU and the Middle East Peace Process.

¹⁷⁶ The API is a repeated offering of a peace and security proposal towards Israel by the 22 states of the Arab League, firstly offered in 2002 and secondly in 2007 and recently in 2008. Oxford Research Group (undated), The Arab Peace Initiative - ORG Meeting on the Arab Peace Initiative.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. European Commission (2010), The EU and the Middle East Peace Process.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. The Spanish Presidency of the European Union (2010), The EU establishes its position with regard to the reactivation of the Middle East peace process.

solutions. One of its recent most important steps was the development of the “*Road Map*”, a plan that aimed at a step by step solution of the conflict until 2005. The “*Road Map*” was acknowledged by the UN-Security Council Resolution 1515 in November 2003.¹⁷⁹

It proposes a two-state-solution that should have been reached by the implementation of three phases:

Phase 1 (April-May 2003): “*Ending terror and violence, normalizing Palestinian life, and building Palestinian institutions*”

Phase 2 (June-December 2003): “*Transition*”

Phase 3 (2004-2005): “*Permanent Status Agreement and End of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*”¹⁸⁰

So far the Road Map is still part of the tools used in the attempts for a solution, but could not be implemented yet.¹⁸¹

Next to the engagement of the HR and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Middle East in the MEQ, the EU also supports the Quartet Representative’s office with human resources and financial support.¹⁸²

4.3.2. Engagement of the HR of the CFSP and the EUSR

The office of the Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process was established in 1996.

His main tasks are:

- to promote the European position towards a solution of the conflicts (e.g. a two-state-solution and security),
- to show a visible presence of the Union in the Middle East,

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Harms, Gregory and Todd M. Ferry (2008), pp. 178-181; Auswärtiges Amt (2009), Middle East Quartet - History of the Quartet.

¹⁸⁰ Auswärtiges Amt (undated), A performance-bases Road Map to a permanent two-state-solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

¹⁸¹ Cf. European Commission (2010), EU positions on the Middle East peace process.

¹⁸² Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - EU political support for the Middle East peace process.

- to monitor the developments and actions of the conflicting parties,
- to help to provide guidelines for actions in that region (e.g. the EU CSDP missions) and
- to provide the Council with the respective information towards these developments.¹⁸³

Further, he assists the HR, for example by taking over the charge of the representation of the Union in the preparatory meetings of the Middle East Quartet. The HR takes part in the meetings of the MEQ as representative for the Union and is the contact person for the diplomatic relations between the EU and the parties of the MEPP.¹⁸⁴

For example the HR, on the occasion of the escalation in Gaza at the beginning of the beginning of June 2010, made a joint statement with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which both parties demand the opening of the borders and “*demand a full inquiry*” of the events.¹⁸⁵

Through implementing these tasks both representatives are a response to the aim of better visibility of the EU and its engagement in the international system.

4.3.3. CSDP missions

With the capabilities established under the CSDP the EU upholds two missions in the Middle East. Firstly, since 2006 the EU operates the EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS).¹⁸⁶

The EUPOL COPPS mission started as a project of the British Government and now under the CSDP has a staff of about 60 people.¹⁸⁷ Although it was initially planned to end the mission after three years, the mission is still being carried out in 2010. The mission aims to assist the development of the police in the Palestinian territories¹⁸⁸, but has changed its focus

¹⁸³ Cf. Otte, Marc, 'The EU has a role of its own to play in the Middle East, p. 51.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - EU political support for the Middle East peace process.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. European Union (2010), Joint statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Council of the European Union (undated), EU Common Security and Defence Policy.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Kernhagan, Paul R., 'Palestinians will not enjoy security and stability with and effective police force alone', p. 52.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Council of the European Union (undated), EU Common Security and Defence Policy.

from only strengthening the police forces towards a broader focus, including reforms in the field of criminal justice. Therefore it is in line with the Union's aims to establish security and stability.¹⁸⁹ As it was positively recognized by both of the conflicting parties and is still executed, it can be seen as a success and contribution to the visibility of European foreign policy in that region.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the mission is also negatively affected by the conflict, e.g. ongoing problems with the deliverance of equipment at the borders that are under control of Israel.¹⁹¹

Next to the EU also the USA in cooperation with Canada, Turkey and Jordan execute a mission, the “*United States Security Coordinators Team (USSC)*”, towards the strengthening of police forces in the Palestinian territories, mainly in the West bank. It has the aim to grant “*peace through security*” via a coordination of international efforts. While the EU has a strong focus on structural development, the US missions focuses mainly on the training of forces, e.g. in a four month training programme in Jordan, chosen because of the positive relations of Jordan towards Israel and the Palestinians. Notably, this training includes a special training on a positive attitude towards a Palestinian state.¹⁹²

The second mission of the EU is the “*EU BAM Rafah*”. This mission has the aim to secure the events at the check point in Rafah, as a neutral third party between Israel and the Palestinians. The mission is based on an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), the “*Agreement on Movement and Access*” from 2005. Operations started in 2005 and were executed until 2007, when the check point was closed. Since then the EU has put the mission “*on standby*”, but upholds the capability to return to an immediate practical execution as soon as there will be the respective successes in the MEPP.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Kernhagan, Paul R., 'Palestinians will not enjoy security and stability with and effective police force alone', p. 53.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Otte, Marc, 'The EU has a role of its own to play in the Middle East. p. 51.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Kernhagan, Paul R., 'Palestinians will not enjoy security and stability with and effective police force alone', pp. 52-53.

¹⁹² Cf. THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY (2009), PROGRAM OF THE SOREF SYMPOSIUM MICHAEL STEIN ADDRESS ON U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY SPEAKER: LIEUTENANT GENERAL KEITH DAYTON, U.S. SECURITY COORDINATOR, ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY THURSDAY, p. 2-8.

¹⁹³ Cf. Council of the European Union (undated), EU Common Security and Defence Policy.

As mentioned in the former chapter, the EU Member States also participate in the UN peacekeeping mission in the Lebanon.

4.3.4. European Neighbourhood Policy ENP

Within its ENP, the EU upholds political and economic relations with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority and Syria¹⁹⁴, though the latter is not an associated country yet and therefore does not enjoy the full range of the benefits of the ENP.¹⁹⁵

The common strategy for each of these relations is laid down in the so called “Action Plans”.¹⁹⁶ While the Action Plans with the Lebanon and Egypt could be agreed upon in 2005, those with Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority were established one year earlier.¹⁹⁷

For example Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian Territories are all part of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the former Barcelona Process and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED).¹⁹⁸ As the Commission states, UfM is an important nEFP tool for the European engagement in the Middle East Peace Process, because it “*serves as a forum for regional dialogue and remains the only multilateral context outside the United Nations where all parties to the conflict can meet and work together on a range of issues.*”¹⁹⁹

So the ENP, including the UfM, serves the EU in two ways. Firstly, it is an important Foreign Policy tool for the extension and strengthening of its interests in trade as one of the world’s biggest economic powers. For example the EU upholds strong economic relations with Israel:

*“The EU is Israel’s largest import and export market and accounts for about a third of Israel’s total trade. Israel is one of EU’s leading trading partners in the Mediterranean area and ranked as the EU’s 25th major trade partner globally.”*²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁴ Cf. European Commission (2009), European Neighbourhood Policy - Documents: Who participates ?.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. European Commission (undated), Delegation of the European Union to Syria - EU-Syria Political & Economic Relations.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - EU political support for the Middle East peace process.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. European Commission (2010), European Neighbourhood Policy - Reference documents.

¹⁹⁸ European Commission (undated), Delegation of the European Union to Israel - Bilateral trade.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - EU political support for the Middle East peace process.

²⁰⁰ European Commission (undated), Delegation of the European Union to Israel - Bilateral trade.

And secondly, the political and economic cooperations can have a stabilizing effect towards the MEPP, for example by the opportunity to meet and discuss common interests as Mediterranean countries.²⁰¹

4.3.5. Trade

Although the Palestinian Authority (PA) “*is by far the smallest trading partner for the EU in the Mediterranean region*”²⁰², an “*Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation*” was concluded between the EU and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), representing the PA.²⁰³ But Israel does not respect this and further agreements, e.g. the “*Paris protocol*” that was agreed on during the Oslo attempts, which among others should guarantee the free circulation of goods between Israel and the Palestinian territories, as well as Free Trade Agreements with the USA and Turkey. Israel hinders free trade at the borders so that also the trade between the Palestinians and for example the EU, USA and Turkey has not been allowed to be properly performed yet..²⁰⁴ Towards this problem the EU states, in a rather vague remark, that it “*works*” on a solution via the relations it upholds with the Mediterranean states, including Israel.²⁰⁵ One of the results of this work with Israel are the recent “*Agreement on Agricultural, Processed Agricultural and Fish and Fishery Products*” with Israel, that entered into force in January 2010 and more important an agreement on “*Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industry Products*”, with which, after its entry into force, Israel will be part of the Single Market.²⁰⁶

Despite the political situation the EU tries to engage both parties of the Israel-Palestinian Conflict into economic relations, though the relations with the Palestinians are hindered by Israel, which clearly has a political impact on the economic relations.

²⁰¹ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - EU political support for the Middle East peace process.

²⁰² Cf. European Commission (2010), European Commission set to help Palestinian economy with full opening of EU market.

²⁰³ Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - Occupied Palestinian Territory.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Directorate General for Financial and Economic Affairs (2008), European Occasional Papers, p. 108.

²⁰⁵ Cf. European Commission (2010), Trade - Occupied Palestinian Territory.

²⁰⁶ Cf. European Commission (2010), Delegation of the European Union to Israel - ENP Country Progress Report 2009 – Israel (12/05/2010).

4.3.6. Financial aid

The financial aid of the EU towards the MEPP mainly focuses on assistance to the Palestinians. Financial as well as further development aid is one of the main contributions towards the MEPP since the Oslo peace attempts in the 1990s.²⁰⁷ In general, the EU is one of the biggest financial supporters of the Palestinians.²⁰⁸ It started its donations with regular donations on the UN support programme for the Palestinian refugees in 1971. Since 1993 Member states donations are coordinated. Before the outbreak of the Intifada II the donations mainly were focused on development aid, but due to the consequences of the second outbreak, the focus changed towards direct support for the Palestinian Authority in their attempts to establish the structures of a Palestinian state.²⁰⁹ Since 2008 the EU money is donated via the “PEGASE mechanism”, which *inter alia* concentrates on direct financial support for work of the Palestinian Authority by the EU and its Member States and the former “*Temporary International Mechanism (TIM)*”²¹⁰ from 2006-2007.²¹¹ The EU is also a huge donor for the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) which helps the Palestinian refugees in the Middle East.²¹² The PEGASE mechanism and the UNRWA are both tools that contribute to the ENP. In March 2009 at the “*International Conference in support of the Palestinian economy for the reconstruction of Gaza*” in Sharm El-Sheikh an amount of about 300 Million Euro was pledged for those two elements on “*Recurrent Expenditure*” and “*Development projects*”. Further, 6 Million Euro was pledged to the two “*Common Foreign and Security Policy Joint Actions*” the “*EUBAM Rafah*” and the “*EUPOL COPPS*”.²¹³

²⁰⁷ Cf. Davis, Meghan M. (2009), 'European Foreign Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1993. An Analysis of European Foreign Policy Tools' Dissertation, Fakultät für Sozial- und Verhaltenswissenschaften, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, p. 146.

²⁰⁸ European Commission (undated), The Office of the European Union Representative West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA - Political and economic relations.

²⁰⁹ Cf. European Commission (2009), External Relations - EC Assistance to the Palestinians.

²¹⁰ For further information see: European Commission (2009), External Relations - The Temporary International Mechanism.

²¹¹ Cf. European Commission (2009), External Relations - EC Assistance to the Palestinians.

²¹² Cf. European Commission (2010), External Relations - Occupied Palestinian Territory.

²¹³ Cf. European Commission (2010), European Commission set to help Palestinian economy with full opening of EU market.

4.3.7. Enlargement

In the “*EU/ Palestinian Authority Action Plan*” the EU stresses, that a closer neighbourhood to the EU, which was established via the European enlargement in 2004, brought the opportunity to deepen the cooperation. The aim is to work on the creation of a Palestinian State, e.g. through the ENP.²¹⁴ Nevertheless, a membership, e.g. of Israel, as recently suggested by the Italian Prime Minister S. Berlusconi in his speech during his three days visit to the Middle East in February 2010²¹⁵, and also discussed by an earlier statement by the former Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the German politician W. Schäuble in 2001²¹⁶, against the background of the recent escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict seems to be more unlikely than ever.

4.4. Chances and hurdles of the nEFP for a new role of the EU in the MEPP - experts and EU views

In the debate on the chances and hurdles of the new European foreign policy and the future role of the EU in the international system, especially since the planned Constitution and the enforced alternative, the Treaty of Lisbon, two factors are mainly discussed. Firstly, there is a discussion about the internal cooperations, ambitions and structural arrangements of the EU and their impact on the aim of a more influential and powerful international actor. And secondly, the relations between the EU and other huge powers, mainly the USA, but also e.g. Russia and China, are discussed. As the Middle East belongs to the European neighbourhood and lies in the interests of many European and international actors, all of these factors can be related to the new European foreign policy in the Middle East. Therefore, the following two sections show a variety of experts’ argumentations as well as the self-view of the European Union towards the two factors with the example of the chances and hurdles of the nEFP and their impact on the MEPP.

²¹⁴ Cf. European Commission (2006), *EU/ PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN*, p. 1.

²¹⁵ FOCUS Online (2010), Berlusconi wirbt für Aufnahme Israels in die EU, available at http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/jerusalem-berlusconi-wirbt-fuer-aufnahme-israels-in-die-eu_aid_476208.html, (accessed on 8 June 2010).

²¹⁶ Cf. SPIEGEL ONLINE GmbH (2001), Israel soll assoziiertes EU-Mitglied werden.

4.4.1. Relations between EU and USA towards the MEPP and the European role in the MEPP

Concerning the first factor, W. Woyke²¹⁷ stated in 2004, that the USA are so far seen as the only superpower worldwide and therefore could unilaterally pursue its interests. Towards the Middle East, the USA, just as the EU, have a keen interest in having access to its energy resources. But this interest needs to be seen as a general interest in resources rather than in the Middle East itself. Also their further interests are indirectly related towards the Middle East and its Peace Process in so far as they serve the American interests. Nevertheless, the American engagements as a Member of the Quartet and the main initiator of the so far attempts of a peaceful solution have a great impact on the Middle East Peace Process and its other actors. Especially since the events of the 11th September, the USA have intensified their interests and aims towards security. Therefore, they also increased their efforts on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and towards the fight against international terrorism, which they also relate with the Palestinian resistance as the main driving force in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict. Therefore they are one of the strongest supporters of the Israeli position in the conflict.²¹⁸

Though he concluded his view in 2004, it is still relevant, as can be seen by the recent events in the MEPP. For example the fact that the USA often take side with Israel, is not only but mainly critically seen by the Member states of the Arabic League. Often the USA take almost an outsider position for the protection of Israel in the UN-Security Council, e.g. during the Gaza crisis in 2006²¹⁹ and recently at the beginning of June 2010.²²⁰ But as they so far keep their dominant position in the UN-Security Council, they can do so.

Woyke in 2004 has concentrated on the shared interest of energy resources between the EU and the USA in the Middle East. These interests are the reason for the American support for Israel and the use of its superpower towards the MEPP.

²¹⁷ University of Münster.

²¹⁸ Cf. Robert, Rüdiger (2004), 'Nahostkonflikt (NOstK.)', pp. 363-368.

²¹⁹ Cf. euronews (2006), US vetoes UN Gaza resolution.

²²⁰ Cf. euronews (2010), UN calls for investigation into israeli raid.

In contrast, P. Keller²²¹ focuses in 2010 mainly on a change in the power of the USA, but also analyzes its impact towards the MEPP. The election of the new American President, Barack Obama, at the beginning of 2009, the new American policy and the recent American engagement in the Middle East, have shown that the superpower USA nowadays struggles with its recent Foreign Policy projects, which it has pursued since the events of the 11th of September. Due to its various aims and tasks towards the fighting against terrorism and atomic and mass destruction proliferation mainly in the region of the Middle East, e.g. in Iran, it has much to focus on. The military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, which so far only had half of the success prospected, but caused a lot of effort, also had the side effect that Iran could strengthen its power in the Middle East and further work on its ambitions as a nuclear power. As Iran is one of the strongest opponents, and a potential threat to the existence of Israel also these actions are related to the Middle East Peace Process. Concerning the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict its recent attempt to adopt a more critical attitude towards Israel's continued building of settlements has led to a short term dispute between Israel and its protector, but in the end Israel could win a diplomatic consent and the Palestinian representatives used this attempt to insist on the inclusion of this issue in further peace talks. So the American attempt of a critical approach towards the Israeli policy strengthened the incompatible positions of both parties. Up to now no new successes could be reached to bring the conflicting parties back into negotiations. Keller sees the reason for this in a lack of new ideas towards a new approach of peace negotiation by the USA. So far, nothing has changed in the Israeli-American relations and the US approach in the Middle East. But it became more obvious that the USA is hindered by their variety of problems that need to be solved on the one hand and its lack of ideas on the other hand. Thus, the USA, though it is still trying to bring the road map plan of a two-state solution to a successful implementation, for the moment it rather focuses on the prevention of further escalations.²²²

C. Gasteyger in 2005 states, the EU has a wide ranging network of relations via Turkey towards the Middle East. In his opinion, the attempts of the EU and the MEQ cannot be successful without the interference of a strong and ambitious USA. Left alone the EU can

²²¹ Coordinator for Foreign and Security Policy at the Adenauer-Stiftung in Berlin.

²²² Keller, Patrick (2010), pp. 23- 28.

only rely on small impacts via its external trade agreements, its humanitarian aid and occasionally mediation in the conflict. He further concludes that the Union's engagements towards a closer cooperation with neighbourhood countries of the Mediterranean Sea could not be the success aimed for, because the Union has huge deficits in self-definition. Although the institutional framework and power exists, clearly defined and supported values and principles as well as a common political will for its promotion are missing. Further, he points out that the Union can be a role model for other regions, because it so far succeeded in overcoming hurdles such as security threats, instabilities and economic differences, mainly among the old and new Member states, within the process of European integration, even if that process will not have the success envisioned in the future. The attempts of institutional amendments towards this position of an influencing actor in the international system, were made by the establishment of a common security strategy, external trade and peacekeeping missions on the African continent to the Middle East, that provided the EU with a positive image toward its activities in the field of foreign policy. But moreover he remarks the risk of an external orientation, without a clear self-definition. This 'identity' must be shaped by the establishment of common values, which are accepted and broadly supported by the public and an idea of the finality of the process of European integration that has not been clearly developed yet. The negative consequences of a change, without the political will in form of the support by the European citizens, can be proved by the debate on the Constitutional Treaty and the referenda that made it fail. In his opinion, the Union's nowadays driving force behind coherence must be the people, common values and legitimacy. Hence, it is not efficient to establish more or review the complex structure in order to gain a more influential position in the international system without an idea or clear position behind it.²²³

4.4.2. Internal European controversies

C. Katsioulis in 2008 focuses on the changes in the European foreign policy and its impact on the role of the EU as an international actor. He is of the opinion, that the EU has a wide range of tools and instruments in the field of foreign policy, but it is not able to use them properly in the Balkans and in the Middle East, because of its complex structure and lack of cohesion.

²²³ Cf. C. Gasteyger, Curt (2005), pp. 517-524.

Further, he refers to the use of the tool of a prospected accession in the Balkan region.²²⁴ A tool which so far is not very likely used towards the conflicts of the Middle East, though the idea was already brought up towards Israel from European leaders (see chapter 4.3.7). The failure of the attempts to become a more influential actor in those regions, shown by the Cyprus issue and the Membership of the Republic of Cyprus in 2004, outlines an EU that is trying, but so far without success. On the one hand the reasons for this failure can be found in the variety of tools and elements used without clear priorities, a lack of a common political position and an internal lack of coherence and legitimacy, and on the other hand high pressure for success towards the Union by the third countries involved. So he concludes that the EU is well equipped to become an international influential actor but so far is not ready to act as one single actor.²²⁵

4.4.3. EU views

M. Otte, the Special Representative for the Middle East, says in an article in 2009 that the “*EU has a role of its own to play in the Middle East*”. In his opinion, this is the role as a partner for the USA, which keeps its leading position in the MEPP. But he expects the USA to rely stronger on multilateralism, which is a declared aim of the nEFP and gives the EU the chance to rise in its position as a stronger ally. The qualifications for this role are the Union’s new foreign policy tools such as the network of agencies and representatives of the EU and its Member states that give the EU a very high presence in that region. Especially the ENP and the EUROMED help to promote its values to the region and show a positive example of how cooperation can be executed. Further, it has an important role as a huge donor of financial aid. Moreover, the process of European integration serves as a role model for regional cooperation. Finally he emphasizes that coherency will lead to the stronger role as a partner of the USA.²²⁶

²²⁴ Cf. Katsioulis, Christos (2008), Europäische Außenpolitik auf dem Prüfstand. Auf halber Strecke zum globalen Akteur?, pp. 11-15.

²²⁵ Cf. Katsioulis, Christos (2008), Europäische Außenpolitik auf dem Prüfstand. Auf halber Strecke zum globalen Akteur?, pp. 11-15.

²²⁶ Otte, Marc, 'The EU has a role of its own to play in the Middle East', p. 51.

Despite the ongoing efforts of the EU towards the MEPP, the Commission's report on the so far reached progress of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the "*ENP Country Progress Report 2009 – Israel*" published in May 2010, states that up until now economically an improvement, but politically very little could be reached by the attempts. Currently, the EU tries to extend its economic cooperation with the countries of the MEPP and partially already succeeded, e.g. through the conclusion of some new agreements. But, politically European and international attempts could neither stop Israel from building further settlements, nor reach an improvement of the relations between Israel and the Palestinians, e.g. on the facilitated passage on persons and goods at the borders of Gaza, while the military operations and the Hamas leadership in Gaza continue (as shown before by the recent escalations in Gaza in the first days of June 2010). Solely an extension of the mandate of the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah (border between Gaza and Egypt) until May 2010 could be concluded, though it must be mentioned that the actual situation prevents the execution in practice.²²⁷

Also a survey on the "successes and failures of Euro-Med-Partnership" from May 2010 commissioned by the Commission and carried out by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) as well, finds that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a huge obstacle towards the progress of the ENP and EUROMED in that region. In the survey "*371 experts and actors from the 43 countries of the Mediterranean and the EU*" were questioned. In detail, the results of the survey show that 73% of the people questioned are of the opinion that the conflicts "*seriously endangered the Partnership*". Consequently, more than 60 percent of the respondents stated that "*Conflict resolution in the region*" is their key priority. Further priorities are the "*Promotion of democracy and political pluralism (49%)*", "*Water access and sustainability (41.5%)*" and "*Education (41%)*". So at least in this survey the awareness of the conflicts and their negative impact on the region as well as the awareness of the necessity to respond to these problems is clearly expressed.²²⁸

²²⁷ Cf. European Commission (2010), Delegation of the European Union to Israel - ENP Country Progress Report 2009 – Israel (12/05/2010).

²²⁸ Europe Aid (undated).

5. Conclusion and prospect

The first section of this thesis has shown the hurdles, that the EU in its attempt to become a more powerful actor in the international system has to overcome. These are firstly the hurdle to become one actor and secondly the hurdle to agree on a common way to act. The Treaty of Lisbon is an attempt to overcome these hurdles by the enhancement of cooperation and the creation of a clearer structure, which for example focuses more on some persons, such as the HR and the EEAS, so to say his 'foreign office'. Besides, the Union was given a legal personality so that it can be a Member in international organisations itself. It was shown that these changes, with which the EU now is more in accordance with the picture of a state's foreign policy, could contribute to a higher recognition of the EU as a powerful international actor by other international actors and their representatives, simply because of its more uniform representation. However, for instance the CFSP remains under control of the Member states via the Council, whereby the possible controversies of the Members were not solved but only transferred into the system. As a result, other measures, such as the possibilities of vocal abstention but also closer cooperation, are measures which make it easier to find a compromise, but at the same time also could run the risk of splitting the Members into several fractions in practice. For example, these newly created opportunities can give states that have larger military capacities and are able to form a common will, the opportunity to act on a permanent basis even though these actions do not correspond to the positions of all Member States of the union. Therefore, it is doubtful whether the changes of the treaty can be seen as a contribution to the chance of achieving a stronger political role in the international system. Finally, it will strongly depend on the arrangements in practice.

In order to reach its aim, the Union, although in its development of the nEFP, has further created own military capabilities and the ESS. The latter for now cannot be discussed as an attempt to create a European army, because the Union clearly states the explicit reference to the requirements of the UN and to the NATO. For this background it was pointed out that, the partly vaguely formulated aims and means, have led to a discussion among experts towards the question, whether the EU thereby loses its civil character that it could claim since beginning of its political and foreign-policy cooperation in the 1970s, by the creation of these military means and therefore at least the attempt of a future European army.

Currently, experts and the EU are both of the opinion that, *inter alia* the practical applicability of these military capabilities for up to now peacekeeping missions, preserve the Union's civil characteristics.

Whereas some experts continue to refer to the Union as a civil power, others, and especially the Union itself, tend to use the term smart power, which implies the use of both forms of power (soft and hard) and therefore has a rather limited significance towards the future practical use or increase of military capacities. Nevertheless, experts and the Union at the moment stress out the intent for a preferential use of civil power.

I come to the conclusion that similar to the discussion on the driving forces behind the process of European integration and the future of the EU, e.g. before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, it is idle to define the characteristics of the Union theoretically. That is why I agree with the approach that uses practical proof for the interpretation of the character of the EU. Such a practical example is the engagement and the role of the Union and its nEFP in the Middle East Peace Process. Although already the term Middle East is a namely distinction from the „Western countries“ of Europe and the USA, the Middle East, *inter alia* via the process of European integration, has become more and more important for the EU and its aim to become a more powerful international actor.

As shown in chapter 3 and 4, the geostrategic position of the region of the Middle East, especially from a “Western” perspective, that already in history has made that region subject to various interests of powers and a huge media presence. Next to the historical links, as shown in chapter 3, the enlargement of 2004, with the membership of the Republic of Cyprus, has brought the Union's external borders towards the Middle East and increased the European interests in that region.

Both, the EU and the USA pursue their interests towards security and energy in that region and are engaged in the attempts of the Middle East Quartet for a peaceful solution of the conflicts. The aim of this process is to put the parties into continued dialogue as well as to assist the states, including the future Palestinian state, in their efforts for a solution of the complex territorial disputes and other issues.

As the most recent events in the Israel-Palestinian Conflict have proved, neither the EU nor the USA in their own or common attempts within the MEQ so far could reach remarkably success. The hardened positions of the conflicting parties and the ignorance towards the diplomatic efforts for a peaceful solution, *inter alia* expressed by the continued settlement-building of Israel in the Palestinian territories and the increased use of violence in the Palestinian resistance, clearly point out that the international actors, no matter how much power they have, could have almost no impact on the conflicting parties via the use of diplomacy.

Nevertheless, the external support towards the MEPP not only consists of diplomatic means but also includes various other tools and instruments of foreign policy, such as financial aid. The support of the EU also combines the means of diplomacy, e.g. by the HR and the EUSR for the Middle East, especially with financial aid for the establishment of the future Palestinian state and the Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, the EU uses also its military instruments, for instance for the monitoring of the border crossing point in Rafah and the increase of the Palestinian police. But for now these military means were only theoretically used. For example, the ongoing conflict has stopped the practical execution of the mission in Rafah. In conclusion, this military mean does not contribute towards the MEPP, because it is not actively used yet.

In addition to its diplomatic and military means, the Union further uses its economical tools, for example in the ENP, in order to link the region stronger to the EU and therefore contribute to its stability. The honest evaluation by the Commission report, shown in chapter 4.4.3, towards the rather small improvements in trade and cooperation within the ENP, which are disrupted by the conflicts as well as the still missing diplomatic successes in the MEPP, express the low impact that these tools and instruments could have so far. Despite this, the Union still strongly uses and promotes these means.

One theoretical success, which practical implementation will be seen in the future, is for example the extension of the economic relations of the EU with Israel as well as with the Palestinians. But also this success must be seen rather critically. It is doubtful, if such a cooperation in the context of the current situation, could become a greater success than it already is, if there is no further diplomatic or political success.

It is specifically the support for one of the conflicting parties as well as the political concept, that stands behind this engagement and the measures taken that defines the relation of EU with the USA in general and in the MEPP. The EU focuses in its efforts on international cooperation, e.g. with the use of its own means such as the ENP and supports a multilateral policy, in which it positions itself as a strong international actor among others in the international system. In contrast, the superpower USA is more supportive of a unilateral approach towards the international system, in which it acts as a leader and guide for the other actors. As a consequence of internal challenges and a strong political and economic burden caused by its engagement in the fight against terrorism, e.g. in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as diplomatic and economic actions against Iran, the USA was more or less forced to adopt a more multilateral approach, as was concluded by P. Keller. In the Middle East the 'traditional' relations between the USA and the EU seem to go on. Both are in general in harmony with the commonly developed attempt of the road map peace solution in the MEQ. But in its practical support, the EU follows a different approach than the USA, as can be seen by the example of the support for the Palestinian police by both parties.

Towards the question on how the EU can present itself to the outside as a unit and therefore strong community, the institutional changes of the foreign policy, among other things a clearer division of the competence and personnel representation to the outside, as well as the extension of the methods to a very wide spectrum of tools, create at least theoretically a chance to reach this aim. But the internal European controversies and, for example, the dispute on the Iraq war and the failure of a European constitution, at least under this name, make this ambitious aim a rather high hurdle for the EU. However, if it should succeed in letting the common interests prevail before its Member states own interests (e.g. by the recognition of the need of the states to their own advantage) and in appearing as a unity, the EU could realise its self-promised ambitions as a political „global player“ with considerable weight. The new era of economic and financial crises and the rise of ambitious new, old powers like China and Iran could cause this effect of a stronger internal European unity. Nevertheless, a clear conclusion on the EU and its relations to these powers, would need a more detailed analysis, which cannot be provided within the narrow scope of this work.

However, the concept of the European Union or the concept of the European integration apparently carried out without an idea of finality also represents a well-known hurdle. The difficulty consists in speaking with a single voice, without having a precise common idea of what should be said with this voice. Still today the influence of the most different political theories can be found in and proved with the process of the European integration. Therefore, mostly very general and basic aims, like peace and democracy, are represented and promoted by the EU to the outside. Consequently, the unique structure of the EU, with its complexity and the need of compromises also after the adaptations of Lisbon, can lead to a foreign policy which is recognised by other political actors as indistinct and weak.

The so far failure of the European ambitions to become a more powerful international political actor also can be found in the relation between the EU and the USA in the MEPP. There the USA keeps its leading position and historically grown supporting position towards Israel, while the EU remains mostly the contributor of financial aid for the 'weaker' Palestinians and economic cooperation with all of the confliction parties, but does not take a leading role in the political dialogues. This can be seen as a result of the different relations between the Member states and the parties of the Middle East Conflicts, by which the EU has to uphold a rather neutral position. But further as a European attempt to prevent the creation of a American-Israeli-European-Arabic conflict in the Middle East for the background of the by lines that were drawn between America and some states of the Middle East, due to the American war against the states that support terrorism.

Further, the EU by its expressed respect to NATO memberships and other international organisations in the Treaty of Lisbon, and in other statements, clearly states that it wants to be an ally of the USA not a competitor. On the one hand this expresses its support for a multilateral international system. On the other hand, in the context of the aim of becoming a stronger international actor, that shows that the EU just like in its founding decades still is very reluctant to take over the full responsibility, tasks and risks of an international leader. The risks such a position can have for an international actor are shown by the decrease of the American power by its international multipolar engagement. The EU instead of becoming an international actor rather concentrates on a regional influence and leading role, e.g. by the offer of the process of European integration as a role model for regional integration, like in

the Mediterranean Sea, although this also touches international concerns like the MEPP. But the impact of the conflicts of the Middle East also hinders European actions, e.g. the ENP on regional basis.

In conclusion, the acting of the Union in the MEPP and its relations towards the superpower USA show that the Union so far has not reached its aim of a more powerful political actor. But as this aim rather was a long-term goal, for now it is only to say that the new foreign policy, with the recent changes of the Treaty of Lisbon did neither result in an abrupt increase in the power or the Role of the Union in the MEPP nor in the international system.

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