

THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT IN THE EU FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

AB Dış Politika Sürecinde İsrail-Filistin Çatışması

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ABSTRACT

The EU has moved from economic union to political integration with a neo-functional integration by using the enlargement and deepening steps. The EU started to focus on foreign policy in order to take a joint position against possible crises with this process. The EU, whose weight is increasing day by day in the international system, tries to be an effective actor as a normative power with its emphasis on economic aid and democracy. The EU, sometimes emphasizes the separate structure of power, highlights its military, civilian or normative power in the foreground depending on the issue.

The EU, that wants to develop a fast and common response to global and regional crises by implementing the common foreign and security policy with the Maastricht Treaty. The common action-policy tools that form the basis of EU foreign policy, were used in the Israel-Palestine conflict, which was the first foreign policy area of the EU. The EU using economic elements together by diplomacy, is trying to be part of the solution by putting pressure. The EU has developed a common position based on certain principles by emphasizing its civilian character and diplomatic language. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the EU member states have ensured the principles of integrity, consistency and hence "univocal" which are also reflected in their actions in the international arena. The EU, which has been able to make faster decisions in actions to which the USA is a party, has problems with reliability and efficiency when it is left alone. For this reason, the EU is in the position of a civilian power, far from being the main actor, influencing international policies and helping their implementation with financial resources.

Key words: EU, Foreign Policy, Israel, Palestine, Conflict, Declaration

ÖZET

Genişleme ve derinleşme adımlarını kullanan AB, Neo-fonksiyonalist bir bütünleşmeyle ekonomik birliktelikten siyasi bütünleşmeye doğru yol almıştır. Bu süreçle olası krizlere yönelik ortak pozisyon alma amacıyla dış politikaya ağırlık vermeye başlamıştır. Uluslararası sistemde her geçen gün ağırlığı artan AB, ekonomik yardımlar ve demokrasi vurgusuyla normatif bir güç olarak etkili bir aktör olmaya çalışmaktadır. Kimi zaman gücün ayrı yapısına vurgu yapan AB konuya bağlı olarak askeri, sivil veya normatif gücünü ön plana çıkarmaktadır.

Küresel, bölgesel krizlerde hızlı ve ortak bir tepki geliştirmek isteyen AB, Maastricht Antlaşması'yla ortak dış ve güvenlik politikasını hayata geçirmiştir. AB dış politikasının temelini oluşturan ortak eylem-politika araçları, AB'nin ilk dış politika alanı olan İsrail-Filistin çatışmasında kullanılmıştır. Diplomasiyle birlikte ekonomik unsurları da kullanan AB, baskı kurarak çözümün bir parçası olmaya çalışmaktadır. Ekonomik yaptırım ve diplomatik bir dille sivil karakterine vurgu yapan AB, belirli ilkelere dayalı ortak bir pozisyon geliştirmiştir. AB üye ülkeleri, İsrail-Filistin çatışmasında uluslararası arenada da eylemlerine yansıyan bütünlük, tutarlılık ve dolayısıyla "tek seslilik" ilkelerini sağlamıştır. ABD'nin taraf olduğu eylemlerde daha hızlı karar alabilen AB, tek başına kaldığında ise güvenilirlik ve etkinlik hususlarında sorun yaşamıştır. Bu nedenle AB, uluslararası politikaları etkileyen ve yürütülmesine mali kaynaklarla yardımcı olan, başat aktör olmaktan uzak, sivil bir güç konumundadır.


Anahtar Kelimeler: AB, Dış Politika, İsrail, Filistin, Çatışma, Deklarasyon

1. INTRODUCTION

The state of Israel, established with the approval of Western states, has been at the center of many discussions in the following process. The state of Israel, established in the Palestinian territories, ignited the conflict that will continue until today. In the first part, the details of this conflict are explained and how other states are involved in the process is briefly explained. Israel has a special place in US foreign policy due to the strength of Israeli lobbies within the United States. It is seen that the EU has also shown an interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the last period. The fact that the EU has shown more interest in this region than the USA recently is more related to its proximity to this region and its desire to take part in the resolution of an important conflict in its foreign policy.

The intensification of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict coincides with the 1960s with the steps of the EU to form a common foreign policy. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is the first foreign policy subject of the EU, put the EU to the test in terms of creating common values and foreign policy. The question of what kind of actor the EU will take place in the international system with the development of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy /CFSP established by the Maastricht Treaty. The EU, that wants to

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make an expansion towards foreign policy after 1992, aims to be an active and effective actor in the Middle East Peace process. The EU's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which could not be univocal in foreign policy in previous processes, is tested with the principles of reliability, efficiency and consistency. The Israeli-Palestinian problem, which many states have intervened, is of particular importance for the EU, as it tests the EU's effectiveness in foreign policy. In addition, the fact that the it has the potential to reveal the competence and effectiveness of the EU to develop a common foreign policy, increases the importance of this issue.

The EU, wanted to focus on foreign policy after Maastricht, supported the solution of the problem through peacefully, that coincided with its core values of the CFSP. The EU has targeted the continuity of peace negotiations and conflict to be resolved in a peaceful manner with the declarations and financial aid it has issued. This study especially focuses on the post-1992 EU foreign policy process in which the EU wants to take an active part in foreign policy. The position of the EU in the international system, the tools and resources of CFSP are discussed in the second chapter.

The current institutional structure for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the framework of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) and CFSP is discussed in the third part of the study. Political, economic and social effects of the EU on the conflict is examined and its approach to this issue is tried to be analyzed. With the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an answer is sought to the question of what kind of actor the EU is in foreign policy. The EU's foreign policy is tried to be analyzed with the EU's effectiveness in the process with the EPC and CFSP approaches, its effects on the parties and the effectiveness in international politics.

As a result of the study, it is understood that the EU has a secondary role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than directing international politics. Instead of taking an active role or being a determinant in this problem, it has tried to contribute to the solution in a structure that provides resources or provides support. It is concluded that the EU, which emphasizes the normative values in foreign policy, is a civilian power in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The EU, which wants to spread normative values on the basis of respect for democracy and human rights, intervenes in the process with diplomacy and economic assistance (Tocci, 2009: 388). The EU, which can provide a high level of univocal towards this problem, can ensure its integrity within itself. However, when the volume and the efficiency of the economic power occupied by the EU in the international system are compared with this problematic, it is understood that its effectiveness is insufficient. The EU, which is bigger than its total in foreign policy, cannot deliver what is expected (Sjösted, 1977). It is seen that the EU, which cannot deliver the desired foreign policy, still cannot meet the capability-expectation gap and cannot create a consistent system (Hill, 1993: 315). The EU is criticized for failing to take a joint decision in foreign policy (Toje, 2008: 122). But when we look at the overall Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it can be seen that decisions were taken late, in a fair way and meeting general norms.

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Aiming the holy lands as a motherland with the Congress of Zionism in 1897, the Jewish community achieved this goal by spreading over the years. The process, which started with the First World War with the encouragement of the British and French to Arab uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, continued with the British strategy of divide, divide and rule. When Palestine was handed over to Britain through the League of Nations in 1922, the Palestinian mandate included both the former Palestinian territories today held by Israel and Jordan.

Jewish communities started to migrate to Palestinian lands from many parts of the world and changed the demographic structure with the support of Britain. Among the documents prepared by the British administration to find a solution to the Palestine issue, the only document supporting Arabs was the Passfield White Book (Armaoğlu, 2019: 61). The Jews, who watched for this change in the population structure and a period when the international environment was suitable, established the State of Israel in 1948. Well organized Jewish militants opposed the armies of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, taking the majority of British-manned Palestine.

Founded in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) started counter-attacks by putting Palestinian nationalism above all other ideologies (Esen, 2019: 69). The separation point of the PLO with the current Arab countries was its goal of a secular and democratic style of administration. PLO was inspired by countries such as Cuba, Vietnam and Algeria, whose struggle for existence is a revolutionary freedom ideology (Levitt, 2006: 8). With the 1967 War, the increasing tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors

turned into war. Israel doubled its borders by taking Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (1967), with its decision numbered 242, rejected the land acquisition by war and asked Israel to withdraw from these lands. This decision of the UNSC has always appeared as an obstacle to Israel in the next process.

The difference between the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the previous wars; It was not the deletion of Israel from the map, but the recaptured of the lands previously had captured by Israel. The war, which started with the simultaneous attack of Egypt and Syria, was stopped with the intervention of the USA, the Soviet Union and the UNSC. UNSC (1973) taken the decision numbered 338 to stop the clashes as soon as possible and to start negotiations. A global economic crisis experienced with the Arab States applying an oil embargo to the states helping Israel. In this process, the European Community (EC) did not accept US aircrafts to use European airports (except Portugal). During the oil embargo process, the EC countries showed a tendency towards the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli issue and got rid of the embargo.

After this war, the political and diplomatic pressure on Israel increased and Israel started to become isolated with the intifada² (Miskel, 2005: 54). While Palestinian nationalism gained meaning with the Intifada, the idea of establishing a state in Gaza and the West Bank was strengthened (Schulz, 1999: 60). Speaking at the UN in 1974, PLO leader Yasser Arafat played a positive role in efforts to internationally recognize Palestine. With the support of Britain and other Western states, Israel annexed Jerusalem, which is considered sacred to the three heavenly religions, and made it its capital in 1978. The PLO, sided with Iraq in the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, lost most of the sympathy gained in the international public opinion through the intifada and the support from other Arab states. The PLO also lost the great financial support it received from oil-rich countries.

At the 1991 Madrid Summit and the 1993 Oslo Peace negotiations, the problems between Israel and Palestine were not resolved. The fact that Hamas was not associated secretly or indirectly during the Oslo negotiations caused problems in the continuation of the process. With the open-ended process, the hopes given in Oslo began to run out, increased the support for Hamas. The second intifada started in 2000 when the negotiations such as the situation of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements and borders were inconclusive. The failure of secular nationalism against Israel increased the support for Hamas. In the 2006 elections, Hamas won 74 out of 132 seats. Hamas against Oslo, ironically became the representative of the Palestinian administration (hereinafter Palestine) in Oslo.

The Quartet established in 2002, the Middle East quartet consisting of the UN, EU, USA and Russia has worked especially for peace between Israel and Palestine. The Quartet made calls to Hamas, which won the post-2006 elections, to recognize the existence of Israel and temporary peace agreements and to end the armed struggle. Hamas rejected this offer, fearing that the Quartet's demands would be lost in front of the Palestinians who voted for Hamas. While this decision of Hamas caused Palestine to be isolated and left alone with its own problems in the eyes of other states, it created an excuse for Israel not to withdraw from the places it occupied. The USA, EU and many Western states decided to sanction Palestine and stopped investments in the region. While Hamas was isolated during this process, the USA and the EU remained close to the PLO. After this process, the conflict between Israel and Palestine has continued, and despite the UNSC resolutions, Israel has expanded its borders and acts as it wishes.

3. EU FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

In 1970, European Community member countries discussed the Israel-Palestine problem as the first agenda topic in the first meeting for the establishment of EPC, which aims partnership in the field of foreign policy (Mercan, 2016: 170). Due to the importance of the Israeli-Palestinian lands in terms of its history, religion and proximity to energy resources, it has been an important issue that needs attention for the EU. Being an effective exporter throughout the world, the EU imports in a way dependent on oil in order to realize this cycle. The geography of the Middle East, which has significant oil reserves, is of particular importance for the EU, just like other major states. For this reason, the continuity of energy security is an important factor in making the decision regarding the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The EU has seen the conflict as a source of security and destabilizing problems that will extend to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. With the oil embargoes implemented after 1973, the EC tried to form a

² Intifada means "shake-off" in Arabic. Its original meaning is not in the sense of insurrection, but in the sense of throwing off the fiery and angry state of the individual.

common policy for the Arab-Israeli conflict. As Europe imports more than 80% of its oil from Middle Eastern countries, the change in the Arab-Israeli paradigm affects the EC deeply (Kohl, 1976: 81). The EU's efforts for effective actor ship in the international arena and the search for a common attitude within itself, the references that constitute the premise of the democracy, human rights and good governance principles that tries to spread in the regional and international arena have motivated him to deal with this issue. This has become the policy of the CFSP with the institutionalization of response and resolution attempts against the conflict in time.

The end of the Cold War after 1990 offered the EU a wider playing field, allowing it to take on more active roles by redefining security interests. The EU participated only as a participant in the Madrid Peace conference held under the leadership of the USA. The EU has institutionalized its conflict initiatives over time and made it a common foreign and security policy. CFSP has been developed in order to develop common diplomatic approaches in the field of foreign policy and to form joint actions. With the Lisbon Treaty, it has become a part of the EU's external action. In order to make the EU a more effective actor in the field of foreign policy, the "European External Action Service (EEAS)", which is the diplomatic service of the EU, as well as the "High Representative for Foreign Relations and Security Policy" was established by the Lisbon Treaty.

A Special Representative for the Middle East was appointed to inform the EU institutions about the ongoing peace process, coordinate the EU's action, and stay in permanent contact with the different actors involved in the conflict (Terpan, 2010: 8-9). The continuity of the process has been ensured with the efforts of the EU Special Representative. In the European Security Strategy published in 2003, it was stated that regional conflicts pose a serious threat to the security of Europe. The European Security and Defense policy, which forms the basis of the EU's CFSP policy, suffers from this process. It has been aimed to develop the culture of democracy in Palestine and to create a suitable environment that will facilitate the peace process with diplomacy and financial support.

The EU, which generalizes as the Arab-Israeli issue rather than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is at the center of the solution efforts with the Arab League and other regional partners (The Council of the European Union, 2009: 19). With the lack of democracy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the absence of a clear strategy, there are few policy areas left for the EU to move forward. Despite all these negativities; "*Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Without this, there will be little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East* (The Council of the European Union, 2003: 8)". As the EU could not gather the parties around the same table in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it turned to crisis and conflict management as its basic policy.

The EU continued its enlargement process by admitting Eastern and Central European countries to the membership in 2004. Having new borders with the newly joined member countries, the EU set up a European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) by tending to deepen with multi-dimensional policies. The EU also included Israel and Palestine in its neighborhood policy. Thus, while providing control over Israel, it ensured the economic and political continuity of Palestine with different policies.

The process did not go as planned by the EU when Hamas won the December 2005 Palestinian local elections and the January 2006 general elections. The execution of the ENP through the PLO, which ruled the West Bank, instead of Hamas, resulted in reforms to be made in a specific area instead of all Palestine. Having received certain concessions from the PLO and Israel for the solution of the problem within Palestine, the EU could not get the same approach or response from Hamas. EU financial assistance was suspended when Hamas refused to accept sanctions for disarmament and recognition of Israel.

Another effective issue in determining policy for the region is the problem of immigration. The "Arab Spring" experienced in Arab countries after 2010 caused a social dynamism. In addition to economic problems such as unemployment and inflation, problems such as uncontrolled population growth, rapid urbanization, deterioration in state administration and weakening of political legitimacy in Middle Eastern countries raise the issue of immigration to Europe and threaten EU security (Cicioğlu and Bal, 2017: 45). The EU, that wants to prevent immigration or at least keep it at a minimum level, realizes that the internal turmoil in these countries turns to itself as immigration, and implements the policy of solving the problems on the spot.

The EU wants the division within Palestine to be eliminated. The deepening of the conflict process over the years makes the solution process even more uncertain. A divided Palestine binds both the EU and Palestine

in the political system. The Palestinian elections, which have not been held for 15 years and will be held in 2021, have the potential to eliminate the division within Palestine with the right moves. Wishing to seize this opportunity, the EU offers all its support to ensure that elections are held properly and fairly. The role to be played by Israel in this process is also important. Israel is preventing the EU's election observation mission from entering Palestinian territory, which needs permission to enter through Israel during the coronavirus process. (Oppenheim, 2021).

4. EU FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

According to Ian Manners, normative power consists of two parts. The EU's ability to define what is "normal" in world politics is its ability to place certain "values" in a normative framework that it tries to spread in foreign policy (Manners, 2002: 236). Manners (2002: 242) listed these values as follows; peace, democracy, liberty, human rights and the rule of law. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is seen that the EU has interpreted the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over these norms and shaped accordingly its foreign policy.

The Schuman Report³, which was drafted in 1971 and accepted by the Council of Ministers, was the first attempt of the EC to take a joint position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Schuman Report constituted the general framework for subsequent declarations. For this purpose, as the first action plan, the EC provided significant support in 1971 to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides vital services to Palestinian refugees.

When the EC took action to adopt a new UN resolution outside the Camp David Agreements and completely independent of America, President Carter stated that America would veto any decision that would change the Security Council's resolution 242 (Armaoğlu, 2019: 449). The EC wanted to show that it acknowledged the Palestinian factor and its existence by issuing declarations. The 1980 Venice Declaration was a comprehensive declaration stating that all states in the region, including Palestine and Israel, had the right to security and existence (European Council, 1980). It was stated that Palestinians should be given the right of self-determination and should participate as a party to the negotiations. It was stated that a unilateral change in the status of Jerusalem and the Israeli occupation cannot be accepted (European Council, 1980). Camp David Agreement by referring to the US-led, was an important issue for the rising tension. The declaration faced a veto from the Israeli side since it stated that Palestine should also participate in the Middle East peace talks.

The EC concentrated on a joint action plan in the 1982 Brussels Declaration and its subsequent declarations. Remaining politically in the background in the 1990 Gulf War, the AT left the initiative to the USA and was excluded from the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference (Dağcı and Sak, 2015: 17). The EU, didn't not want to stay out of the table, turned to financial aid to Palestine with different budget items in the economic field with the Oslo process. In this process, that coincides with the values of the EU, the EU has started to provide technical and financial support to Palestine. In addition to these aids, the EU assumed the role of mediator when there was a breakdown in the negotiations. The EU even supported B'Tselem⁴, a non-governmental organization originating from Israel and reacting to human rights violations in Israel, financially. By taking the Oslo process as an opportunity to develop its own political role, the EU created a ground on which it accepts the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

The Barcelona Process brought the EU with Israel and other Arab states for the first time in partnership with avid economic, sociocultural and political goals based on regional cooperation. (Soliman, 2011: 1). The EU aimed to create a stability pact under these headings and paved the way for new collaborations (Spencer, 1997: 24). Although the USA failed in multilateral negotiations, the EU aimed to develop a link between Israel and the Arab world by including other Arab countries such as Syria and Lebanon in this process. With the Barcelona process, the EU has also established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Finding a suitable environment for spreading its normative norms, the EU turned to cooperation with Arab countries on political, socio-cultural, economic, financial and security issues. Instead of creating multilateral negotiations with Israel, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries, the EU has turned to bilateral negotiations and agreements with countries (Vasconcelos and Joffe, 2004: 4). Euro-Mediterranean Partnership acts as a regional forum, taking place as the context in which all parties to the conflict come

³ Six principles have been put forward in the Schuman Report; - The demilitarized region where international forces can be deployed, - Israel's withdrawal from all the lands occupied, - The international status of Jerusalem, - The postponement of the independence of East Jerusalem, - Returning to Arab refugees' homes and compensating their losses - Reach a peaceful solution between Israel and Arab countries.

⁴ B'Tselem has been regularly publishing activity reports on human rights violations committed by Israel every year since 2009 (B'Tselem, 2017).

together outside the UN. While the commercial-based Association Agreement was signed with Israel in 1995, the Association Agreement was signed with Palestine in 1997. With the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the EU tried to get involved in the issue with commercial and technical support without going into the political details of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and create a basis for mutual dialogue between the two (Hollis, 2011: 35). However, Israel's decision to start building new settlements in East Jerusalem after 1997 jeopardized the Barcelona process.

Since 1998, the EU has started to issue its Observation Reports on the Israel-Palestine issue twice a year, emphasizing that it has closely monitored the process and provided a platform for announcing the developments to the world. The 1999 Berlin Declaration contains a clear commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian state (European Council, 1999). After this declaration, the necessity of the establishment of a Palestinian State has been expressed by the EU in every platform. In addition, the Venice declaration has effectively shaped the international community's approach to conflict and it is seen as a factor that transforms it from a refugee problem into an issue of self-determination.

The extinction of hope for peace after the Second Intifada, EU Commission President Romano Prodi condemned the Israel's violent attitude. Providing commercial-technical support and focusing on regional peace, the EU had to change its policy after the Second Intifada. The EU gave all its strength to the solution of humanitarian and socio-economic problems and increased the capacity when realizing that the supports offered were not effective,

The 2002 Seville Declaration contains specific details of the final status solution. After this declaration, the Middle East Quartet consisting of the USA, Russia and the UN was established with the efforts of the EU. The USA thus accepted the political presence of the EU in this conflict. The EU, acting with the Quartet and turning towards a two-state solution with the Annapolis Process⁵, proposed a new road map. The negotiation process was scheduled, ensuring that both sides came together and dealt with various aspects of the conflict by the end of 2008 (European Commission, 2009). With the Annapolis process for a two-state solution, the EU closely involved in financial support for the border, refugees, security, the status of Jerusalem, residential areas and the Palestinian authority. The EU's solution is an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state that lives side by side with Israel and its other neighbors. (European Commission, 2009).

The EU with ENP, started to have strong political and economic relations with Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. The Palestinian budget, which is dependent on external donors, is based on the import economy (EEAS, 2013). Israel is responsible for collecting and transferring taxes and the irregularities in tax transfers from Israel put Palestine in a difficult situation (EC & High Representative, 2015). There are different opinions between the EU, its members and Palestine about how to pay attention to with the ENP (Selleslaghs, 2014: 7). As the EU gave priority to democracy and a stable market with the ENP, Palestine's main focus was gaining sovereignty. The unique aspect of ENP that differs from other policies is that relations and cooperation progress depend on political conditionality (Mercan, 2016: 198). Political cooperation with the EU can progress if the policies deemed appropriate by the EU are implemented. With this policy, the EU has become the party that sets the conditions and the benchmark for progress.

The EU undertook the border crossing and control mission between Israel and Palestine with the mission of the EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah) in 2005. The European Council approved the establishment of EUBAM Rafah within the scope of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)⁶. It was created to monitor the control of border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt (Council Joint Action 2005/797/ CFSP, 2005: 28). EUBAM Rafah, a non-armed civilian crisis management mission, aimed to contribute to the EU's Middle East peace process. The EU's existence as a third party has taken into account the security concerns of Israel and ensure the free movement of Palestinians living in Gaza (The EU External Action, 2005).

In the 2006 Palestinian elections, Javier Solana threatened to stop EU assistance in a possible Hamas victory in an attempt to reduce Hamas' eligibility. After the victory of Hamas⁷, the EU embraced the notion of conditional engagement⁸. When the requests from Hamas were not accepted, the EU cut its budget aid and

⁵ Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy in the Annapolis Process, represented the EU.

⁶ The Mission's existing mandate runs till 30 June 2020, Source: (EU External Action, 2005).

⁷ Although Turkey does not oppose the PLO, it clearly supports Hamas (Kissinger, 2014: 115).

⁸ EU Ministers adopted the proposal put forward by Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, limiting contact with the new Palestinian government ministers (Lovatt, 2021).

turned to an economic and diplomatic boycott. The EU didn't follow a one-sided policy as the party that always helps in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The EU established the European Union Police and Rule of law Mission for the Palestinian Territory (EUPOL COPPS) in 2006 to support the Palestinian state building for a comprehensive peace based on a two-state solution (Council Joint Action 2005/889 / CFSP, 2005: 65). EUPOL COPPS initially consisted of four police advisors and funded by UK, Spain, Sweden and Denmark. UK, allowing the EU to make concrete contributions to the peace process that went beyond common declarations and statements, enabled the EU to make concrete contributions to the peace process (Müller, 2012: 110). Palestine aims to support the civil police reform and develop a democratic and professional Palestinian power. The EU has allocated 12,65 million budget for the EUPOL COPPS mission under CSDP in 2021 (The EU External Action, 2021).

The Lisbon Treaty includes many new regulations regarding the institutional structure and functioning of the community in order for the EU to take its place as a stronger actor in world politics. It is aimed to provide the Union with a democratic, effective and transparent structure. Although it does not have the characteristics of a complete constitution, it has similar characteristics with the new articles it contains. The "Crisis Management and Planning Directorate", which is responsible for providing assistance and information to the High Representative, has been established and given an important role within the CFSP.

The EU established an institute for the training of judges and prosecutors between 2005-2009 with the program called Seyada. The program has a total budget of 8.1 million Euros; It was established to strengthen the judicial system and help the development of a modern justice system (EU Foreign Affairs Council, 2009). EU member states may have different preferences in funding, execution, military and technical support. The biggest obstacle to the EU's inability to be a univocal in conflict resolution and foreign policy is the different initiative choices of the member states.

The EU has supported the establishment of an economically and politically independent Palestinian state by undertaking complementary missions such as EUBAM Rafah, EUPOL COPPS and Seyada. These missions, which were carried out with a wide political consensus among EU members, helped the EU to strengthen its position between the two conflicting parties and increased its visibility. While the commission approved the mission's mandate to support police capacity, it opposed a wider mandate on the ground that judicial assistance could be better provided by other actors (Gourlay, 2012: 10). The EU seeks to promote the strengthening of the Palestinian economy through loan guarantees, vocational training and trade facilitation. Palestinians' economic activities and daily lives have been restricted due to Israel's access and movement restrictions.

Continuing to help prevent the collapse of the Palestinian state system in 2006 and 2007, the EU formed the Pegasa mechanism in 2008. The EU has supported the four-dimensional system of governance, economic, social development and technical assistance projects to support Palestinian state building, in line with the Copenhagen criteria. With the Pegasa mechanism, the EU helps to maintain democratic values, human rights standards and the rule of law in Palestine (Jaya and Ooij, 2018: 98). The system created to improve Palestinian public services aims to strengthen social development and Palestinian administration performance. The total contribution of the EU to the Pegase mechanism in 2020 is 159.05 million Euros (European Commission, 2021)⁹.

Although the EU tried not to be a party and wanted the continuity of the process, it stated that after the military operations carried out by Israel, suspended the relations. Defending the rights of states to self-defense, the EU called for a ceasefire, stating that civilian deaths would not be tolerated. The EU declared the necessity of reconnecting with the Middle East peace process by canceling the negotiations to be held with Israel in 2009. Javier Solana (2009) summarized the common opinion in the EU as follows; "*The only way out is the two-state solution. . . Maintaining the status quo is not an option. We have to act now*". Even when the people of Israeli stop thinking about peace, support for the two-state framework has been eroding since around 2010, when it reached a high point of 71% (Muasher and Brown, 2018: 35). In 2018, the rate of support of the Israeli society to the two-state structure decreased to 43%. The decline is not exactly ideological; it is driven largely by the sense that the solution is no longer feasible (Muasher and Brown, 2018: 35). The lack of progress on the Middle East Peace Process front has also been a major concern for the

⁹ €85 million for salaries, €22,5 million to support the response of the East Jerusalem Hospitals to COVID-19 and €45 million to support the incomes of the most vulnerable households.

Mediterranean Arab partners who perceive the EU as an ineffective, unconvincing and inconsistent external actor (Pace, 2010: 89).

There are different practices among EU institutions. While the European Parliament is an institution that can freely reflect the tendency of the European public opinion, other EU institutions such as the Council and the Commission have taken a more “loyal” attitude (Merçan, 2016: 180). The difference of opinion or priority between institutions is the main factor in the formation of this distinction, and it undermines the credibility of the EU. It is also known that member states adopt different attitudes even in their actions towards foreign policy. In 2011 Palestinian membership to UNESCO and 2012 Palestinian “UN Non Member Observer State” voting, the EU could not carry out a monophonic foreign policy. In the UNESCO voting, states such as Germany, Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Netherland voted no, while Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania and UK voted in abstention and others voted in favor. Although EU High Representative Catherine Ashton repeatedly expressed her wish for Palestine to become a full member of the UN as part of the solution to the Palestinian conflict before the vote for the “UN Non Member Observer State Status” (Euractiv, 2012); 14 members voted in favor, 12 members abstained and 1 member voted against¹⁰.

The EU has shown examples of inconsistencies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by signing different decisions even in the same year. The EU, that criticized Israel's forced displacement of Palestinians in 2012, took decisions to strengthen Israeli relations in the same year. As Heimann (2011) stated;

“Israel enjoyed excellent economic ties with the Community and established important contacts in a variety of spheres (in 1964, for example, Israel and the Common Market signed a limited tariff agreement, later extended to a Free Trade Agreement)”.

The potential for an agreement between the EU and Palestine has been more limited due to the fact that Palestine is not a state and the transitions are provided from Israel. By signing more commercial and financial aid agreements between the EU and Palestine, the soft policy method that enables Palestine to survive has been preferred. The EU has also used security tools to support the Palestinian police and border security (Nuttall, 2000: 262).

The European Council issued a declaration against Israeli settlements in 2012, laying the groundwork for a more legal EU approach (Persson, 2018: 196). The EU stated that in all agreements to be made with Israel, the occupation in 1967 would be acted on the motive that it was unacceptable. For this reason, it would not accept products coming from the occupied area and EU funds would not be used in these areas (Bouris and Brown, 2014: 2-3). Although it was stated in the EU Parliament many times that this decision was not implemented in 2017, no action was taken and Israel broke this ban.

For the EU, whether the aid sent to Palestine was used in the right place was a serious problem. 2 billion Euros of the aid sent by the EU to the West Bank and Gaza was lost (Ramahi, 2013: 4). The total contribution of the EU and its member states, which are the largest donors to Palestinians, increases every year in an unsustainable manner. Over the last two decades, more than 6 billion Euros used to support the Palestinian territories' economic development could not reach the desired level of the Palestinian economy and still hardly survive (Shafi, 2015: 8).

In 2017, Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel and his decision to move the US embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, created a shock all over the world. This decision, which meant the deviation of the US administrations from the policy implemented until today, symbolized a serious break. EU High Representative Mogherini has made it clear that they do not support this decision. In 2020, the Trump administration turned to normalization agreements between Israel and Arab states. Biden took over the management; *“he said that although these agreements were pleasing, such agreements could not replace the Israeli-Palestinian peace (Robinson, 2021)”*. Biden called for separate Israeli and Palestinian states, which had borders before the 1967 war, and stated that support for a two-state solution would continue, as the EU stated.

The 2017-2022 The Palestinian Authority National Policy Agenda includes three pillars describing the strategic direction of the government: path to independence, government reform and sustainable

¹⁰ In “UN Non Member Observer State” EU favored countries were Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Sweden. Abstained countries were Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and United Kingdom. The Czech Republic voted against the membership.

development (European Commission, 2018: 5). But in this government policy, the desired has not been achieved. The EU, in order to support the two-state solution and the state building of Palestine; offers advanced governance support for the sustainable development and economic resilience of the Palestinian industry (European Commission, 2018: 12-13).

The EU has managed relations without any direct terms for Palestine and Israel in some cases. In the EU-Israel Cooperation Agreement of 1995, the process was carried out without stipulating that Israel should withdraw from the land it occupies. In 2004, no special requests were made from Israel in the EU Action Plan. The EU tried to provide a space for the conflict parties to come together by avoiding direct demands and providing unconditional support during the aid process to Palestine. Instead of political or economic sanctions, it aimed to support the progress of the process with guidance. The focus on creating the necessary conditions for Palestinian state led to a shift in this approach and the emergence of a degree of soft conditionality in its approach to Israel and the Palestinian Authority (Peters, 2010: 522).

The EU, increased the infection prevention and control interventions in Palestine in the Covid outbreak, allocated 23.2 million Euros against the epidemic (European Commission, 2021)., The EU has provided over 793 million humanitarian aid to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian population since 2000 (European Commission, 2020). The EU aims for Palestine to achieve a state image that can stand on its own feet, with humanitarian, economic and technical assistance. With the improvement of the conditions in Palestine, the EU aims to see Palestine as an equivalent state and produce constructive solutions by focusing on normative values in this process. Unless the balance of power between Israel and Palestine converges, it seems difficult to achieve a positive outcome for the peace process.

The EU has been portrayed as a weak and ineffective normative force in conflict, displaying at best only very limited normative power (Persson, 2018: 194). The EU has failed to be an active player in conflict resolution efforts dominated by the US (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 184). The EU's support for the Palestinians in the field of economic and financial aid is accepted by the Palestinians (Nasrallah and Santoro, 2005: 25). As Israel sees the EU as a weak and pro-Arab in the mediation process, avoids a close political relationship (Fridlund, 2010: 5). The EU, that is among the formations such as Quartet, expands its area of influence, despite Israel's cautious approach to the EU during the solution process.

5. CONCLUSION

The main role of the EU's foreign and security policy is to preserve peace, promote international cooperation, strengthen international security, develop and consolidate democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU, took an active role in foreign policy with Maastricht, approached the Israel-Palestine problem within the framework of CFSP. Some members avoided anti-Israel resolutions in order not to conflict with the US and Israel. On the other hand, some member countries, behaved individually in the desired decisions, as they had a different interest or foreign policy from the community towards the Middle East. EU members, that have their own security and financial interests, often act in tension with each other. When they act collectively, they give what they want after a rather burdensome process. Supporting the peace talks, the EU accepts the existence of Palestine as a separate state with the technical and financial support it provides to Palestine. The EU, intervenes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through economic means and is the biggest donor towards a solution, cannot achieve the same success politically.

Even if the EU or other great powers do not come to a final conclusion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, first of all; The Palestinian economy should be seriously supported, violence should be reduced, the risk of escalation should be eliminated, cooperation between both structures should be strengthened and natural resources should be shared fairly, Israel's expansion should be stopped and measures should be taken to increase security. The EU has focused on the state-building process of Palestine, paying attention to the dimension of building and maintaining peace with funds. As a natural result of these processes, a more constructive ground for peace can be formed in the following years.

The EU, whose visibility and influence increased with missions such as EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS, tried to strengthen the institutional structure of Palestine. The EU tried to find solutions to Israel's security concerns and offered support for the establishment of mutual trust with this process. With the strengthening of the current situation and institutional structure of Palestine, there is a feeling that different missions of the EU can also be created.

The EU, which does not contradict itself with its declarations, has taken a constructive role in the solution of the problem. The EU has increased its voice on the issues that the USA has supported and it has more weight

in its foreign policy. The EU may have some long-term positive effects in some areas that the USA has decided not to do (Bouris and Brown, 2014: 1). It does not seem possible to implement an effective policy, where the EU has recently become the leading actor for this problem.

The EU has stated that it will provide the necessary support in the elections held in Palestine in 2021. In this process, the fact that Palestine preserves its integrity and achieves a fair and democratic election will play a key role in the solution of this problem. On the other hand, The EU should respect the results of free and fair elections and offer all the support it can, instead of the one-sided dissolution made in 2006. With the existence of equal states and constructive external interventions, the possibility of solving this problem will increase.

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