

Mendel University in Brno
Faculty of Regional Development and International Studies

Israel and the European Union Bilateral Relations

Bachelor Thesis

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I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the supervisor of my thesis - Mgr. Ing. Richard Turcsányi, Ph.D. – for his useful advice and leadership.

A big thank you also goes to my beloved family for their support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The Thesis „Israel and the European Union Bilateral Relations“ addresses the mutual ties and approaches connecting the State of Israel and the EU. It describes the main historical events, which have individually shaped their policies as well as it addresses the history of their bilateral relations. This Thesis also introduces the forms of cooperation between the two bodies and diplomatic tensions, which have had a significant impact on the mutual approaches.

Key Words:

Israel; European Union; bilateral relations; foreign policy; diplomacy; international relations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Many world powers can describe their relationship to be beneficial, yet questionable and controversial at the same time. Israel and the European Union are no exception. The European Union (EU) is considered to be one of the main economic and political partners to Israel, alongside with the United States of America (USA). We refer to the Israeli-EU relationship to be ‘exceptional’ for two main reasons. The first reason is that Israel enjoys its ‘special status’¹ with the EU through which it benefits from mutual agreements, despite major political differences. The second reason is that there are continuous waves of criticism flowing from both parties on a regular basis, so affirmations of friendship are usually followed by strong disagreements. The topic of this thesis – “Israel and the European Union Bilateral Relations” was chosen, because the author finds this problem to be important to the contemporary global society as well as to both parties alone. Although the topic is well covered in both scientific literature and news articles, the situation changes basically day to day.

As the name suggests, this thesis will be focused on the special relationship the State of Israel and the European Union share. This bachelor thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first half of the thesis is focused on the historical development of both bodies. The topic of Israel-EU bilateral relations is so broad and complex that the author finds it crucial to briefly explain the historical backgrounds in order to make all the information and events described more understandable. In the case of the European Union, we also mention the most important EU institutions with a brief explanation of their functioning. The second half of the thesis addresses the main topic, which is the relationship between the two world powers itself. We examine the roots of the cooperation together with the beginnings of their bilateral relations, and agreements which set a legal basis for the cooperation. We also address trade and economic cooperation. A big emphasis is put on the strategic cooperation, which is key for maintaining stability and balance. In the relationship between the EU and Israel, we can see many tensions which significantly shape the level of bilateral relations and which play a key role in diplomatic negotiations.

¹ For ‘Special Status’ see page 32.

There are two main research questions this thesis aims to answer. *What is the relationship between The State of Israel and the European Union? What influences their bilateral relations?*

The goal of this bachelor thesis is to answer the research questions, to describe and evaluate the level of bilateral relations, and to introduce the reader to the problem both in historical context and from present perspective; to identify the disputes which shape the bilateral relations significantly and at the same time to analyze the approach of both sides in order to address the current situation and evaluate what influences their mutual policies.

2. METHODOLOGY

A 'Case Study' is applied to describe and deal with given topic. The case study deals with a pre-selected phenomenon and examines it within its real context. It has a primarily descriptive goal as it seeks to capture a complex case and describes relationships in their entirety.² In this case, the case study is applied to describe the phenomenon of bilateral relations between Israel and the European Union. It has been used to collect data and information from a specific environment of international relations. We are looking at the historical background of the problem, and describe the historical development of both parties as well as the events of the present, which is evident from the chapter dealing with the current form of their bilateral relations. We use existing data and information that can be further used for future exploration.

Case study is the one qualitative research method used in this paper. It was a clear option since the topic of bilateral relations is very complex and broad, therefore it was necessary to use qualitative research to collect a big amount of data, which is available and easily accessible. Qualitative research is endogenous research, which means that the resulting data is generated from the participants themselves, not by the researcher, and the research focuses primarily on the specifics of the description of individuals or cases. During the research, hypotheses are not tested, but rather created.³ The advantage of qualitative research is that it can derive intricate information from a large amount of data. Primary data was collected from official sources – Embassies, official diplomatic statements, speeches of leaders of both parties, strategic partnerships or mutual agreements, United Nations resolutions as well as the EU and Knesset resolutions and decisions. Secondary data consists of scientific literature written on the topic, studies, political books, theoretical books on diplomacy and foreign relations as well as news articles.

² BUSINESS DICTIONARY. *Case Study – Definition*. In: *WebFinance Inc.* [on-line] Accessed on [2017-05-19] Available at: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/case-study.html>

³ AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON. *Qualitative Research Introduction*. In: *Center for Teaching, Research and Learning*. [on-line] Accessed on [2017-05-19] Available at: <https://www.american.edu/ctrl/upload/Qualitative-Research-Introduction.pdf>

3. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

3.1. Introduction

Independence of the Jewish state, which is located on the East coast of the Mediterranean Sea, was announced on 14 May 1948. The State of Israel (*Medinat Yisrael*) recognizes Jerusalem (*Yerushalayim* in Hebrew, *al-Quds* in Arabic) as its capital even though according to the 1947 UN Resolution⁴, the city of Tel Aviv is the metropolis of the country. The author of this work will stick to the fact that the State of Israel recognizes Jerusalem as its capital, and therefore all the links pointing to the Israeli metropolis, unless stated differently, will be about Jerusalem.

The State of Israel is a democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government in which the unicameral parliament known as *The Knesset* operates, and to which 120 new members are elected every four years. The seat of this legislative power is in Jerusalem. The country assures a great level of prosperity and freedom to all citizens, which is an uncommon feature in the Middle East. Israel is considered to be the only Western-Style democracy in the area. There are two official languages, namely modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*) and Arabic. These are Semitic languages, which differ from standard languages used in Europe by writing and reading direction. These two languages are clearly distinguishable from each other mainly by using different fonts.

The State of Israel is a country which is being referred to as the Holy Land by three major global religions – Christianity, Judaism and Islam. All the disagreements related to the entitlement of the Holy Land and Jerusalem, have in the past escalated into many disputes and wars. These clashes do not cease even in these days, but their violent nature has been reduced into clashes primarily between the Muslim and Jewish communities.

Israel shares a border with four purely Arab countries: the Lebanese Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Arab Republic of Egypt.⁵ The most important towns are the already mentioned Jerusalem, Tel Aviv - Yaffo, Haifa, Eilat or Beer Sheba.

⁴ UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL. *Resolution 478 of 20 August 1980*. In: *The United Nations* [online]1980, accessed on: [2017-05-10] Available at:

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/DDE590C6FF232007852560DF0065FDDB>

⁵ For the *Political Map of Israel and its Neighboring States* see page 46., Picture Attachment n. 1.

The State of Israel is situated on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea and its territory is measured at the widest point 135 km and the longest place 470 km.⁶

This relatively small area is inhabited by 8.059 million people.⁷ The Israeli currency is called the New Israeli Shekel (*Sheqel Hadash*) whose international code is NIS. One hundred NIS is equal to 27.41 USD (data valid for 23 March 2017). The currency came into force on 1 January 1986.⁸

3.2. Historical Development before the Establishment of the State

Although the aim of this paper is not to examine in detail all the historical events that shaped, and have still been shaping the development of Israel, the author considers it important to at least outline the most important historical events that would lead to clarification of the historical ties and relations between states or nations.

3.2.1. Development Before the Common Era

The main sources from which we can draw when compiling the historical development of the territory of the present state of Israel - Palestine - are mainly biblical stories and hieroglyphics originating from ancient Egypt. The Romans began marking Palestine as 'Palestine' in the 1st century A.D., with the name being derived from the Philistine nation which lived in the western coastal area of Kanaan.

The first seen inhabitants of the area were West Semitic tribes, known as Canaan, and the original name of the area was derived from the name of these tribes - *The Land of Canaan*. This area had been the site of frequent disputes and wars already in the early history - either when it was a war campaign directed into the area or just the passage of troops, which focused on some other goal. During the conquest of Palestine by Hebrew tribes, Jerusalem had almost no significance, it was just a small town that nobody seemed to be interested in.

⁶ WORLD BANK. *Country – Israel*. In: *The World Bank Group* [on-line] 2017, accessed on: [2017-04-28] Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/israel>

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. *Israel Today*. In: *AIPAC: America's Pro-Israel Lobby* [on-line] USA, 2017 accessed on: [2017-05-17] Available at: <http://www.aipac.org/learn/resources/maps/israel-today>

*Hebrews*⁹ started arriving to the area from the South and the East in the 13th and 12th century BC. Their form of entry was rather violent, with their armies conquering and destroying cities and killing original inhabitants. In the 11th century A.D. a centralized Israeli state was created.

The very first king of Israel was Saul (since around 1025 A.D.), but much more significant are King David (the turn of the 11th and 10th century A.D.) and his son Solomon. During the reign of King David, Jerusalem became the capital of the kingdom and it was during his reign, when the kingdom expanded dramatically. After his death, his successor King Solomon carried on with the expansion of the whole empire - chiefly through marriage. During his reign, the first temple, the Temple of Jerusalem (*Beit HaMikdash*) was built.¹⁰

After the death of the third king, the centralized Empire didn't last long. In 928 A.D., the Empire was divided into Israel (the state in the northern part of the territory with its capital Samaria) and Judea (the state in the southern part of the territory, whose capital was Jerusalem). Along with the establishment of the southern state, the usage of the term Jews - people of Judah - has begun. Hence the concept of Judaism - the first monotheistic religion. Yet, this was a very weak state, which did not have a capable ruler, so in the years 722-721 A.D. it was defeated by the Assyrians. This defeat symbolized the end to existence of any state in this area for a very long time.

In Judea, the situation was somewhat better, since it possessed more capable rulers. The belief in one God and the religion helped in the unity among residents. In the 5th century A.D., the *Great Assembly*¹¹ (*Hakneset Hagdolah*) was based in Jerusalem. This Assembly held a representative role and had 120 members. Following the example of the Great Assembly, Israeli parliament - the Knesset - was founded, also with 120 members. Nevertheless, the state has paid the price not only for underestimating the strength of Egypt, but also for its internal, religious disputes. In 578 A.D., the state was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar II, the ruler of Babylon.

⁹ Author's note: „Hebrews“ is a term widely featured in the Bible and stands for the Israelites, who speak Hebrew. BRENNER, Michael. *A Short History of the Jews*. pub. n. 1. Prague: Nakladatelství Paseka s.r.o., 2014, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 21

¹¹ THE STATE OF ISRAEL. *The Knesset History – Introduction*. In: *The Knesset*. [on-line] 2006, accessed on [2017-04-12] Available at: https://www.knesset.gov.il/history/eng/eng_hist.htm

Almost one thousand years after the conquest of Judea and at the beginning of the Babylonian captivity, the Persian king Cyrus the Great¹² had the Jews leave to their original homeland, but only a minority of them wanted to move back to Palestine. After returning to Jerusalem, it was necessary to restore the damaged buildings and turn the city back into a prosperous place. A new temple was built and the formation of the final text of the *Old Testament* is also dated to this period.¹³

During the conquests of Alexander the Great to the Middle East, the Greek culture started to spread in the area with Greek becoming the most frequent language. Its mixing with the local culture gave birth to the Hellenistic period. The religious leaders were in a strong opposition; with their opinion escalating into riots in Jerusalem. But in the end, despite all the resistance, Jews and Greeks were unified. The huge Empire created by Alexander the Great also facilitated trade relations between countries it had been connecting.¹⁴ The bilateral trade, not only between individual Middle East countries, but also between the Middle East and Greece experienced a huge expansion.

3.2.2. Development After the Beginning of Our Era

Since the mid-2nd Century A.D., the territory of today's Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire. An important milestone of this historical period was renaming Jerusalem to *Aelia Capitolina* and the subsequent expulsion of Jews from the city. It took almost 300 years before the Jews were at least allowed to visit Jerusalem once a year and pray at the Western Wall of the ruined temple (*HaKotel HaMa'aravi*). This wall is now known as the Wailing Wall. During this period, Christianity was established as the world's second great religion whose followers later began to claim the territory of the Holy City.¹⁵

As part of the Roman efforts to expel the Jews from the land, Judea was renamed to *Syria Palaestina*. In the fourth century, Christianity became the state religion throughout the Byzantine Empire and Jerusalem obtained back its original name.

¹² Author's note: Cyrus the Great, commonly known as Cyrus II of Persia.

¹³ BRENNER, Michael. *A Short History of the Jews*. pub. n. 1. Prague: Nakladatelství Paseka s.r.o., 2014, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 22

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 34

¹⁵ *History of Christianity*. All About Religion. In: *AllAboutReligion.com* [on-line] USA, 2017 accessed on [2017-05-17] Available at: <http://www.allaboutreligion.org/history-of-christianity.htm>

Although Jerusalem had been, for the next 200 years, developing as a Christian city, those Jews who returned to their ancestral homes could live freely as well. The Persian invaders made the end to this relatively peaceful co-existence, as they plundered the country and killed over 60,000 of its Christian inhabitants.

We shall not forget, that Palestine had been dominated by Arabs between 7th and 11th Century with the newly-established Islam as their religion.¹⁶ At that time, they built the Al Aqsa Mosque which is marked as the site of Ascension of Prophet Mohammed. Thus, the imaginary, and later a real battle for the Holy City was joined by the followers of another religion – the Muslims.

Historical development of Israel was greatly influenced by the Crusades too. Ideologically, Crusades were holy wars against the enemies of Christianity, whose aim was to expel Arabs from the country. But in fact, it was mainly about consolidating the power of the Pope and gaining influence. The Crusaders conquered Jerusalem and kept it, together with other major cities, for about 100 years; then they were pushed back to Europe by Arabs.

Since that time, Palestine was under the rule of various Arab tribes and empires. The most important of these is the Ottoman Empire, which controlled the territory since 1299 until the 1st World War.¹⁷ It is no surprise, that Islam became the official religion. During the 19th Century, the Ottoman Empire had been losing its power and therefore a significant part of its land was in a bad economic, social and political condition. An interesting fact is, that at that time, there was peace between the Jewish minority and the Arab majority.

An important movement for the historical development leading to the creation of the State of Israel is Zionism. Zionism is defined as Jewish nationalist movement, responding to Anti-Semitism and the tragic Jewish history; it seeks the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.¹⁸ This movement was founded by Theodore Herzl in connection with the Dreyfus affair,¹⁹ which took place in France.

¹⁶ GISCONI, B. *History of Islam*. In: *History World* [on-line] 2017, History World Home, accessed on [2017-04-30] Available at: <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=aa56>

¹⁷ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 13

¹⁸ SACHAR, Howard M. *A History of Israel*. pub. n. 2. New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1996, 1270 p. ISBN: 978-0375711329 p. 55

¹⁹ Author's note: Dreyfus affair was a trial against French officer of Jewish origin Alfred Dreyfus, who was accused of spying for the German Empire, on the basis of false evidence.

The place was originally supposed to be created in South America, but these plans were soon changed and all efforts were directed towards the area of Palestine, with which the Jewish nation is inextricably linked. The first step in gaining the desired land was to encourage the colonization of Palestine, whether that be by craftsmen, farmers or small traders. This colonization was followed by efforts to boost the national identity; and finally, it was necessary to make the Great Britain and other world powers and international organizations to recognize the newly established state.²⁰

During the First World War, Great Britain showed considerable efforts to maintain its trade routes to India, which led through the Suez Canal. As part of these efforts, the Great Britain won the Arab tribes to his side, which were at that time the majority population in the area, with the unspoken promise that after the war, Palestine would be recognized as an independent state. Representatives of Great Britain, however, concluded the so-called '*Sykes-Picot Agreement*'²¹, together with French policy-makers. This agreement is related to the partition of Palestine after the war; GB was to gain the territory of today's Iraq and Gulf States; France was to gain Syria. Palestine, including Jerusalem, was to be declared the territory to international scrutiny. This outcome made Arabs very upset as they considered it to be a violation of a promise. After the official announcement of the British Mandate over Palestine on 29 September 1923,²² the Agreement 'fell under the table'. In 1922, the *Palestine Constitution* was established as it introduced a strict colonial regime.

After World War II., there were – despite all expectations – no free immigration quotas for European Jews who wanted to move to Palestine.²³ This strong immigration policy led to heavy illegal immigration, therefore it is not possible to determine the exact number of people who have moved to Palestine. At this time, the USA also pushes on the Great Britain due to its influence in Palestine – main reason for that was the mineral wealth of the region. As time passed by, the USA gained more influence on the political and economic development in the area, at the expense of Great Britain.

On 18 February 1947, Great Britain passed the issue of Palestine under the auspices of the UN and in June of the same year, the *United Nations Special Committee*

²⁰ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 44

²¹ *ibid.* p. 19

²² SCHUBERT, Kurt. *Dějiny Židů*. pub. n.1. Prague: NS Svoboda, 2003, 132 p. ISBN: 80-205-1035-2 p. 118

²³ *ibid.* p. 120

on Palestine (UNSCOOP) was established.²⁴ Most members of this committee agreed that two separate states – Jewish and Arabic – shall be created. According to their decision, Jerusalem was to become a city under an international supervision; rather than the capital of any of the two states. Similarly to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, this decision was also never implemented.

On 14 May 1948, the independent State of Israel was founded with Jerusalem as its capital city and David Ben Gurion as its historically first Prime Minister and Chaim Weizmann as its first President.²⁵ No independent Palestinian state has been declared until nowadays.

3.3. Modern History of the State of Israel

The newly proclaimed state had to fight for its right to exist straight from the beginning. The first conflict is commonly known as the *First Arab-Israeli War*²⁶ (*Milchemet Ha-Acma'ut*). In the afternoon of 14 May 1948, the armies of all Israel's neighboring countries (Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon) crossed the border and the war officially started as the aggressors clearly declared their intention to destroy the land. The start of this war was marked with the lack of soldiers and weapons, but after two weeks, the Israeli Army – *Israel Defense Forces* (IDF)²⁷ – was introduced and managed to win the war after one year.

Among other things, the young state also had to deal with its state deficit caused mainly by the need for armaments and immigration. It was primarily David Ben Gurion's credit, that financial aid had started flowing from the Jewish Diaspora representatives from all across the world, but also from foreign governments, from which the most important donors were the USA and Germany in a form of war reparations. It is also important to highlight the help the Czech Republic provided towards the State of Israel.

The Sinai Campaign led by Israel after a secret collusion with the Great Britain and France against Egypt, aimed to open its sea routes to Eilat after Egypt nationalized

²⁴ SCHUBERT, Kurt. *Dějiny Židů*. pub. n.1. Prague: NS Svoboda, 2003, 132 p. ISBN: 80-205-1035-2 p. 121

²⁵ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 39

²⁶ *ibid.* p. 43

²⁷ *Israel Defense Forces: History & Overview*. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In: *Jewish Virtual Library – A Project of AICE* [on-line] USA-ISRAEL, 2017 accessed on [2017-02-23] Available at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-the-israel-defense-forces>

the Suez Canal. The second reason for Israeli participation was the effort to eliminate all rebel-held bases in the Gaza Strip.²⁸ The campaign took place in 1956 and Israel managed not only to fulfill the predetermined goals, but also to conquer a large part of the Sinai Peninsula. However, on the UN instructions, Israeli troops had to withdraw from all occupied territories, since it was reportedly an illegitimate action. The sea routes remained open and the UN sent an allied army to the Gaza Strip to maintain peace in the area.

Rebellions at Israel's borders had been escalating over the years and the possibility of war became ever more real as it was obvious that the surrounding states were prepared to strike. On 5 June 1967, Israel carried out a preemptive attack on Egypt, Syria and Jordan.²⁹ During this intervention, the IDF was very successful mainly because of the suddenness and speed of the attack, within which it destroyed a considerable part of the enemy's air force.

After six days, Israel controlled the Sinai Peninsula (formerly under the administration of Egypt), the Golan Heights (formerly controlled by Syria), the Old City of Jerusalem and the entire East Jerusalem (originally under the control of Jordan). From this moment on, the West Bank has been 'occupied' by Israel. This *Six-Day War* also heavily influenced the bilateral relations with the European Union. The EU did not recognize the newly-conquered areas and has been considering the Golan Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as "occupied" territories.³⁰

The Yom Kippur War (also known as the *Ramadan War* or the *October War*) which took place in October 1973 was an unexpected attack of Egypt and Syria on Israel.³¹ In early days of the war it had seemed like Israel was being pushed back to the pre-Six-Day War territory, but after about a week the situation changed and the Israeli army started to dominate. The ceasefire agreement was signed on 11 November 1973 with no clear winner.

²⁸ ISRAEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. *The Sinai Campaign – Operation Kadesh 1956*. In: *The State of Israel –History* [on-line] 2013, accessed on [2017-01-14] Available at: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/History/Pages/The%20Sinai%20Campaign%20-%201956.aspx>

²⁹ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 118

³⁰ *ibid.* p. 118

³¹ *ibid.* p. 142

In the late 80's of the 20th Century, an intifada took place in Israel. That was reflected in daily unrests or rather street skirmishes during which the disgruntled Palestinians kept attacking Israeli soldiers and civilians. Demonstrations against the current regime were also frequent. The *First Intifada* broke out on 8 December 1987 as a direct response to Israeli policy of colonization of the Gaza Strip and other 'occupied' territories.³² As the level of rebellion was increasing, the IDF had to suppress it relatively hard. It should be noted, that the general public was divided into two camps, one of which fully supported the government's actions and the other supported the creation of an independent Palestinian state. This level of rebellion had a negative impact on Israel's economy, mainly because of the reduction of internal labor mobility as Israel increased the severity of border controls; but also, it decreased its credibility in the eyes of its international partners.

Given these fights, or better said attacks; both parties had no other choice than to meet and try to find a common solution. The first official meeting happened during the *Madrid Conference* on 30 October 1991.³³ Even though no mutual agreement was achieved, since the participants did not reach a consensus; it was still an important step in the Israeli-Arab peace negotiations.

In January 1993, a series of *Oslo Peace Negotiations* begun.³⁴ These had been hidden from both public and international partners, but later, other states (incl. the USA) were invited to join the table. Israel was represented by Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin; the Palestinian authority was represented by Yasser Arafat. The '*Oslo Accords*'³⁵ were signed in Washington as they were supposed to determine next steps necessary to achieve the much-needed peace, meaning mainly the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and the city of Jericho. On 4 May 1994, an agreement on the territories under the Palestinian authority was concluded. But since Israel feared of terrorist attacks, it was forced to isolate the above-mentioned areas, which had worsened the national political environment again.

³² ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 200

³³ *ibid.* p. 219

³⁴ *ibid.* p. 231

³⁵ *Oslo Accords Fast Facts*. CNN Library. In: *CNN World News*. [on-line] USA, 2016, accessed on [2017-02-17] Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/03/world/meast/oslo-accords-fast-facts/>

Under the *Oslo II Accord*, which was signed in Washington two years after the initial agreement, the schedule of Israeli withdrawal from certain areas was revised.

The West Bank area has been divided into three administrative zones³⁶:

- “**AREA A**” – Palestinians have an exclusive civil and security autonomy in this area. Per the agreement, this concerns all major cities (Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilyah and Nablus). Israeli citizens are not legally allowed to entry.
- “**AREA B**” – This zone encompasses mainly densely populated areas of the West Bank. These are also under the Palestinian authority, but only in civil matters. Security questions are still in hands of Israeli executive.
- “**AREA C**” – Covers all the remaining parts of the West Bank (70,5%). This area is under full civilian and security administration of Israel. Virtually everything that falls within this zone is a part of the “permanent status.” In other words, the most controversial areas like the East Jerusalem, Jewish settlements, military bases and border zones are under Israeli authority.

The *Second Intifada* (also known as the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*) broke out on 28 September 2000.³⁷ During the intifada, the *Operation Defensive Shield* was carried out as the biggest military operation in the West Bank since the Six-Day War in 1967. Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and his statement that holy places should remain under the control of Israel initiated the uprising.³⁸ In response to this statement, a wave of resistance among Palestinians had arisen and subsequently caused fights and rebellions. It is important to note, that the Second Intifada was much more violent with many more fatalities than the previous one.

³⁶ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 244

³⁷ *ibid.* p. 272

³⁸ GOLDENBERG, Suzanne. *Rioting as Sharon Visits Islam Holy Site*. In: *The Guardian* [on-line] Jerusalem, 2000. Accessed on [2017-03-05] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/sep/29/israel>

After intense rocket launches from the Palestinian territories in December 2008, the *Operation Cast Lead* took place in the Gaza Strip as the Israeli Army targeted Hamas bases in the area. Yet, the operation was far from harming only Hamas, it impacted mainly civilians in the Gaza Strip. The operation triggered a humanitarian crisis and negative reactions from all around the world. The international community called for an investigation of all circumstances, including the suspicion of war crimes allegedly committed by both parties. During the operation, 1300 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army; the Israelis lost 13 soldiers.³⁹

The modern history of the State of Israel has also been marked by the *Arab Spring* events. The Arab Spring was a series of protests against the authoritarian regimes in the area of the Middle East. These rebellions have also had an impact on the State of Israel and its policy, because of its all-Arab neighbors.

³⁹ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.l. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 312

4. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

4.1. Historical Overview

Efforts to create an integrated European continent were evident already in the period before the World War II., but the idea itself got a real shape right after the war, which was driven mainly by a great political instability and uncertainty. It was necessary to ensure, that no similar crisis would happen in the future. The USA became the model for the integration, since it is a federal state that has evolved into a world superpower with a major potential. Europe, back then divided into nearly 40 predominantly national states, was quite the opposite. Its unification would enable the creation of a powerful body on the European continent. French diplomacy played an important initiative role in the development of the European integration. In 1950, seizing the opportunity, France presented an ambitious proposal on the creation of an integrated *Western European Union*,⁴⁰ which went far beyond the traditionally conceived intergovernmental cooperation promoted mainly by the Great Britain. The leaders of this proposal were French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman and French economist Jean Monnet. Their concept was to create a supranational organization, whose member states shall hand in part of their sovereignty.

The first step towards the integration of Western Europe was the creation of the *European Coal and Steel Community* (ECSC), which brought Belgium, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Germany together. The reason behind the creation of this community was not only economic, but also political, which sought for peace and stability in Europe. The Great Britain also took part in the discussion, but later rejected its adoption, mainly due to a disapproval with the principle of supranational institutions.

The ECSC was established by the *Treaty of Paris* of 1951.⁴¹ Following the establishment of the ECSC, the same states attempted to create a *European Defense Community* (EDC). The main objective of EDC was to create an alternative to West Germany's proposed accession to the NATO. This idea was never implemented since it touched many sensitive issues concerning national sovereignties of European states. After this failure, the leading

⁴⁰ Author's note: Western European Union was the first intergovernmental and defense organization functioning in cooperation with the European Community.

⁴¹ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Treaty of Paris* – full text. In: *The European Parliament* [on-line] Paris, 1951. Accessed on [2017-02-25] Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.1.pdf

states worried that the integration process might stagnate, therefore they mobilized all forces to search for new ways of integration.

They have concluded, that a concentration on the economic sphere would bring more benefits and be politically less controversial. The Benelux⁴² countries took the initiative as they proposed to convene a conference and develop a common treaty on transportation, energy, atomic energy, as well as a treaty on economic integration and on European institutions.

At the conference in Messina, Italy in 1955, the ECSC member states expressed their substantial agreement with the proposals of the Benelux countries and agreed on the creation of two new organizations – one for the common market and the other for atomic energy. The treaty establishing the *European Economic Community* (EEC) and the *European Atomic Energy Community* (Euratom) was signed in Rome on 25 March 1957, hence the title *Treaty of Rome*⁴³ which came to force after the ratification on 1 January 1958. The Treaty of Rome, together with the Treaty of Paris have both set a basic legal and program outline for further integration.

There were three organizations, collectively known as the *European Communities*, functioning within Europe by 1965, each of which had its own framework. In 1965, the so-called *Merger Treaty* was signed and it provided a single institutional network for all above-mentioned organizations.⁴⁴

In 1973, in a period of global economic crisis, the Community's membership base was expanded for the first time when the Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland got accepted.

The Great Britain, though, was very skeptical about the original integration plan and due to the disputes with France, it originally refused to participate. After French President Charles de Gaulle left the office, the Great Britain could join.

Charles de Gaulle was not only against the reinforcement of the transitional elements, but also against the enlargement by the Great Britain.⁴⁵ Following the introduction of the

⁴² Author's note: Benelux = Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

⁴³ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Treaty of Rome* – full text. In: *The European Commission* [on-line] Rome, 1957. Accessed on [2017-02-26] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/romania/sites/romania/files/tratatul_de_la_roma.pdf

⁴⁴ HAD M., URBAN L., *Evropská společenství – První pilíř Evropské Unie*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic with the Institute of International Relations, Prague, 2000, 165 p., p. 18

⁴⁵ *ibid.* p. 18

common trade policy in the early 1970's, the Community began to act on behalf of its member states and became the most important player in international economic relations.

The Community has participated in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations, managed to create a dense network of contractual relations with third world countries and international organizations and, together with the USA, played an important role in global economy. The interconnection in the field of foreign policy has also been intensified. Since 1974, the council of member states' highest representatives has been meeting on a regular basis as it became the supreme body of the Community, which is nowadays known as the *European Council*. Five years later, the *European Monetary System* was created and formed a basis to the *European Monetary Union*.⁴⁶ The Community policy has also begun to transfer its area of interest to other fields, particularly social, regional, and environmental.

The membership base got further expanded in the 1980's. Greece became the 10th member in 1981 followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986. In the same year, the so-called *Single European Act* (SEA) was created as the first large-scale amendment of the Treaty of Rome.⁴⁷ It addressed the creation of a single European market, an area without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is guaranteed. This concept was turned into reality in January 1993.

In 1985, the *Schengen Agreement* was signed as it aimed to remove controls at internal borders of the European Community and to intensify controls at its external borders.⁴⁸ This agreement was not part of the Community's legal order, until the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999. The signatory countries were Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1985.

As the economic integration continued to expand, it became clear, that a further cooperation in the political field would be necessary.

The common market and a respective dissolution of state borders brought numerous social problems requiring a close political interconnection.

⁴⁶ HAD M., URBAN L., *Evropská společnost – První pilíř Evropské Unie*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic with the Institute of International Relations, Prague, 2000, 165 p., p. 18.

⁴⁷ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Single European Act* – full text. In: *EUR-Lex* [on-line] Luxembourg, 1986. Accessed on [2017-05-12] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Axy0027>

⁴⁸ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Schengen Agreement* – full text. In: *EUR-Lex* [on-line] Luxembourg, 1985. Accessed on [2017-05-12] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3A133020>

The Community responded by signing the *Maastricht Treaty* in 1993, which is sometimes being referred to as the *Treaty on European Union*.⁴⁹

The Treaty initiated a new phase of European integration. It created the European Union based on three pillars.⁵⁰

- 1) **The European Communities** (comprising of the European Community, the European Coal and Steel Community and the Euratom)
- 2) **The Common Foreign and Security Policy** (CFSP)
- 3) **Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters**

The beginning of the 1990s was marked by a period of dramatic changes. After the end of the Cold War, a new situation emerged in Europe. The two main structures of the Communist system - the *Warsaw Pact* and the *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance* (COMECON)- fell apart, together with all its member states, therefore it was necessary to start negotiations as soon as possible to ensure stability in Europe. On 1 January 1995, Austria, Sweden, and Finland became members of the European Union.

The Maastricht Treaty, which gave a name to the European Union (EU) and deepened the cooperation between states, was undoubtedly an important part of the development process, but as time passed by, it became clear, that it was not going to be the definitive document. In order for the Union to continue to play its role as the main factor of stability and prosperity in Europe and to cope with the new challenges posed by the post-Cold War period (especially the enlargement of the Union to the East and South), it was crucial to increase the efficiency of the Union's institutions.

The deepening integration among member states, bringing the Community closer to citizens, and gaining more public support for European integration were the main issues discussed at the intergovernmental conference, which took place in 1996 in Turin, resulting in the *Treaty of Amsterdam*, which was signed in 1997 and ratified by all

⁴⁹ EUROPEAN UNION. The Maastricht Treaty – full text. In: The European Commission [on-line] The Netherlands, 1993. Accessed on [2017-05-19] Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europa.eu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf

⁵⁰ Author's note: For the 'Three Pillars' of the European Union - see the Maastricht Treaty – full text.

member states of the Union, entered into force on 1 May 1999.⁵¹ The Treaty of Amsterdam aimed to establish further political solidarity.

The Treaty of Amsterdam retained substantial decision-making powers with the European Council laying down universal directives on foreign and security policy. It is the Council's competence to agree on general strategies, while the Council of the European Union rather undertakes steps towards the definition and implementation of all CFSP decisions. The Treaty of Amsterdam has also redefined the concept of the so-called '*joint strategies*.' The joint strategies are defined by the European Council and enable the EU to undertake concrete measures in areas where crucial common interests of the EU member states meet.⁵²

Under the French Presidency in December 2000, a summit of the European Council was held in Nice, resulting in the *Treaty of Nice*, which was signed on 26 February 2001 and became operative on 1 February 2003. The summit was accompanied by a stormy debate on the reform of European institutions before other European countries get accepted. The Treaty of Nice brought, among other things, the following changes: the extension of the majority vote, the change in the allocation of seats in the European Commission (one Commissioner per country), the increase in the number of seats in Parliament to 740, the distribution of votes in the Council of Ministers according to the number of future members, or the aim to accept some of the best-prepared candidate countries in June 2004.⁵³

The year 2002 marked a significant step in the integration process as the common currency, known as the *EURO* became valid after being agreed-on in 1999. The common currency was set as one of the main goals of the Maastricht Treaty.⁵⁴

The new currency was immediately adopted by 12 member states – The Benelux, Finland, Italy, Ireland, France, Germany, Portugal, Austria, and Spain. This event played an important role in bringing the countries closer together and in making the Common Market more effective. Currently (May 2017) the Eurozone consists of 19 states.

⁵¹ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Treaty of Amsterdam* – full text. In: *European Parliament* [on-line] The Netherlands, 1997. Accessed on [2017-05-01] Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/treaty/pdf/amst-en.pdf>

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Treaty of Nice* – full text. In: *EUR-Lex*. [on-line] Nice, 2001. Accessed on [2017-04-17] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12001C/TXT&from=CS>

⁵⁴ Author's note: For the 'EURO' - see the Maastricht Treaty – full text.

Other EU member states (except for the Great Britain and Denmark) have the obligation to adopt the common currency sometime in the future.

Two years after the adoption of the common currency, we could witness what was the biggest enlargement of the EU so far as 10 new states joined the European Union, which meant 75 million new citizens. Among these countries were: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta. The so-called *Fifth Enlargement* signed the efforts to strengthen and stabilize the newly united continent. After this, the EU became the world's largest market with a significant increase in the EU population, which now includes over 508 million citizens⁵⁵ and has also strengthen Europe's voice on the global scene.

As a response to problems caused by the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty (a Constitution) in 2004, it was agreed to convene an intergovernmental conference, which took place in Lisbon in 2007 and sought not to reform the Constitution, rather to create a whole new treaty.

The Lisbon Treaty came into force in December 2009 and brought significant reform of the European Union. It is composed of revised versions of *Treaty on the European Union* and the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*.⁵⁶ The year 2007 also saw Romania and Bulgaria's accession to the EU. The latest accession happened in 2014, when Croatia joined the integration. This was the second single accession in the EU's history.

⁵⁵ THE WORLD BANK. *Country – EU*. In: *The World Bank Group* [on-line] 2017, accessed on: [2017-04-26] Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/eu>

⁵⁶ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Lisbon Treaty – full text*. In: *The European Parliament* [on-line] Portugal, 2007. Accessed on [2017-04-23] Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.1.5.pdf

4.2. The EU Institutions

4.2.1. The European Council

The European Council is the highest political body representing the institutional structure of the European Union, as it is at the top of the EU's legal system. The European integration process and the most important issues are being consulted by the Heads of the member states or Prime Ministers at the so-called European Summits. Until the 1970s, this informal grouping became the regular consilium at systematically summoned meetings. The European Council is the only institution within the EU with a legislative initiative.⁵⁷

4.2.2. The Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union (also known as the 'Council of Ministers') is a body that is considered to form a counterweight to the transnational European Commission and represents the interests of individual Member States. It is a legislative body which adopts legislation based on the European Commission and the European Parliament proposals and suggestions. It also represents an executive role in relation to all European policies and integration issues.⁵⁸

4.2.3. The European Commission

The European Commission (the 'Commission') represents a supranational body within the EU and stands as a guard to European interests. It stands as a counterpart to the interests of member states. It forms both an initiative, executive as well as a control body that has all the legislative power in the 1st Pillar. The Commission forms and is responsible for all policies the EU represents, represents the EU on the outside, and enforces the EU laws.⁵⁹ Each member state has own commissioner, but these don't represent their national interests, rather the EU's interests.

⁵⁷ HUNGR, Pavel. *Základy teorie státu a organizace Evropské unie*. pub. n. 2. Brno: KEY Publishing, 2007, 124 p. ISBN: 978-80-87071-13-7 p. 74

⁵⁸ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Council of the European Union*. In: *EU Institutions and Other Bodies*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-04-21] Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/council-eu_en

⁵⁹ EUROPEAN UNION. *The European Commission*. In: *EU Institutions and Other Bodies*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-03-26] Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en

4.2.4. The European Parliament

The European Parliament (the ‘Parliament’) is one of the founding institutions of the European Union, an institution that has undergone the greatest number of changes in its powers and structure. The Parliament is a part of the so-called institutional triangle, together with the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, it is an institution representing the citizens of the Member States through directly elected representatives – the so-called ‘MEPs’.⁶⁰ The Parliament, similarly as in the case of the Commission, represents the transnational concept of the Union and its position and function within the EU is constantly evolving.

4.2.5. The European Court of Justice

It is one of the five most important European institutions, acting as the protector of the law of the European Union. Its crucial functions include oversight of the application of the Union law, responsibility for the unity of its interpretation within the member states, and the scrutiny of Council and Commission decisions.

The European Court of Justice is assisted by the General Court together with the national courts of the member states and operates on the basis of the principle of the primacy and direct effect of European law.⁶¹

4.2.6. The European Central Bank

The European Central Bank (ECB) is the top banking authority of the Eurozone area. Since January 1, 1999, when the bank officially started operations, it has undertaken the responsibility for monetary policy from the Eurozone national central banks. Its primary objective is to maintain price stability.⁶² The European Central Bank is also responsible for defining and implementing foreign exchange operations, holding and managing the Eurozone foreign exchange reserves and promoting a smooth functioning of payment systems.

⁶⁰ EUROPEAN UNION. *The European Parliament*. In: *EU Institutions and Other Bodies*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-04-05] Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament_en

⁶¹ EUROPEAN UNION. *The European Court of Justice*. In: *EU Institutions and Other Bodies*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-03-15] Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/court-justice_en

⁶² EUROPEAN UNION. *The European Central Bank*. In: *EU Institutions and Other Bodies*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-03-15] Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-central-bank_en

5. ISRAEL AND THE EU RELATIONS

5.1. Introduction

Modern history has deeply stained the relations between the European Union and Israel, both positively and negatively. On one hand, it offers differentiated views and opinions, which serve to motivate a valuable cultural exchange, but on the other hand, it provides distrust and a certain level of antagonism, since the historical scars are still deeply rooted in their memories. Mutual values and common ideas significantly simplify the cooperation between the two powers and make the interaction smoother. These shared cultural characters between the State of Israel and the European Union are key factors that may possibly play a role in overcoming their differences.

The relations between the two bodies are marked by the continuous enhancement of their activities in diverse areas. Today, Israel has one of the most progressive positions among the non-member states concerning its covenanted relations with the EU.

The tactical cooperation between these two players has grown rapidly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks⁶³ and the unity in the fight against shared threats has become one of the main topics.

5.2. The Beginnings of Bilateral Relations

The beginnings of relations between the European Union and Israel go far back to the establishment of the European Economic Community in March of 1957.⁶⁴ Israel was one of the first countries to recognize the newly-established Community as a subject of international law and has also very early realized its growing economic and political importance. The Israeli government underwent negotiations with the European Economic Community in late 1957, only several months before the Treaty of Rome came into force. In addition to this, in April 1958, Israel was the third country to apply for accreditation of its diplomatic mission to the European Economic Community. That represented a significant step in their cooperation as Israel belonged to the first countries with diplomatic relations with the Community.

⁶³ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 276

⁶⁴ For 'European Economic Community' see page 18.

The mutual relations of the European Union and Israel are based on similar culture, given by the composition of the population and the history of both states, the high level of development of both powers, the high qualification of their labor force, as well as the technological possibilities offered by both.

A rapid increase in Israel's population – from 800,000 in 1948, 4 million in the mid 1980's to 8,3 million in 2015⁶⁵ significantly contributed to its economic development which caused Israel being a reliable and strong trading partner to the EU. Due to this large growth, the number of employed persons could gradually rise. At the same time, immigrants flowing to Israel after its establishment, have generated a growth in demand that has given an impulse for further development of the Israeli economy.

5.3. Mutual Agreements

Even though Israel is a country geographically outside of Europe, it is a state which holds an exceptional status within the EU. This should be seen from the historical point of view, starting by the establishment of the State of Israel and by the establishment of the European Economic Community. The first official confirmation of the relation between Israel and the EEC was the 1975 *Association Agreement* which controlled the relationship between the two until 1995, when the *EU-Israel Association Agreement*⁶⁶ came to force after being ratified by the Knesset on 1 June 2000. This opened the door for a closer and thorough political and economic cooperation.

The Preamble to this Treaty emphasizes respect for human rights and the principles of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, it stresses the need to stabilize the Middle East by strengthening regional cooperation in the fields of science and technology, culture, in the audio-visual and social sphere – all to the benefit of all parties.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ THE WORLD BANK. *Country – Israel*. In: *The World Bank Group* [on-line] 2017, accessed on: [2017-04-28] Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/israel>

⁶⁶ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 152

⁶⁷ EUROPEAN UNION. *The EU-Israel Association Agreement - full text*. In: *EUR-Lex*. [on-line] 2000. Accessed in [2017-05-01] Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2010/april/tradoc_146089.pdf

The text discusses the cooperation at the governmental and parliamentary level (meaning the European Parliament and the Knesset) in order to achieve peace, security, and cooperation. It also highlights the construction of a liberal market society and economic system - the liberalization of services, free movement of capital and free economic competition.

This Treaty also establishes a free zone in the trade of industrial goods and products. The joint agreement of July 2006, has managed to achieve the objectives of reciprocal trade in agricultural products. Joint Declaration also commits both sides to fight against xenophobia, racism, and Anti-Semitism. The cooperation under the Association Agreement has been significantly expanded by bilateral agreements included within the framework of the *European Neighborhood Policy* (ENP) established in 2005 and extended in 2010.⁶⁸

The Association Agreement and in particular the *Action Plan* within the ENP have developed close and regular cooperation between the EU and Israel. The basic body for regular coordination of the implementation of the ENP Action Plan are the subcommittees composed of representatives of Israel and the EU, the *EU-Israel Association Council* and the *EU-Israel Association Committee*. These subcommittees usually meet once a year in Brussels and in Jerusalem and deal with the development of trade relations, cooperation in the fight against terrorism, legal cooperation, and other areas.

The EU-Israel Association Council is a body operating at a ministerial level and seeks to deliver political instigation crucial for consolidation of their relations. As mentioned above, the meetings should be held on a regular basis once a year. Yet, it is evident that the bilateral relations between the EU and Israel have not been optimal, considering that until 28 February 2017, when there was a high-level forum in Brussels; the last bilateral meeting of both parties' high representatives occurred in 2012.⁶⁹

Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon described the forum as following: „*This is an extremely positive development, which will enable Israel and the*

⁶⁸ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC. *European Neighborhood Policy*. In: *Foreign Relations*. [on-line] Prague, 2010. Accessed on [2017-03-02] Available at: http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/cr_v_evrope/vnejsi_vztahy_eu/vychodni_partnerstvi/eps.html

⁶⁹ AHREN, Raphael. After 5-year hiatus, EU and Israel reconvene high-level forum. *The Times of Israel*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-05-17] Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/after-5-year-hiatus-eu-and-israel-reconvene-high-level-forum/>

*EU to deepen their relations on a wide array of issues.*⁷⁰ The EU-Israel Association Committee operates under a senior officials standard and works towards political and economic goals fulfilment as well as it serves as a basis for bilateral and regional partnership.

The European Parliament and the Knesset representatives also meet on a regular basis.⁷¹ Closer cooperation requires the convergence of legal regulatory environment. That is when the procedure called *Twinning* comes to action.⁷² Twinning is an instrument designed to strengthen the cooperation between the Israeli authorities and their equivalents at the EU level.

The short-term *Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX)*⁷³ also operates on the principle of twinning and aims to help the EU to align and open EU's internal market to Israel. Besides instruments for the harmonization of the regulatory environment, the financial cooperation plays an important role in bilateral relations as well. Given the knowledge of high-tech nature of the Israeli economy, the cooperation in science and research plays a vital role. Israel has been a participant in the EU *Research Framework Program (FP7)* since 1996.⁷⁴ The program allows the exchange of scientific knowledge, participation of Israeli scientists in scientific projects as well as the participation of European scientists in Israeli projects. Besides the above-mentioned cooperation, Israel is also involved in study programs Erasmus Mundus or Euro-Med Youth.

Although Israel is not a part of the *European Economic Area (EEA)*, it is still very well-integrated within the European market as well as it is a member of several European trading programs. The very first agreement signed between the EU and Israel was on free trade and was agreed in 1975.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ AHREN, Raphael. *After 5-year hiatus, EU and Israel reconvene high-level forum*. In: *The Times of Israel*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-05-17] Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/after-5-year-hiatus-eu-and-israel-reconvene-high-level-forum/>

⁷¹ EUROPEAN UNION. *EP-Knesset Meetings*. In: *European Parliament Delegations – General Documents*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-03-12] Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-il/publications.html?tab=EP-Knesset%20meetings>

⁷² EUROPEAN UNION. *TAIEX*. In: *European Commission – Neighborhood-Enlargement*. [on-line] 2016. Accessed on [2017-03-20] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taix_en

⁷³ EUROPEAN UNION. *Twinning*. In: *European Commission – Neighborhood-Enlargement*. [on-line] 2016. Accessed on [2017-03-20] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/twinning_en

⁷⁴ TUČEK, Filip. *Izrael*. In: *Euroskop*. [on-line] 2017, Prague. EUROSOKOP – Vláda České Republiky. Accessed on [2017-05-14] Available at: <https://www.euroskop.cz/9123/sekce/izrael/>

⁷⁵ DU PLESSIX, Caroline. *L'Union Européenne et Israël: Une 'special' relationship durable et ambiguë*. *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* [on-line] 22 / 2011 p. 5., accessed on. [2017-05-17] Available at: <https://bcfrj.revues.org/6604>

It creates a stable structure for customs reduction, particularly on industrial goods as well as it addresses the abolition of these duties on the majority of Israel's rural production. Ever since then, the business cooperation has been gradually deepening.

New talks between the two powers happened in Essen, Germany, in 1994 when Israel officially obtained the “*Special Status*” given by the European Council. “*The European Council considers that Israel, on account of its high level of economic development, should enjoy special status in its relations with the European Union on the basis of reciprocity and common interests. In the process regional economic development in the Middle East including in the Palestinian areas, will also be boosted. The European Council requests the Council and the Commission to report to it at its next meeting on action taken.*”⁷⁶ (Presidency Conclusions, European Council Meeting, 9 and 10 December 1994, Essen)

5.4. The Barcelona Process and the Barcelona Declaration

The *Barcelona Process* is the first crucial project connecting the EU and the Mediterranean area, which includes the State of Israel. However, the *Barcelona Declaration* was not the first initiative on the partnership of these two regions, as it was preceded by a decades-long process of development of mutual relations. The entire Israeli relationship-building process started by concluding both non-preferential and preferential agreements between individual EU member states. In the 1970s, the EU began to strive for a united approach to the entire Mediterranean region. These efforts are known as the global approach and, since the 1990s, as the *New Mediterranean Policy*, which eventually led to the launch of the Barcelona Process.⁷⁷

The Barcelona Process itself has been developing and refining its objectives since 1995 at the so-called *Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences of Foreign Affairs*, commonly known as ‘Barcelona’ and the serial number. In order to strengthen the

⁷⁶ EUROPEAN UNION. *European Council Meeting on 9 and 10 December 1994*. In: *Presidency Conclusions* [online] Essen, 1994. Accessed [2017-04-27] Available at:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/ess1_en.htm?textMode=on

⁷⁷ CIHELKOVÁ, Eva. *Vnější ekonomické vztahy Evropské unie*. pub. n. 1. Praha: C H Beck, 2003, 709 p. ISBN: 80-7179-804-5 p. 367

financial and economic partnership, the *MEDA Programme*⁷⁸ emerged as a key instrument of the Barcelona process.

The Barcelona Declaration, which was signed at the first Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers Conference in Barcelona on 27 and 28 November 1995, is the first official document on the European Union's comprehensive approach to the entire region. From that moment on, the development of common relations is referred to as the Barcelona Process. Among the states accepting the Barcelona Declaration was The State of Israel as well. Its representative was the Foreign Minister Ehud Barak and on behalf of the European Union, the declaration was signed by the President of the Council of the European Union, Javier Solana, and the Vice-President of the European Commission, Manuel Marin. The diversity of cultures and values of individual states is emphasized right at the beginning of the Barcelona Declaration. These values must be preserved at all costs as well as they have to be respected by other participants.

Although the states are so different and thus their macroeconomic situation is different, it is necessary to unify their conditions so that the European Union can unite its policy. The Barcelona Declaration initiates the effort to launch dialogues and cooperation that will eventually lead to stability and prosperity. Its aim is not to replace existing agreements, but on the contrary; the declaration should be used as a tool for their successful fulfillment. In the section devoted to the area of peace and stability in the Mediterranean, the Barcelona Declaration deals mainly with the issues connected to security, military and balance. This is closely linked to respect for human rights under the *United Nations Charter* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms*, combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination. States also declare not to spontaneously interfere with the internal affairs of other states and to respect each other's defined territories. In an effort to maintain peace, states commit themselves to cooperate in the fight against organized crime and terrorism.⁷⁹

The Barcelona Declaration also addresses the importance of finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

⁷⁸ Author's note: Given that Israel is a developed economy, it did not receive financial support as part of this process, as it did not get loans for its economic transformation (unlike other economies in the region).

⁷⁹ EUROPEAN UNION. *The Barcelona Declaration* – full text. In: *EUR-Lex*. [on-line] Barcelona, 1995. Accessed on [2017-03-27] Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3Ar15001>

However, this process is very sensitive and all the steps in the process are very difficult, as it is difficult for all players to agree on specific actions or procedures.

As a political and economic factor, the European Union plays an increasingly important role in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean countries would like to incorporate themselves within the EU more intensely as they hope to find a wise partner who does not have the ambition to dominate the region and who is still willing to let its market open. In addition to the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, Israel, due to the free access to European markets, is the country which benefits the most and is the most economically and industrially tied to Western Europe.

5.5. Economic and Trade Relations

For Israel, foreign trade is the key factor in making the economy functioning, as it is a country with limited domestic market and dependence on the import of a wide portfolio of products.⁸⁰ Israeli companies are trading mainly with Europe and the US, but Asia is gaining more and more importance, namely China and India.

The locality in which Israel is situated is very specific as there is the impossibility of economic cooperation with its neighboring countries; the two exceptions, yet with great restrictions are to some extent Egypt and Jordan.

The economic relations between the EU and Israel were formed by the *Free Trade Agreement* included in the EU-Israel Association Agreement in 2000.⁸¹ The European Union forms Israel's biggest market and is liable for around one third of Israel's total volume of trade. Israel is EU's essential commerce partner in the Mediterranean. The EU on the contrary, is Israel's biggest and the most significant trading partner with the volume of mutual trade reaching up to €34,3 billion in 2016.⁸² The level of European export to Israel was at €21,1 billion in 2016 where the main exported products contained machinery and transport apparatus (forming 45,4% of total exports), chemicals (forming 16,2% of total exports) and other manufactured products (forming 15,1% of total exports).

⁸⁰ EUROPEAN UNION. *Israel – Trade*. In: *European Commission*. [on-line] Accessed on [2017-04-11] Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/israel/>

⁸¹ For „Association Agreement“ see page 29.

⁸² EUROPEAN UNION. *Israel – Trade*. In: *European Commission*. [on-line] Accessed on [2017-04-12] Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/israel/>

Israeli exports to the European Union reached up to €13,2 billion in 2016. These consisted mainly of chemicals (forming 39,2 % of total exports), machinery and transport apparatus (forming 21,3 % of total exports) and other manufactured products (forming 15 % of total exports).

Both bodies have been continuously working towards strengthening their trade and economic relations by signing several agreements for this purpose:⁸³

- The *Open Skies* aviation agreement of 2013, which allowed free air transportation between Europe and Israel.
- The *Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance* of industrial goods, which allows the recognition of mutual pharmaceutical certificates.

The representatives of both sides regularly meet in sub-committee meetings in order to intensify their cooperation. The European Union strongly supports the Israeli market reform process with the goal to lower the living cost together with the simplification of the market-entry procedure. All these actions aim to interconnect the Israeli and EU economies and legislations as thoroughly as possible.

Israel remains the only Mediterranean country providing the EU with full reciprocity. As of 1 January 1989, the EU industrial exports to Israel are neither subject to tariffs nor quantitative restrictions.

The status of Israel is at a very similar to the level the EU member states benefit from and, given the high degree of development of the State of Israel, such treatment is justified.

5.6. Strategic Cooperation

Israel and the European Union both take the advantage of increasing level of interconnection in the field of security. This is viewed as an outcome of EU's sympathy with all pressures Israel's security sector has to deal with, from which terrorism is undoubtedly the biggest threat. The EU's involvement was particularly amplified after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, followed by an attack in Madrid in 2004 and then

⁸³ EUROPEAN UNION. *Israel and the EU*. In: *European Union External Action*. [on-line] 2016. Accessed on [2017-03-29] Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/1337/Israel%20and%20the%20EU

an attack in London in 2005.⁸⁴ Both parties proclaimed their shared readiness to cooperate in the fight against terrorism and to share security agencies information – all with the goal to cut terrorist groups from their main sources of income.

The two parties agreed to intensify their mutual tactical assistance at the eight meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council in Luxembourg in June of 2008. Accordingly to the Council, Israel shall be requested to join the meetings of different strategic groups with the goal to debate topics like counter-terrorism, cooperation at the level of global bodies, the European safekeeping and defense tactics as well as the supervision over the trade of weapons.⁸⁵ Pronouncements that the Council of the EU acknowledged in December 2008 estimated Israeli involvement within certain European supranational bodies, and Euro-Israeli governmental meetings at various stages, yet with the biggest emphasis on a more intense cooperation of Israeli government and the *Political and Security Committee* (PSC). Nevertheless, the execution of this strategic alliance has been stopped by the outbreak of the Israeli Operation Cast Lead.⁸⁶ This situation may suggest, that the tactical cooperation between the two is still heavily dependent on the level of their political relations.

An agreement on the exchange of confidential data between the EU and Israel was signed on 1 June 2009. It stays clear, that such close cooperation between the two parties is an outcome of their shared threats. Not only global terrorism, but also the increasing instability connected to the Iranian nuclear program has encouraged both the EU and Israel to cooperate ever so closely.

Starting in 2003, the Great Britain, Germany and France together with the USA, Russia and China, have been forming the so-called *EU3+3* group and has continuously lead negotiations or impose sanctions towards Iran to limit or stop their nuclear program.⁸⁷ Iran represents an unpredictable threat which leaves Israel in uncertainty, therefore it collaborates closely with some European states, mainly France and the Great

⁸⁴ DU PLESSIX, Caroline. L'Union Européenne et Israël: Une ,special' relationship durable et ambiguë. *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* [on-line] 22 / 2011 p. 7., cit. [2017-05-17] Available at: <https://bcfrj.revues.org/6604>

⁸⁵ EUROPEAN UNION. *The EU-Israel Association Council, Luxembourg 16 June 2008 - Statement of the EU*. In: *European Parliament*. [on-line] Luxembourg, 2008. Accessed on [2017-04-07] Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/association_counc/association_council.pdf

⁸⁶ For ,Operation Cast Lead' see page 19.

⁸⁷ EUROPEAN UNION. *EU3+3 Nuclear Negotiations With Iran*. In: *European Union External Action*. [on-line] Brussels, 2014. Accessed on [2017-04-30] Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/statements/docs/2013/131219_02_en.pdf

Britain, in order to carry out particular actions that aim to hinder the development of this nuclear program.

Hamas, as a Palestinian subdivision of the *Muslim Brotherhood*, also poses a threat both to the European Union and the State of Israel. After the governmental Palestinian elections of January 2006, which saw Hamas as the winner, the EU member states concluded not to give their support to the newly-formed Palestinian government mainly through stopping the flow of humanitarian aid to the *Palestinian Authority* to which the EU is the key donor. The EU member states stand against this form of rule on a global scene mainly due to the criteria of its acknowledgement by the *Quartet on the Middle East*.⁸⁸ The main three conditions include: the acknowledgement of the State of Israel, the rejection of ferocity and the acknowledgement of arrangements which had been ratified by the previous Palestinian Authority.⁸⁹

The fact that Hamas controls a major territory in the area endangers the stability of the region, therefore the United States, the European Union and the United Nations all consider their form of government to be dangerous to the stability and continuity of the peace negotiations in given region. However, some of these parties, either outright or partially, boost the conflict between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, which is the very same conflict as the one that led to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June of 2007.⁹⁰

Both the European Union and the State of Israel share a mutual interest in guaranteeing provincial steadiness. Yet, the strategies they want to follow while maintaining peace in the area are often different, particularly when it comes to the Palestinian question. Namely, the European Union's disapproval of the creation of new settlements in the West Bank area, the entitlement of Western Jerusalem, or its support to the International Court of Justice's resolution opposing the creation of a parting wall. Moreover, the EU openly condemned the Operation Cast Lead followed by air strikes performed by the Israeli Defense Forces in January of 2009.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Author's note: The so-called „Quartet“ consists of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia and was established in 2002 as a response to escalating conflicts in the Middle East.

⁸⁹ EUROPEAN UNION. EU Council Conclusions – Middle-East Peace Process. In: European Union Delegation to the United Nations – New York. [on-line] Brussels, 2006. Accessed [2017-05-16] Available at: <http://eu-un.europa.eu/eu-council-conclusions-%C2%96-middle-east-peace-process-3/>

⁹⁰ DU PLESSIX, Caroline. L'Union Européenne et Israël: Une ‚special‘ relationship durable et ambiguë. *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* [on-line] 22 / 2011 p. 8., cit. [2017-04-24] Available at: <https://bcrfj.revues.org/6604>

⁹¹ *ibid.* p. 8.

These differentiated views on how to deal with the situation shape their approaches and we can safely state, that it's particularly these problems and disagreements which form the bilateral relations between the two players.

5.7. Diplomatic Tensions

Since the very founding of the State of Israel, Europe has strived to preserve a neutral position towards the Israeli-Arab, or, respectively, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Throughout its history, however, it has been unable to develop an integrated and unified policy towards the region, as individual states have been constantly changing their opinions depending on specific political or time-related contexts. The European states were very close to the Middle East area even before the establishment of the European Community and subsequently the European Union itself as they endorsed their power and political ambitions there. In addition, this area was very strategic in both economic and military terms.

The disproportionate attitudes towards the Middle East in the fields of economy and politics form yet another challenge in the bilateral relations between Israel and the EU. Even though the EU is trying to act as the main contributor to the peace process, its position remains overshadowed by the USA. Lastly, the EU often seems to take significantly pro-Palestinian stance, which Israel considers to be almost an insurmountable problem, particularly because the EU wants to play the role of a neutral mediator of the peace process. The EU's stance could be seen clearly after the European Council's *Venice Declaration* of 1980.⁹² This Declaration emphasizes the need to acknowledge Palestinian citizens and their right for autonomy.

5.7.1. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Role of the EU

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the main risk factors of the contemporary world. It affects not only the security situation in the Middle East; its importance overlaps regional borders. Since the EU's establishment in 1993, it has been engaged in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict primarily through financial aid.

⁹² EUROPEAN UNION. Venice Summit 12-13 June 1980. In: The European Council. [on-line] Venice, 1980. Accessed on [2017-03-29] Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/1393/1/venice_june_1980.pdf

An example of this may be the creation of the *Palestinian Police Force* in accordance to the Oslo Accords. The EU has also begun to emphasize the importance of trade relations with the Middle East and so the Barcelona Declaration was signed in 1995. By this declaration, the countries agreed to establish intensive cooperation in security and political, but also economic, social or cultural spheres. At the Berlin European Council in 1999, EU's pro-Palestinian attitude was already quite distinct.

*"The Berlin Declaration opens up the possibility of a European recognition of an independent Palestinian state even if that state is unilaterally declared in the event of a failure of bilateral negotiations."*⁹³ (Newman, Jacobi, p. 24)

The EU also criticized the Israeli policy towards the Palestinians during the Second Intifada, condemned violence and supported the US peace initiatives. After the peace negotiations at Camp David⁹⁴ in 1978, followed by ratification of the *Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty*, both the US and the EU cease to be involved in the Middle East question on a larger scale. However, the *European Security Strategy*, adopted by the EU Council in 2003,⁹⁵ identifies, among other things, the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as Europe's strategic priority, expresses its readiness to allocate the necessary resources to resolve this conflict and expresses its desire to adopt the Two-State Solution.

The Two-State Solution

While both the European Union and the United Nations push Israel to accept and implement the Two-State Solution of the Palestinian conflict, Israel itself stays against this kind of solution. The term refers to a proposal on creation of an independent *State of Palestine* alongside with the already existing State of Israel.

However, the border separating the two states, or the size of their territories are still subjects of disputes. Until nowadays, we could witness many political and diplomatic attempts to implement the two-state solution, originating in the Madrid Conference in

⁹³ NEWMAN D., YACOBI H. *The Role of the EU in the Israel/Palestine Conflict*. In: *Ben Gurion University, Beer Sheva, Israel*. [on-line] Israel, 2004. Accessed on [2017-05-02] p. 24 Available at <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/polsis/research/2006/eu-border-conflict/wp12-role-of-the-eu-in-the-israel-palestine-conflict.pdf>

⁹⁴ ČEJKA, Marek. *Dějiny moderního Izraele*. pub. n.1. Prague: Grada Publishing a.s., 2011, 352 p. ISBN: 978-80-247-2910-7 p. 165

⁹⁵ EUROPEAN UNION. *A Secure Europe In a Better World*. In: *European Security Strategy*. [on-line] Brussels, 2003. Accessed on [2017-05-10] Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>

1991,⁹⁶ followed by the Oslo Accords, the Camp David Summit in 2000 and lastly, the *Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks*⁹⁷ in the years 2013 and 2014.

EU's current position is clearly visible in the *High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy* Federica Mogherini's commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Mogherini delivered her position after meeting with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas on 27 March 2017, and assured him that the EU is opposed to Israeli settlement policy, and that it is considered illegal under international law.⁹⁸ Recently, this solution, which has been pursued for decades by various US governments, seems to be relatively distant.

The deflection from the current concept has been clearly demonstrated in a joint meeting of the US President Donald Trump and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Trump has said that he would prefer a solution that would appeal to both sides, regardless of whether one or two states are created.⁹⁹

Generally, there are five possible solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian problem:¹⁰⁰

- The first idea, strongly supported by President Netanyahu, speaks of the so-called "**Regional Peace Process**." In other words, bilateral peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians would be replaced by a complex process involving moderate Sunni states such as Egypt, Jordan, or Saudi Arabia. However, the US's stance towards this solution remains in question.
- Another widely discussed option is the **Palestinian-Jordan Confederation**. Jordan would, in this case, take over civilian administration over the West Bank, but the military control would remain with the Israelis.

⁹⁶ For 'Madrid Conference' see page 17.

⁹⁷ SHERWOOD, Hariett. *Israelis and Palestinians meet for peace talks*. In: *The Guardian*. [on-line] Jerusalem, 2013. Accessed on [2015-05-04] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/14/israelis-palestinians-peace-talks>

⁹⁸ KRAJŇÁK, Tomáš. *EU nadále prosazuje dvoustátní řešení Izraelsko-palestinského konfliktu*. In: *ESJ News*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-04-15] Available at: <https://www.esjnews.com/cs/eu-nadale-prosazuje-dvoustatni-reseni-izraelsko-palestinskeho-konfliktu>

⁹⁹ BAKER P., LANDLER M. *Trump, Meeting With Netanyahu, Backs Away From Palestinian State*. In: *The New York Times*. [on-line] Washington, 2017. Accessed on [2017-05-17] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/15/world/middleeast/benjamin-netanyahu-israel-trump.html?_r=0

¹⁰⁰ CASPIT, Ben. *Three Alternatives to the Two-State or One-State Solution for Mideast Peace*. In: *Al-Monitor*. [on-line] Jerusalem 2017. Accessed on [2017-04-27] Available at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/israel-palestinians-jordan-egypt-avigdor-liberman.html>

- The third option is **territorial exchanges between Israel, Egypt and Jordan**. The Jewish state would thus *de iure* gain the so-called ‘illegal’ settlements in the Palestinian Territories and surrendered its land to the detriment of Egypt, which would stretch the Gaza Strip all the way to Sinai. In the past, however, this idea was rejected by Egypt.
- Another theoretical solution would be **to withdraw Israel from the Palestinian territories**. However, after the Gaza Strip was dominated by Hamas, this solution seems unrealistic.
- The last, and probably the most plausible solution is **preserving the status quo**. That is, to promote at least partial cooperation between the two bodies and to prevent any further escalation of the conflict.

The EU is currently involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly within the framework of the Quartet.

The last step undertaken individually by the EU was the establishment of the *Union for the Mediterranean* by the European Council in March 2008.¹⁰¹ The Union for the Mediterranean functions as an international forum that serves as the sole forum for the UN, with the participation of all sides of the conflict. In the final document of the Union for the Mediterranean, the peace process in the Middle East is supported, but the direct mention of the creation of two separate states is missing.¹⁰²

5.7.2. EU’s Financial Aid to the Palestinian Authority

While the economic relations between Israel and the EU are based on trade relations between two developed and modern economies; relations with the Palestinian Authority (PA) are characterized by a significant financial support. Since 1971, the EU (back then the European Community) has been providing financial assistance and is the largest donor under the 1997 *Interim Association Agreement on Trade and*

¹⁰¹ UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN. *History*. In: *Institutional Documents* [on-line] 2013. Accessed on [2017-05-05]. Available at: <http://ufmsecretariat.org/history/>.

¹⁰² UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN. *History*. In: *Institutional Documents* [on-line] 2013. Accessed on [2017-05-05]. Available at: <http://ufmsecretariat.org/history/>.

Cooperation.¹⁰³ It should also be noted that there is no other country that would receive as much financial assistance as the Palestinian Authority.

Until the Second Intifada, the humanitarian aid was directed primarily towards the development of the PA itself, but with its outburst it sends aid directly into its budget, assists with preparation for sovereignty, revives the economy, calls for economic and democratic reform, but also helps build schools for Palestinian children. In the year of 2016, the amount of financial aid to the Palestinian Authority was at €291,1 million.¹⁰⁴

The European Union is being criticized for such considerable help not only by Israel but also by other states, mainly because of the controversies it brings. One of the main problems is the situation in Palestinian education system, directly financed by the EU. Independent observing organizations (e.g. NGO Monitor) claim, that Palestinians raise their children in a rather Anti-Semitic manner, deny the existence of the State of Israel, name schools after Palestinian terrorists,

(for instance after terrorists guilty of murdering Israeli Olympians at the Olympics in Berlin in 1974), teach them how to ‘stab a Jew’ at summer camps, or present the advantages of dying as a martyr.¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, it has to be said that the use of this financial assistance is reportedly strictly monitored by the European Commission and an emphasis is placed on its transparency. The aim is to prevent misuse of this aid to support terrorism, as it has happened in the past. The EU also cooperates with the *International Monetary Fund* to ensure a fair handling of the money provided.

5.7.3. Labeling Goods from Jewish Settlements

In November 2015, the European Union approved guidelines on the labeling of goods produced in Jewish settlements. It argues that goods originating in the territory that Israel has ‘occupied’ since 1967 can not be sold in the Union as goods produced in Israel.

¹⁰³ EUROPEAN UNION. *Palestine*. In: *European Commission – European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations*. [on-line] 2017. Accessed on [2017-05-02] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east-north-africa/palestine_en

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ Author’s note: Within the framework of an internship in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in December 2016 to February 2017, the author was given the opportunity to attend the *Europe and Israel 2017 – Challenges, Opportunities and Moving Forward* Conference which took place on the 6 March 2017; during which the NGO Monitor founder *Gerald M. Steinberg* spoke and mentioned this issue.

The EU does not recognize the post-1967 Israeli borders,¹⁰⁶ therefore it feels the need to distinguish between the goods originating from an internationally recognized territory – the State of Israel; and the questionable territories – the Gaza Strip, the West Bank area and the Golan Heights.¹⁰⁷ The Israeli Foreign Ministry, in response to this move, has stopped cooperating with the European Union bodies involved in peace talks with the Palestinians. It also considers the decision to be discriminatory and politically motivated.

*"The labelling of products of the Jewish state by the European Union brings back dark memories. Europe should be ashamed of itself. It took an immoral decision. Of the hundreds of territorial conflicts around the world, it chose to single out Israel and Israel alone, while it's fighting with its back against the wall against the wave of terror. "*¹⁰⁸
(Benjamin Netanyahu, 11 November 2015)

¹⁰⁶ For the *Post Six-Day War Map of Israel* see page 47., Picture Attachment n. 2.

¹⁰⁷EUROPEAN UNION. *Interpretative Notice on Indication of Origin of Goods from Territories Occupied by Israel Since June 1967*. In: *European Commission*. [on-line] Brussels, 2015. Accessed on [2017-04-15] Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20151111_interpretative_notice_indication_of_origin_en.pdf

¹⁰⁸ ISRAEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. *PM Netanyahu's Response to EU Decision Regarding Product Labeling*. In: *Press Room*. [on-line] Jerusalem, 2015. Accessed on [2017-05-12] Available at: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2015/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-responds-to-EU-decision-regarding-product-labeling-11-November-2015.aspx>

6. CONCLUSION

The differentiated suppositions of both players have significantly shaped the outline of their contemporary and upcoming policies. The European Union wants Israel to meet certain political standards, if it wants to continuously enjoy its status and benefit from its exceptional position within the EU. These measures should serve the European Union to control Israeli behavior, understand it better and predict its future tendencies. When it comes to EU's policies, it emphasizes an improvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by implementing the Two-State Solution. Despite the EU's efforts, Israel has been continuously building new settlements in the West Bank, which may suggest its unwillingness to accept it.

The acceptance of EU academic and commercial standards has allowed Israel to benefit from mutual agreements, yet, the fulfillment of EU's requirements becomes a problem while the EU pushes Israel to act in a certain "EU-favorable" way. Furthermore, when certain requirements are subject to political obedience, the situation is usually recognized as undermining Israeli authority. Although Israel needs to understand that adoption of some EU's conditions is key for all the states, which want to strengthen their relationship with the European Union, it puts its domestic interests first. Looking at the relationship from the Israeli side, it is necessary for the European Union to accept the status Israel obtained by the European Council in 1994.¹⁰⁹

After reading the bachelor thesis 'Israel and the European Union Bilateral Relations', the readers gain an insight into the co-operation between the State of Israel and the European Union, mainly on a political and strategic level. This cooperation is formally based on common treaties, the most important of which is the *EU-Israel Association Agreement* and its sub-sections, which give the relationship a legal dimension. Informally, this cooperation is based on shared Western values, high economic development of both parties, and the emphasis on democratic principles.

The first chapter highlights the most important events that took place in Israel's history. From a historical context, the reader can then grasp Israeli approach to diverse challenges it faces.

¹⁰⁹ For 'Essen Council' see page 32.

Similarly, the second chapter on the history of the European Union enables the readers to understand the functioning of this institution and its bodies within the historical context. We can see history as one of the main factors which have been shaping the policies of both.

Chapter n.5. clearly suggests, that the bilateral relations between the EU and Israel are influenced by several factors, yet, this work shows that the most important obstacle to what could otherwise be successful and beneficial cooperation, is the European Union's approach to the still unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israeli reluctance to change its attitude in any way and some controversies connected to its policy. On the other hand, the EU's desire to implement an operative pluralist politics into the field of bilateral relations with Israel regularly clashes with Israel's individualism and disbelief toward this multilateral and supra-national body. European Union's opinion clearly seeks to control the way Israel behaves and ensure its politics is foreseeable and nonviolent. This approach stands opposite to Israel's desire for autonomy, which is key mainly for tactical reasons.

The European Union's approach is often contrasting to Israeli opinions, but at the same time, both parties long for closer cooperation and openness. At this moment of time, it is not possible to determine how exactly could EU's stringent policy lead the Israeli side to closer cooperation and progress. The author hopes, that people searching for a deeper understanding of the Israeli-EU bilateral relations and those searching for information in a historical and political context will find this work useful and beneficial for their future studies.

7. ATTACHMENTS

Picture n. 1. – Political Map of Israel with its Neighboring States¹¹⁰



¹¹⁰ *Map of Israel Today*. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee. In: *AIPAC: America's Pro-Israel Lobby* [on-line] USA, 2017 Accessed on: [2017-05-17] Available at: <http://www.aipac.org/learn/resources/maps/israel-today>

Picture n. 2. – Post Six-Day War Map of Israel¹¹¹



¹¹¹ *How 1967 Defined the Middle East*. BBC. In: *BBC News* [on-line] UK, 2007 Accessed on: [2017-05-17] Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6709173.stm

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