

**T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ ENSTİTÜSÜ**

AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ SİYASETİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANA BİLİM DALI

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EU IN THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS (MEPP) AND THE ROLE OF TURKEY**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Sedat METİNULU

İstanbul – 2009



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ONAY SAYFASI

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ÖZET

Ortadoğu bölgesi dünya siyasetinde üzerinde en çok konuşulan bölgelerin başında gelmektedir. Bölgeyi bu kadar ilgi çekici hale getiren en önemli faktör devam etmekte olan İsrail ve Arap devletleri arasındaki uyuşmazlıktır. Bu bağlamda özellikle İsrail-Filistin mücadelesi ön plana çıkmaktadır. Tarihçesi altmış yıldan daha eskiye giden bu uyuşmazlığın çözümü için farklı platformlarda barışı sağlama çalışmaları yapılmıştır. Birleşmiş Milletler, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avrupa Birliği (AB), Orta Doğu Barış Süreci'nde en fazla adı geçen uluslararası aktörlerdir. Bu aktörlerin yanı sıra bölgede önemli yeri olan ülkelerin de barış sürecine katkıları olmaktadır. Türkiye sahip olduğu stratejik konumu, tarihsel arka planı ve geliştirmekte olduğu ikili ilişkiler bağlamında İsrail ve Filistin ile iyi ilişkiler içerisinde. Barış sürecinin yol alabilmesi bölgedeki aktörlerin güven duyabileceği bir arabulucunun daha aktif rol almasıyla doğrudan ilgilidir. Bu çalışmanın birbiriyle ilişkili iki amacı bulunmaktadır. Bir taraftan AB'nin Orta Doğu Barış Süreci'ndeki rolünü ve etkinliğini analiz ederken diğer taraftan da Türkiye'nin bölgedeki konumuna, tarihsel bağlara ve ikili ilişkilerine vurgu yaparak barış sürecindeki rolünü yansıtmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne girmesi durumunda AB'nin Ortadoğu politikasına ve barış sürecine nasıl katkı sağlayabileceğini dolaylı olarak göstermektedir. Ekonomik bir işbirliği bağlamında başlayan ancak bütünleşme sürecinin olumlu etkisiyle farklı alanlarda da ortak politikalar oluşturan Avrupa Birliği uluslar arası sistemde önemli bir aktör haline gelmektedir. AB'nin ortak dış ve güvenlik politikasının etkinliği kullanmış olduğu araçlarla doğrudan etkilidir. Orta Doğu Barış Süreci, Avrupa Birliği'nin aktörlüğünün ve dış politika araçlarının etkinliğinin analiz edilebileceği önemli bir laboratuardır. Sürecin dinamik yapısı ve AB'nin gelişmekte olan yapısı bu çalışmanın içeriğini etkileyen önemli bir faktördür. Bu çalışma AB'nin Orta Doğu Barış Süreci'ndeki etkinliğinin sınırlı olduğunu ve bölgedeki Amerikan politikalarının gölgesinde kaldığını savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Türkiye'nin AB üyeliğinin birlik için artı bir değer olacağını savunmaktadır.

ABSTRACT

The Middle East region is one of the popular regions in world politics. This is mainly because of the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Arab States, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conflict has a history which is more than sixty year. There exist efforts in different platforms in order to establish peace in the region. The United Nations (UN), the United States of America (US) and the European Union (EU) are among the actors mentioned mostly in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). In addition to these actors, there are some regional actors that would contribute to the peace process. Turkey, for instance, has developed good relations with Israel and Palestine due to its geo-strategic position in the region, historical ties with them and significance of the bilateral agreements. The Development of the peace process is related to presence of an actor as the mediator who has been trusted by the parties in the conflict. There are two inter-related aims of this study. On the one hand, this study aims at to analyse the involvement and the effectiveness of the EU in the MEPP, on the other hand, it reflects the role of Turkey in the peace process by referring its position in the region, historical ties and the bilateral relations in the region.

This study indirectly shows to what extent Turkey would contribute to the EU's Middle East Policy and the Middle East Peace Process in case of membership to the Union. Thanks to the integration process of the Union, the EU has become an important actor in the international system which started as an economic cooperation and later developed common policies in different issues. The effectiveness of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU is directly related to the tools available while dealing with third countries. In this context, the MEPP is an important laboratory to analyse the presence of the EU's actorness and the effectiveness of the policy tools within the CFSP. Dynamic nature of the MEPP and the developing structure of the EU are the factors that affect the content of this study. This study argues that the EU's effectiveness in the MEPP is limited and under the shadow of the US policies. In this context, the membership of Turkey to the Union would contribute to presence of EU as an effective actor in the peace process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRS	Arms Control and Regional Security
AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
CEECs	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CHP	Republican People's Party
DYP	True Path Party
EAD	Euro-Arab Dialogue
EC	European Community
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EMU	European Monetary Union
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
GMP	Global Mediterranean Policy
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IN	International Organization
IR	International Relations
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PKK	The Kurdistan Workers' Party
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
RP	Welfare Party (RP)
TEU	Treaty of European Union
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly

TIKA	Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency
TOBB	Union of Stock Markets and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

“Resolution of Arab-Israel Conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Without this, there will be little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East. The EU must remain engaged and ready to commit resources to the problem until it is solved” (Solana, 2003, the ESS).

The European Union (EU) is the most successful peace and integration project in world politics in the post-war period. EU integration process has evolved step by step through different stages and included new areas of cooperation as a result of growing demands of the member states. In the millennium age, the Union is one of the leading actors of the international system. Although the member states have transferred their competences to the EU regarding economic issues under the first pillar, they are still reluctant to share their sovereignty in high politics issues placed under the second and third pillars of the Union. In the context of political integration and external relations, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) under the second pillar of the EU can be considered as the framework regarding the relations with third parties. The second pillar, the CFSP, aimed at creating a common voice that represents the will of EU in terms of foreign policy as well as security concerns.

Although the EU has not developed a supranational foreign and security policy, it has already developed some instruments that can be used in conducting its relations with third parties like declarations, common positions and joint actions in addition to special tools like development aid including humanitarian and reconstruction aid and framework instruments such as cooperation, association and partnership agreements. The post of the High Representative of the EU at Amsterdam Treaty and the appointment of Javier Solana for the position, has given positive signs for the future of a common European foreign policy. As a reflection of its international policies, the EU has been producing new policies concerning different parts of the world in different contexts and levels. One of these regions is the Middle East where the EU wants to be an effective player to solve the existing problems of the region not only to sustain stability in the region but also to protect its own security and interests.

The Middle East in general and the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) in particular have a special place in the EU's political integration process and the development of the CFSP. While the Middle East Peace Process refers to the process including Israel and the Arab states in conflict with Israel, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Since the first meeting of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in Munich in 1970, the issue has been on the agenda of the European leaders. From this point of view, the Arab-Israeli conflict, or the MEPP is a test case for the EU to evaluate the effectiveness of its CFSP. To what extent has the EU been involved in and shaped the peace process? It is logical to say that the development of European capabilities and instruments in the CFSP positively affected the EU involvement in the process. Although the EU participation in the peace process was restricted only to the Venice Declaration until end of the Cold War, in the following years along with the establishment of the CFSP pillar, the EU has become more active as seen in Madrid peace process, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the Road Map and the Quartet. However, the EU is not the only external actor in the process. There are also other actors like the US. Therefore, the EU's role in the Middle East is limited with the other actors' roles, especially the US which is the mediator in the peace process.

The EU has been developing relations with both parties of the conflict. On the one hand, the EU is one of the supporters of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in order for it to develop its democratic and independent institutions as well as to build up a 'viable' Palestinian State living side by side with Israel and other neighbours in the region. Based on the "Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation" (1997) signed between the EU and the PLO on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, there is an ongoing political and economic cooperation between the parties. Moreover, the European Commission is the biggest donor of financial assistance to the Palestinians. On the other hand, based on the EU-Israel "Association Agreement", which was signed in 1995 and which entered into force in 2000 (replaces the earlier Cooperation Agreement of 1975), the parties have established partnership in different areas such as economic, social, financial, political, cultural and technological cooperation. The EU supports the idea that the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state is also good for Israel's interest.

A just and lasting peace in the Middle East is the main purpose of the EU in the region. The EU supports a two state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict based on the UN Security Council Resolutions, the principles of Madrid Conference and the implementation of the Road Map. The EU explicitly condemns violence and terrorism in the region since terrorist attacks has no justification. That is why the EU included Islamic Jihad and Hamas in the list of the terrorist organisations. In the European Security Strategy (ESS) (2003), Solana declared the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a strategic priority for the EU in region.

Thanks to the European integration process, the common values and norms, the Union has become a promoter of peace and security around its borders. Therefore, the EU wants to expand this peace and security sphere towards its neighbourhoods as seen in the EMP and the New Neighbourhood Policy. Regarding the MEPP, the EMP was a milestone initiative because it brings all conflicting parties in the conflict around the same table even though it has its own problems.

Turkey as part of the Middle East region has developed relations with the states in the region in different sectors at different levels. Turkey’s foreign policy towards the region is dependent on the internal and external developments. In this context, Turkey considers Kurdish separatism, energy security, trade relations, public opinion and the position of international actors regarding the region while formulating its policy priorities and the position. Combination of these variety factors shapes the direction of Turkish foreign policy in the region. It is obvious that any Middle East policy directly or indirectly involves in the Middle East Peace Process. Turkey has been developing good relation with Israel and Palestine. Since the establishment of State of Israel, Turkey has been developing cooperation and diplomatic relations with Israel. However, the partnership between them can be affected from the public concerns and international developments. As a secular, Western oriented with a predominantly Muslim population, Turkey has good relations not only with Israel but also Palestine. Turkey supports the concerns of the Palestinians in different platforms and supports the establishment of a viable Palestine state in the region. On the other hand, Turkey respects the right of Israel to live in a

secure environment. Since Turkey has credibility in the eyes of Israel and Palestine due to the existing cooperation and the neutral position of Turkey, in most of the cases regarding the conflict, Turkey would play a more active role in the peace process.

In the membership process of Turkey to the European Union, not only economic and social criteria but also geopolitical and geostrategic significance of Turkey will play a decisive role in overcoming the concerns of Europeans against Turkey. When Turkey becomes a member of the EU, the borders of the Union will expand towards the Middle East geographically and the Union will inevitably be affected by the instability in the region closely. In this context, Turkey's capabilities and willingness to play a leading role in the region affects the concerns of Europeans and neighbours in the region. The European security understanding requires good relations with neighbouring regions and the peaceful settlement of the existing conflicts. Therefore, Turkey's potential role in the MEPP would contribute the European foreign and security policy.

This study is dedicated to investigating mainly two issues. On the one hand, it analyses the involvement of the EU, an evolving global actor in the international system, in the Middle East Peace Process and the effectiveness of the instruments used in order to establish peace in the region. On the other hand, it tries to elaborate on the potential contributions of Turkey to the EU, as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East and in the MEPP in case Turkey's membership is realized. Due to the dynamic nature of the MEPP, this study does not include recent development in detail as reference points. The major research questions of this thesis are:

To what extent is the EU's involvement in the Middle East Peace Process effective within the context of CFSP? How would the possible membership of Turkey to the EU contribute the effectiveness of the European Union in the process?

Two major and related arguments of this thesis are: (1) Although the effectiveness of the EU in the Middle East Peace Process has been consistently increasing with the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Union, it is still not the

main mediator in the process and it plays only a complementary role in the sense that it complements policies set by the US and other actors. (2) A possible membership of Turkey to the EU would positively affect the role of the Union in the MEPP to a certain extent due to the strategic position of Turkey and its good relations in the region especially with conflicting parties

This study employs policy analysis in order to reflect visions of the EU and Turkey regarding the MEPP. Based on the historical developments in the process, the effectiveness of the EU in the peace process and the role of Turkey are analysed. For this purpose, official documents from the EU and its institutions as well as official web pages of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Israel are used as primary sources in this study. Books, journal articles and other relevant documents as secondary sources are consulted in order to elaborate the issue.

This study is divided into three chapters which are complementary to each other. The first chapter analyses the actorness of the EU in a globalized international system. After defining the features of the EU as an actor through comparing it with a nation state and a federal state, the unique aspects of the EU are presented. The basic concern of this chapter is to understand how the EU developed its own identity, presence, opportunities and policy in its foreign policy in order to shed light on the EU's actorness in the Middle East. In this context, the factors which force the EU to be involved actively in the MEPP will be clarified. Since the EU is not a super power and presents a "post-modern polity" or "sui generis" organization, this chapter also points out the EU's policy instruments in dealing with third countries. For this purpose, the EU conditionality is examined to see whether it is a tool available for the EU in the MEPP. Although the EU uses its conditionality as a precondition for third countries in order to develop good relations or become members, this is not the case for the MEPP. So, this situation limits the impact of the EU over the issue one way or another.

The second chapter is dedicated to the historical background of the conflict; the main reasons behind the involvement of the European Union in the process; and the

effectiveness of the EU instruments in the MEPP. Therefore, in the first section, the significance of the Middle East for the EU is analysed in geo-economic, geo-strategic and religious perspectives. The section aims to show that the region is vital not only for the members of the region but also for the super powers. In the second section, the root causes and development of the conflict are summarized in order to have background information over the process. Without understanding the history of the conflict, it is very difficult to understand and solve today's complex peace process. In the following section, the main reasons of the EU's involvement in the MEPP are reflected. This section argues that the EU's concerns are not restricted only to economic considerations but also other factors such as politics and security of the region, and the historical ties affect the Union's position.

In the section related to the involvement of the EU in the peace process, the EU's instruments and declarations regarding the issue are analysed in order to show how the EU has approached the issue to contribute the peace process. The EU's policy instruments in the MEPP are evaluated to point out to what extent the EU's policy on the MEPP is effective in the context of CFSP. The EU's position and involvement in the peace process are presented by referring to the Venice Declaration, the Madrid Peace Process, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the EU declarations on the issue, the Quartet group and the Road Map. Since the peace process is very complex due to the reluctance of the parties and the events damage the peace negotiations; the position of the EU and its relations with Israel and the Arab states has been changing based on the internal dynamics, international developments and the willingness of the parties to accept the EU as a mediator in the peace process. Under the light of recent developments regarding the issue, the current position of the EU is also stated in this section.

The last section of this chapter focuses on the transatlantic division over the MEPP. It involves a comparison between the EU and the US in the peace process to understand why they reflect divergent approaches on the issue. The division between the transatlantic partners derives not only from the economic factors but also geographical proximity, historical perspectives, security understanding and domestic considerations.

The last chapter focuses on the involvement of Turkey in the MEPP. After analysing the importance of the Middle East for Turkey and its relations with the region from a general perspective, the study dwells on Turkey's role as a mediator in the MEPP. Following the analysis of Turkey's relations with Israel and Palestine, especially within the MEPP, the study points out the divergences and convergences between the EU and Turkey regarding the issue. Turkey should play an active mediator role in the MEPP at least for three reasons: First of all, the geo-strategic position and national interests of Turkey require a peaceful and stable atmosphere in the region. Conflict and instability in the region directly or indirectly damage Turkish foreign policy in the region. Secondly, Turkey has historical, economic, social and political relations with all the parties of the conflict. Coexistence of Islam, democracy and secularism in Turkey, as a model for the Middle East, attracts not only Muslim Arab parties but also Israel in the MEPP. Therefore, they are in favour of Turkey's participation and mediation in the peace negotiations. Current Israel-Syria peace negotiations and the mediator role of Turkey can be perceived from this perspective. Last but not least, the MEPP and Turkey's role in the region can be a test case to show the EU member states to what extent Turkey is a capable and strategic partner for the Union. All these factors support the argument that positive contributions of Turkey in the process will inevitably increase the EU's actorness in the Middle East once it becomes a member.

Chapter I

The European Union as a Global Actor

In the international relations literature, there is an ongoing discussion over ‘actorness’, ‘global role’ and ‘effectiveness’ of the EU by academics. It is commonly accepted that the EU is a *sui generis* organization in the international system because of its special mechanisms and integration process. Therefore, to better evaluate the dynamics and actorness of the EU, many analysts compare the EU with both nation state and federal state system. However, the EU is neither a nation state nor a federal state like the US but it is an international organization that includes 27 members today and is supposed to have more in the process. The integration process of the EU has been transforming the identities and perceptions of member states. In other words, interest and sovereignty of member states have been redefined as the outcome of transformation process. Thus, the interests and identities of individual member states have become consistently the interests and identities of a European polity (Waeber, 1998a: 46). These discussions indicate that the EU is an example of “post-modern polity”, or “post-sovereign system” in the international system (Wallace, 1999; Waeber, 1998b: 105; Kekeç, 2004: 2).

This chapter aims at analysing actorness of the EU and the foreign policy instruments employed by the Union in order to sustain peace and security regarding its environment (conflict regions) and play an effective role in crisis management. This chapter argues that involvement of the EU in crisis regions, especially in the MEPP, and improvement of the foreign policy tools significantly are the natural outcomes of EU’s actorness, integration process and global role constructed during the transformation process. After analysing the actorness, presence, capabilities and effectiveness of the EU, the instruments used by the Union for its foreign policy, or external relations with third parties are defined in the last section.

1.1. Defining the EU as an Actor

It is an obvious fact that the EU is an important actor in the system. G. Sjostedt (1977) in his study underlines two important features for an actor: autonomy and capability (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 17). Autonomy refers that the actor can be separated from its environment (both internal and external), has its own working mechanism and is capable of volition (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 16). In other words, an entity should be capable of formulating its purpose, taking decisions over the purpose and applying purposeful actions. Autonomy is essential and central for actorness. In the EU context, autonomy depends on the voting mechanism in the Council of Ministers, issues in concern and competences of the Commission (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 17). Capability, as the second component of actorness and complementary to autonomy, points out the actor's capability to act "actively and deliberately" in the system with other actors (Sjostedt, 1977: 16; Dosenrode and Stubkjaer, 2002: 108). At this stage it would be useful to make a distinction between an international (or global) actor and a superpower because their influences and capabilities in the system are not equal. Actorness requires quality and credibility that is to some extent different from being a superpower which also requires military power, i.e., a standing army. So, although the EU is not a superpower in that sense, it is a global actor in the system because of its credibility in global politics and effectiveness of the "soft power" instruments to convince third parties.

A comparison between a state and the EU would be a starting point to better understand the nature and dynamics of the EU as an actor. The notion of state includes some essential elements such as exclusive territorial entity, internal and external sovereignty, hierarchical structure of authority, or a government dealing with wide range of subjects (White, 2001: 20). At this stage, it is essential to make a distinction between the EU and the EC which has legal personality on behalf of the member states. Although the EU is a territorial entity bordered by member states and permits flow of people and goods within its borders, the EU definitely lacks of statehood in terms of hierarchical, centralized authority independent from member states, acting as a government on internal control

and external relations (White, 2001: 21). So, to limited extent the EU acts in state-like ways (ibid.).

As an alternative to comparison of the EU with a state, it would be relevant to some extent to make a comparison between the EU and an international organization (IO) such as NATO or the United Nations (UN) including many members and acting over common policies. From international law perspective, the EC as a legal entity has similar functions like the UN in terms of executive power on agreed competences. Compared to international organizations, the EU is overqualified because the EU does more than an international organization in which states cooperate with each other voluntarily based on mutual benefit (White, 2001: 21). However, the EU has unique, special qualifications which do not exist in an IO. First of all, the EU has more complex and developed institutional structure compared to other IOs in which different institutions are responsible in various policy areas at different levels and they have special units over the subjects in concern (ibid.). Secondly, the EU has more responsibility concerning the policy areas, and including new ones based on the needs of members states and requirement of the system (ibid.). And thirdly, it is beyond the classical intergovernmental organization because it has already acquired supranational capabilities in specific issues regarding its structure, decision making and implementation (White, 2001: 21; Nugent, 1994: 431).

1.1.1. EU as a Unique Actor

It is obvious that the EU is neither a conventional state nor a traditional international organization, but a *unique* organization in progress, under construction. Some policy analysts approach the EU as a *policy network* in order to describe EU policy-making structure (White, 2001: 22). They focus on decentralized, non-hierarchical governance among different networks working in various policy areas to find solutions to common problems rather than centralized system of governance as seen in a traditional state system. So, based on this approach it can be argued that in the process of policy-making in the EU, there exists mix of actors including member states, the EU institutions, interest

groups and others dealing with the subject. Moreover, there are different policy-making procedures and processes at the EU level, changing according to issues of concern. This bargaining or policy-making process would be intergovernmental, trans-national, trans-governmental, sub-national or supranational based on the subject and existing treaties (White, 2001: 22).

Regarding the general impact of the EU in different policy areas, the EU can be also defined as an *international regime* which has its own agreed explicit principles, rules, norms, procedures and programme that regulate and govern the interaction between members, or actors of the regime in defined issue areas (Soetendorp, 1999: 11). However, policy coordination process in the EU, pooling decision making through qualified, and sometimes simple majority voting, delegation of power to (semi)autonomous EU institutions regarding agenda-setting, representation and implementation of the agreed decision shows that the EU is qualitatively different from other international regimes (Moravcsik, 1993: 514). Even though behaviour of the EU is similar to other international actors in the system, the EU has its unique characteristics. For instance, while the EC has been acting on behalf of the member states over the issues such as trade and development policy, with respect to the CFSP, the member states put their restrictions and the EU reflects an intergovernmental behaviour (White, 2001: 23).

The discourse of the EU as a *unique* actor in international politics is supported by the *civilian power*¹ character of the Union. As a civilian power, the EU prefers to use non-military instruments like economic (carrots and sticks approach) or diplomatic and; prefers international cooperation based on international law and strengthens the rule of law; uses persuasion rather than coercion and depends on civilian democratic control over the foreign and defence policy (Larsen, 2002: 289; McCormick, 2007: 69-80). However, the concept of civilian power has been transformed during the process depending on the internal and structural changes. The concept is not essentially the same in use compared

¹ The concept was firstly used by François Duchene (1972) to define the values and characteristics of the EC. He defines as follow: “The EC will only make the most of its opportunities if it remains true to its inner characteristics. They are primarily: civilian ends and means and a built-in sense of collective action, which in turn express, however imperfectly, social values of equality, justice and tolerance ” (Duchene, 1972: 20).

to 1970s and 1980s. Political and economic means are not enough each time for persuasion and to establish effective solutions over existing problems. Therefore, military means as integral part of joint action of the Union are available to be used in crisis management and conflict resolution (Larsen, 2002: 289-90). Using military instruments can not damage the civilian nature only if they are used for civilian purposes to stop a crisis or whatever as a last resort (Smith, 2003 and McCormick, 2007: 69-80). So, availability of military capabilities in addition to enhancing civilian capabilities (economic, political and diplomatic means) would contribute the unique actorness of the EU. Moreover, some experts evaluate this situation as an advantage for the EU in order to declare its civilian identity globally and become a “civilian superpower” (Biscop and Coolsaet, 2003: 31).

1.2. How to approach EU’s Actorness

In the discipline of international relations, the EU is ignored as an international political actor because traditional foreign policy is based on nation states (Ginsberg, 2001: 12). Since the establishment of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, modern state system, sovereign nation states have been the subject of International Law and, therefore, only states have been eligible to make treaties, responsible to other states and join international organizations (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 14). However, realities and necessities of international system challenged the Westphalian order. Following the formal recognition of the legal status of the United Nations by International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1948, parameters of IR has been transformed. Thus, the UN gained international legal status, which shaped its role in world politics. Similarly, the European Community succeed legal personality regarding the specific issues placed under the Pillar I of the TEU entered into force in November 1993 while Pillar II and Pillar III remained intergovernmental where the Union has no legal personality to conclude international agreements. So, the EC has become successor of the member states in specific international agreements. For instance, the EC has its own place within the World Trade Organization (WTO) together with the member states and has exclusive competence in common policies such as international fisheries agreements (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 15). Moreover, there is no direct link

between actorness and legal personality. Even though weak states have their legal personality, they are not effective, significant actors. From this perspective, the EU is able to fulfil important functions in world politics without a legal personality in full sense (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 15). However, it does not mean that the law has no significance in the system. On the contrary, it provides common understanding concerning the acts and behaviour of actors in institutional context. Therefore, it has regulatory factor to some extent.

There are some restricting factors regarding the position, or actorness of EU in world politics. First of all, state-centric traditional approaches to IR, like realism, neglect the EU as an actor functioning within the system. Secondly, foreign policy analysis pay attention to limited number of external activities concerning mainly 'high politics' issues, related to politics and security, led by primarily foreign ministers, diplomats, representatives and militaries (Smith, 2003: 13). This approach ignores low politics issues. However, the EU has effective policy regarding the environmental, economic or humanitarian polices. Therefore, it is essential to consider "cumulative impact" of the EU rather than policy oriented evaluation (Ginsberg, 2001: 279). So, both state-centric approach to IR and limited range of foreign policy areas in which the EU is not capable as expected would presume that the EU is not an actor in the system, or at least not yet (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 12).

However, currently some experts on IR reject, or seriously criticize the state-centric approach by referring the policy instruments of the CFSP and its positive outcomes. Hazel Smith (2002: 9), for instance, points out the 'staggering effect' of state-centric approaches ignoring or excluding the distinctive and important external activities of the EU. Policies on regional cooperation, conflict prevention, human rights and democracy, fight against international crime are parts of the answer of the question asking about what the EU actually does in world politics (Smith, 2003: 2). Similarly, the analysis of Roy Ginsberg on cumulative impact of the EU in international politics rejects the depiction of the EU as an 'economic giant- political pygmy' (Ginsberg, 2001: 279). Today, it can be argued that the EU is more than the sum of its parts in terms of its cumulative impact and

an important actor of the international politics because the instruments used by the EU is not restricted only to economic and value-based principles but also their interrelated affects over political and security issues. For instance, while the EU is not a leading political actor in the MEPP, it is still the indispensable part of the process because of its balanced power, supporting principles and economic opportunities.

1.2.1. Constructivist approach to actorness

There are different approaches to actorness within the context of theories of international relations. Among other theories, the constructivist approach as a reconciliation between behavioral and structural approaches² to actorness can provide a better, convenient explanation regarding the formation and development of actorness (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 21). According to the constructivist approach, structures provide both opportunities and constraints for actors, or agencies established by actors. Structures are defined based on intersubjective rather than material perspective. Alexander Wendt (1994: 389) defines the concept as follows: “intersubjective systemic structures consist of shared understandings, expectations and social knowledge embedded in international institutions”, and he adds “intersubjective structures give meaning to material ones, and it is in term of meanings that actors act.” Therefore, there exist a dialectical relationship between structure and agency regarding the process of construction and reconstruction depending on actions of actors and reinterpretation of international norms and rules.

The interconnection between structure and agency would be useful to understand actorness and identity of the EU (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 22). In the evolution of the EU, dynamic interaction between political actors and opportunities and limitations afforded by both domestic and international structure can be observed easily. The emergence of the EU as an international actor and development of its external relations with third parties directly relates to evolution of practices and meanings within the

² While behavioral approach to actorness focus on mainly autonomy and capability as reference points, structural approaches to actorness (for instance; structural realism developed by Waltz , ‘world system theory’ used by Immanuel Wallerstein) underlines the importance of structure which shape the system and characteristics of actorness in short. For more on the discussion about behavioural and structural approaches see: (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 16-20).

intersubjective structures (Larsen, 2002: 287). In other words, transformation of national interests of the member states into European interests provides an area of maneuver for the EU to improve its external relations and effectiveness regarding the global issues. In the context of influence of the inter-subjective approach to the EU, there are mainly two interconnected processes that influence each other. On the one hand, norms and action settings of global politics shape the roles, responsibility and limits of the EU within the inter-subjective international structure, on the other hand the presence of the EU and its purposeful actions based on the capabilities and opportunities contribute to construction of the structure (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 23). So, actorness of the EU has been constructed in a long process and will continue to change according to opportunities and capabilities.

1.2.2. Dynamics of Actorness: opportunity, presence and capability

Actorness is not a self-constructed or acquired notion in global politics. Recognition of an entity or organization in concern as an actor and development of its actorness in the system depend on several factors. While autonomy, or presence and capabilities are essential components of existence of an actor, its role in world politics and development of its capabilities and effectiveness depends on opportunities which occur in the system in specific circumstances. In the following section, opportunity, presence and capability as crucial dynamics of actorness will be analyzed in order to better evaluate actorness of the EU.

Opportunity reflects the external or structural events and ideas that restrict or allow actorness. In other words, external events and developments, the context, would shape EU's action or inaction (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 24). Opportunity refers a dynamic process because ideas and events are interpreted in various ways (Jacobsen, 2003: 56). Notion of interdependence, the ending of Cold War, globalization process and the 9/11 attacks triggered the involvement of the EU in global politics significantly. In different periods, the identity and the role of the Union have transformed according to the necessities of the period. For instance, emergence of economic interdependence after

1970s and consistent development of globalization process showed that individual states were impotent in the system where non-territorial economic actors were dominating the system. Thus, this external challenge provided an opportunity for the EU, especially for the Community pillar, to act on behalf of the member states on economic fields and this later provided the development of the Single Market programme and the Lisbon process (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 24-5).

Similarly, collapse of the USSR and ending of Cold War provided another opportunity for the EU to have closer relationship with CEECs and go one step ahead toward the discourse of reuniting Europe. The accession of the eight CEE countries in 2004 has transformed the character of the Union which would cause new opportunities and threats. Regarding the development of CFSP, one of the turning points was the outbreak of armed conflict in former Yugoslavia in 1991 which increased the fear of political instability in the backyard of the EU. The war provoked the “EU responsibility” discourse in the region and it was the chance for Europe to prove its effectiveness. As Brian White (2001: 106) points out: “No other area of international activity to date has attracted more adverse publicity for either the community or the EU”. However, the constraints of EU capabilities did not allow effective involvement of the EU in the region. The ‘capabilities and expectation’ gap evocation reflects that although opportunity may be constructed through discourse, material conditions directly matter (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 26).

Regarding the MEPP, inadequacy of the US, emerging problems in the region due to the conflict and the response of the EU to violence in the region based on its common norms and values have provided and an opportunity for the EU to become an important mediator, or player in the region to establish a lasting peace. The question to what extent the EU has been acting effectively in the process is discussed in the following chapters. However, it should be underlined that global actorness claim of the EU requires the involvement of the Union in long lasting conflicts in its neighbour region as a mediator since global actorness of the EU and promotion of global values cannot be realised by ignoring the existing insecurity.

Presence can be regarded as the ability to impose external influence which shapes the expectations, perceptions and behaviours of others in international politics (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 27). In the EU context, there are mainly two interconnected factors that indicate the status and reputation of the EU. The first one is related to character (material existence) and identity (nature) of the EU. While character of the EU refers to political system containing the member states and institutions of the Union, identity refers to common understanding of the Union regarding what the EU should, or not, do (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 27). It is the identity of the EU that shape its role, policy priorities and approach. The enlargement process of the Union and the new application as positive outcome of the Union's character contribute to the international presence of the EU (Kupchan, 2002: 145). The second component of presence indicates the external outcomes of the internal priorities and policies of the Union. Internal policy initiatives of the EU directly or indirectly would get responses from third parties (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 27-8). So, the expansion of the Union's size through new members and policy scope definitely increased the presence of the EU since the EU has increased its area of influence geographically and position in world politics due to the number of its member states compared to other regional cooperations.

Capability is related to internal context of the EU and its effect over the external actions as well as the ability of EU to formulate policies and the availability of effective instruments in order to respond to existing opportunities (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 29). Based on Gunner Sjødtedt's works (1977), Bretherton and Vogler (2006: 30-32) underline four requirements of actorness which shape capability of the Union regarding its external relations:

- Shared commitment to a set of overarching values
- Domestic legitimization of decision making process and priorities relating to external policies
- The ability to identify priorities and formulate policies- captured by the concept of consistency and coherence, where:
 - Consistency indicates the degree of congruence between the external policies of the Member States and of the EU;

- Coherence refers to the level of internal coordination of EU policies.
- The availability of, and capacity to utilize, policy instruments- diplomacy/negotiation, economic tools and military means.

Common European values are well defined in the Treaty of European Union (TEU) and both the EU and the Member States are willing to protect and promote them not only within their borders but also in their external relations, including the rule of law, democratic governance, sustainable development, and, social and economic progress. Domestic legitimization is a matter of growing consideration regarding the external policies of the EU because of mainly two reasons (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 30). First of all, the EU itself has been suffering a democratic deficit despite the fact that it is the leading promoter of democracy regarding the third countries. Secondly, policies of the EU and implementation of them domestically directly or indirectly affect the daily lives of people in member states. Therefore, the EU will require more public awareness and support for its policies especially on external affairs. However, in the issues where member states are inadequate the EU would be more effective such as combating terrorism, protection of environment, combating unemployment and a general context of ‘maintaining peace and security in Europe’, in which public support is significantly higher than other issues/issue areas. Regarding the EU involvement in the MEPP, 81 percent of respondents to a Eurobarometer survey supports enhanced role of the Union in the process (Commission, 2003: 59).

The identification of priorities and formulation of policies have significant importance regarding the development and effectiveness of the EU policies. Enlargement of the Union to 27 members triggered the *consistency* problem in the Union because some member states have bilateral relations with countries, for instance with the US, that have different line over foreign policy priorities and instruments. This would cause divergence among the member states over the CFSP issues because in foreign policy bilateral relations of the member states have central role and this would damage the consistency. However, the problem of consensus among the member states of the Union has been partly overcome through ‘flexibility’, differentiated integration as experienced at the European Monetary Union (EMU) where the UK, Denmark, Sweden opted out

(Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 32). In the CFSP context, ‘constructive abstention’ introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam and ‘enhanced cooperation’ elaborated by the Nice Treaty strengthened the foreign and security policy of the Union through providing an opportunity for some member states to move forward. Internal policy process of the EU regarding the *coherence* between policy areas and actors is also an important dynamic of the EU in terms of capability formation. Existing pillar structure of the Union and need for cross-pillar cooperation regarding today’s complicated problems increase the concerns about coherence. Especially with regard to the issues related to military intervention, crisis management and civil emergencies there would occur different approaches led by actors playing role at the EU structure, for instance between the Commission and the Council Secretariat.

Even though capabilities of the Union are limited regarding the MEPP, the existing instruments of the CFSP and other foreign policy instruments of the EU would contribute to some extent the solution of existing problems. It is obvious that today’s complex problems can not be solved through traditional foreign policy tools and capabilities of national states are not enough to find lasting solution. Therefore, mediation of the EU in the MEPP would contribute the parts’ desire for the solution because the EU not only has capabilities to produce policies but also implement and monitor them.

1.2.3. Inclusive and exclusive roles of the EU

In this section inclusive and exclusive roles of the EU will be analyzed in order to reflect the involvement of the EU in world politics as a global actor. Prospective roles of the EU are deriving from its collective identity which has mainly two facets. First one is inclusive identity of the EU which approaches the Union as a value-based community (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 37). This identity of the EU, based on the EU’s declared norms and values, provides an opportunity for non-members, or third parties to enhance their relationship with the Union ranging from cooperation, partnership to membership. Here, outsiders are defined as more or less European. Second approach to the EU reflects the EU as an exclusive community as ‘fortress Europe’ (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006:

38). This approach indicates policies of the EU related to market protection, immigration and asylum. This exclusive identity defines outsiders as non-European or alien rather than less European. Being European in this sense has its own cultural and geographical boundaries.

The EU as a singular and inclusive, or value-based actor has basically three roles in international politics: as a model, as a promoter of its values; and counterweight to the US (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 56). First of all, as a model in terms of its successful economic integration, the EU would be a model for other regions which have potential to start a similar integration. Secondly, as a value-based community the EU would promote its norms and support protection of human rights, extension of democratic governance and other relevant issues during its relations with third parties (ibid.). The final role of the Union based on its identity as a single and inclusive actor, as an alternative actor at global scale, or counterweight to the US, includes both roles of the EU as a model and promoter of norm and values (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 57). Even though the US is the superpower of the period and has great military power, the EU would be alternative power to the US based on its civilian nature. Especially regarding the policies such as trade, peacekeeping, aid, monitoring and multilateral legitimization, Europeans are better prepared and more effective than Americans (Moravcsik, 2003: 85).

The roles of the EU as an exclusive actor are related to protection of its members and citizens from external threats: threats to prosperity; threats to stability and security; and threats to the Union itself as the provider of protection. At the EU context, it is very important to identify potential threats and take necessary preconditions to overcome them. While threats to prosperity are mainly related to globalization process, unfair trade, external competitors and protection of internal market; threats to social stability and security include cross-border crimes, external immigrants, and terrorist activities. Protection of external borders of the EU through visa regime and border control system has been contributing the protection of the Union from external threats (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 58). In these policy areas the EU has been given an exclusive competence to get necessary measures as the protector. Threats to the EU itself are related to issues

that damage the integration process of the Union. Among other factors, enlargement is the most outstanding factor that would threaten the EU's capacity to function and, therefore, the EU is getting more sensitive on new enlargement (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 58).

Inclusive and exclusive roles of the EU are relevant regarding the MEPP. On the one hand, the EU wants to promote its values such as human rights and democracy in the region as part of its inclusive role or the value-based discourse. The violence of human rights is an inevitable outcome of the conflict in the region. Moreover, the EU as a mediator would replace or complement the role of the US in the region not only to solve the existing regional conflict but also to protect its own priorities. On the other hand, as a requirement of its exclusive role, the EU should pay more attention to the MEPP due to the fact that instability and conflict in the region threaten the security of Europeans one way or another. The flow of illegal immigrants to the continent as a result of the ongoing conflict and the reactions of Muslims living in Europe regarding the conflict and the response of Europeans appear as a potential threat. Therefore, the EU should involve actively in the MEPP.

1.3. The EU's foreign policy instruments in dealing with third countries

The EU as a 'civilian power' utilizes different policy tools, most of them special and unique to the EU, to sustain its security concerns and foreign policy priorities. These foreign policy instruments include framework instruments (cooperation, association and partnership agreements); enlargement (membership); regulatory and coercive instruments especially in economic relations; political (diplomacy and negotiation); instruments available in the CFSP and the ESDP; and development aid covering humanitarian and reconstruction aid. Each tool has its own limits and requires a cross-pillar approach in order to be used more effectively. Moreover, attractiveness of the EU because of its economic power (trade proportion and development aid) and common values allow it to use its conditionality regarding the relations with third countries. The conditionality requires countries in concern to respect common European values such as democracy,

human rights and rule of law. This is the essential precondition of the Union to establish and develop cooperation with third countries. If the country in concern is a candidate country for membership, the Union would significantly play its conditionality card. However, if the other country has no membership prospect, conditionality would be restricted to benefits provided by the EU.

In the context of **framework instruments**, there exists different level of cooperation agreements with third countries. These framework agreements as instruments of foreign policy are used to develop relations in low politics issues and sustain political dialogue in order to promote the European norms and values (White, 2001: 56). Relationship between the EU and developing countries based on different framework agreements contributes the development of these countries in concern in terms of democracy, human rights and rule of law. Even though the EU can not apply any sanction in political terms, it has ability to freeze the benefit given to contacting party (White, 2001: 57). Regarding the MEPP, the EU has been developing relations with both parties of the conflict based on bilateral agreements. On the one hand, based on the “Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation” (1997) signed between the EU and the PLO on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, there is an ongoing political and economic cooperation between parties. Moreover, the European Commission is the biggest donor of financial assistance to the Palestinians. On the other hand, based on the EU-Israel “Association Agreement”, signed in 1995 and entered into force in 2000 (replaces the earlier Cooperation Agreement of 1975), parties have established partnership in different areas such as economic, social, financial, political, cultural and technological cooperation. So, the EU has already developed relations with both parties at different levels. However, the question of to what extent these agreements have positive effect over the process is still not clear enough.

The development aid of the EU has multi-dimensional impact. On the one hand, the development aid policy of the EU helps developing countries to eliminate their economic, social and political instabilities and facilitate their reconstruction in political, social and economic terms. Thus, the EU as a catalyst supports their integration to the global system

and prevents them to slide towards insecure conditions. On the other hand, by promoting democracy, human rights, the rule of law and cooperation against organized crimes in those developing countries, the EU aims to establish a secure environment which contributes to its internal security. The EU is the biggest provider of development aid in the world. The budget of the Commission is the main instrument for this policy.³ Moreover, the EU is the biggest trade partner of developing countries and supports their economies through direct investment in different sectors.

In addition to development aid, the EU also provides various aids such as **rehabilitation, reconstruction and humanitarian aid**. Rehabilitation and reconstruction aid are useful and necessary in order to reconstruct a country, a society especially after a war, natural disaster or social instability. These aids would restore social, economic and political stability in a country in concern. Humanitarian aid, similarly, is an important tool of the EU's foreign policy. The EU provides around 55% of the total humanitarian aid and currently has 39 humanitarian aid offices.⁴ The aim of this aid is to help people who are victims of natural catastrophes such as earthquakes; human-made disasters such as ethnic conflicts; structural crises including economic, political or social instabilities. Refugees and displaced people in case of emergency and after the final settlement are also in scope of the humanitarian aid. There are different methodologies that the Commission and related units utilize to be effective in preventing emergency situation. Financial aid, providing goods and services are significant elements of this policy. This policy reflects the European solidarity towards the regions in trouble.⁵ Development of non-military crisis management instruments within the EU and its cooperation with other international organizations and NGOs would contribute a lot in crisis management regarding the humanitarian assistance, search and rescue, human rights monitoring, administrative rehabilitation and similar issues.

³ For more information about development policies of the EU please see:
http://ec.europa.eu/development/policiesgen_en.cfm

⁴ For more information about humanitarian aid of the EU, its content, budget and activities please see:
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

⁵ Ibid.

Conditionality is another tool used by the EU as part of its foreign and security policy in addition to economic policies regarding the third countries. The main purpose of the conditionality is to promote and support the basic European values in different platforms in order to sustain peace and security in the environment of Europe because today's security understanding has no borders and is more complicated. The fulfilment of conditions such as protection of human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance have been presented as political conditionality of the EU to establish a relationship with a third party that would have an aspiration of membership, trade agreement, association agreement or financial aid (Smith, 1997: 6). In other words, the EU is not willing to have any kind of cooperation with partners that do not respect the European norms and values. States in concern would fulfil the conditions at least to get the benefit sustained by the Union. The most significant influence of conditionality can be observed in the **enlargement** process where the candidates transform their structures rapidly in accordance with the EU norms as seen in the accession of CEECs (Waeber, 2000: 261). However, conditionality is also used as a foreign policy instrument in framework instruments and development aids in relations with third countries. Because the purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of the EU in the MEPP, in which actors have no prospect of membership, conditionality is partly relevant, but still matters. Magnetism, or attractiveness of the EU is significant for the near abroad of the Union. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and later the New European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are the reflections of this approach. The relation of the EU with these third countries in concern includes various aspects, not only economic but also social, political and security concerns.

Development of the CFSP and the ESDP has significant effect on capabilities of the EU regarding the relations with third parties. During the process of European integration as well as transformation of the capabilities and identity of the Union, establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy and a defence capability has been debated in different platforms at different levels. A development at that level would be the optimum point that European countries would construct. During the last decade of the twentieth century, there were positive steps regarding the establishment and development of both the CFSP and the ESDP. Although the name of new policy instruments increased the

expectations from and responsibility of the EU to some extent; they were developed in the context of non-military character and did not infringe national sovereignty and interest. There is no exclusive competence of the EU on issues within the CFSP yet; member states are not willing to transfer their power on these sensitive issues. In other words, the EU has no authority as a state does to implement traditional policy instruments in external relations and security issues.

Although the EU has limited power on the CFSP issues in terms of policy instruments, it still has a number of instruments, including common positions, common strategies, joint actions, decisions, and also political dialog with third parties. Most of the issues and instruments require unanimity among the member states and this would negatively affect the effectiveness of EU involvement in sensitive issues and regions. Although the EU has no Ministry of Foreign Affairs like a state, it has a High Representative in order to represent the EU in international organizations and dialog with third parties as a contact person on behalf of the Union. Furthermore, declarations and demarches as traditional diplomatic tools have been also used in the CFSP context as used in the EPC (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 33). One of the significant example was observed following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in which the EU reflected its common response to terrorism. In order to improve its diplomatic presence, the EU has been appointing several EU representatives in the regions like Balkans, Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan. In special circumstances the EU is able to mandate a special representative in a region to be closer to and more active in the process as the special envoy of the EU in the MEPP.

Moreover, in the context of CFSP, not only the Council and the units depending on the Council but also the Commission and its representatives are playing a central role in representation and improvement of the foreign policy of the Union. Currently, there are around 130 delegations working in different regions. However, they are not working as traditional way of foreign services and are focusing more on trade and aid; and less on CFSP issues (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 33). Since the problems and issues of today are multi-dimensional and relations with third countries are at different levels, the cross-pillar coordination as well as solidarity among representatives of member states are

significantly important to have fruitful outcomes. Involvement of the EU in the conflict regions as a requirement of the CFSP aims at the development of effective conflict resolution strategies and settlement of the problem effectively. The imposition of economic sanctions in the context of joint action of the CFSP, which is consistent with the UN decisions, requires cross-pillar cooperation between Pillar I and Pillar II. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a direct link between the EC and the CFSP in legal and practical context (Koutrakos, 2001: 223).

Negative outcomes of the conflicts in Balkans during 1990s and insufficient role of the Union in crisis management in different regions such as the Middle East have triggered and facilitated the development of EU instruments, including military operation capabilities. In order to become an effective actor in crisis management and prevention, the ESDP has been developed as ‘military’ pillar of the Union even though it does not refer a European Army and has no collective defence measures. In other words, the EU is not a collective defence organization such as NATO. The content of crisis management, called *Petersberg Tasks*, is defined in the TEU and includes humanitarian and rescue operations, peacekeeping, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management including peacemaking. In order to fulfil the requirements of Petersberg tasks the EU has established a European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), consisting troops up to 60.000, able to be deployed within sixty days and sustainable for at least one year (Wood and Quaisse, 2008: 121).

The ESDP was formally launched at the Cologne Summit in 1999 and progress following this process is rapid enough. After the Berlin Plus agreement in 2002 based on the NATO’s Washington Summit in 1999, the EU is able use NATO structures, mechanisms and assets to carry out military operations in case of decline of NATO to act (Wood and Quaisse, 2008: 123). So, the availability of military means in addition to civilian personnel (police officers, prosecutors, prison officers and judges) in crisis management operations has contributed to the actorness of the EU at the global level (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 35). The ESDP has involved its first operations in 2003, including a police mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina and brief military missions in Democratic Republic of

Congo and Macedonia (Wood and Quaisse, 2008: 123). Even though they were relatively successful, consistency problems still exist in those sensitive policy areas (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 35).

1.4. Conclusion

This chapter aimed at analysing the actorness of the EU and instruments used by the EU in order to indicate to what extent the EU is an effective and capable actor in the system. Actorness can be evaluated as a complex interaction between meanings of actorness and units in concern. Based on the constructivist approach to international actorness, there are mainly two factors that shape the actorness: “whether and how institutional actors, states and others construct themselves as an actor; and whether and how surrounding world constructs this group as an international actor” (Larsen, 2002: 287). Therefore, actorness is limited to not only its internal capabilities and character but also external constraints and opportunities. The dialectic relation between the structure and agency shape the change in the system and responsibilities of actorness (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006: 36).

The EU as a *unique* actor in the international system has been developing its actorness through the improvement of its presence and capabilities in parallel to structural opportunities and constraints. It can be argued that approaching the actorness of the EU has two interconnected problems. While the first one is related to nature and criteria for actorness, the second one refers to unique and complex character of the EU. So, the EU as a *sui generis* organization is a challenge to the traditional approach to IR and the level of analysis. It is obvious that the EU remains in the process of construction, therefore character, identity and instruments used by the EU would be transformed over time.

Although the EU is not a unitary actor within the system and has no central government and standing military power, it is still capable to play a significant role in world politics based on its civilian instruments. However, the EU does not absolutely lack of military instruments. As discussed in the previous sections, military tools are available for the EU as part of the ESDP in case of crisis management as a last resort to support civilian

measures. Currently, foreign policy instruments of the EU such as framework instruments, development and humanitarian aids, conditionality, the CFSP as well as the ESDP have been used not only to promote basic European norms and values but also to establish new regional cooperations, prevent conflicts and in crisis management. Although the CFSP is under construction, the instruments available in the CFSP still provide the opportunity for the EU to be involved in world politics as an important actor. In the context of foreign policy, the EU depends on not only the instruments of the CFSP but also cross-pillar instruments and policies.

Based on its values and norms, the EU aims to establish peace and security not only within the borders of Union but also around the Union and globally as much as possible. From this perspective, the EU has been working as a 'security organization', but different from traditional organizations such as NATO. In this respect, the EU prioritizes the civilian instruments rather than military instruments for sustainable peace and security at a global scale as the reflection of its value-added in international politics. Lack of autonomous military instruments and weaknesses of the CFSP would be evaluated to some extent as deficit of European foreign policy in terms of effectiveness and capability of the Union in conflict regions. However, it is obvious that today's complex problems need more than military response.

Regarding the MEPP, the EU is an important actor and working on establishment of a long lasting peace in the region. However, to become a key actor in the MEPP, 'security actorness' of an organization or a state is essential. Security actorness is beyond the military actorness or hard power politics. In this context, security actorness requires recognition, effective policies and capabilities, responsibility and credibility among other actors. Actors in concern should have instruments and capability to persuade parties to become willing to find solution to the conflict. So, the answer to question that to what extent the EU is a security actor would reflect the position of Union in the process. While the EU is a capable and effective actor in the process in terms of economic issues such as development and humanitarian aid as well as trade cooperation; monitoring human rights violations and the declaratory diplomacy, it is not yet a main actor that mediates the

process. Although the EU pays the burden of conflict economically, the process is not under the control of the EU because of deficits of the Union regarding the CFSP and the nature of the conflict. In the following chapter, the involvement of the EU in the MEPP, its instruments and effectiveness are discussed in detail. Here, it can be argued that actorness and instruments of the EU do not only contribute to the MEPP but also are to be developed based on increased involvement in the process and working on a lasting and just solution.

Chapter II

The European Union and the Middle East Peace Process

This chapter provides historical background of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and the involvement of the European Union in the process due to the several reasons, including both internal and external factors. Thanks to the integration process of the EU, the values promoted by the EU and the expansion of the EU's policy areas as well as the scope of action, the EU has been developing policies towards the Middle East, especially regarding the MEPP. After analysing the roots of the conflict, the importance of the Middle East region and the logic behind the EU involvement in the peace process, the following sections reveal the dynamics of the conflict and the EU's role in the peace process. The position of the EU in the peace process has been reflected in the common positions and declarations of the Union despite the fact that their influence is limited. In addition to its declaratory diplomacy, the EU has been playing an active role in international and regional initiatives to promote the MEPP. After analysing the actorness and the instruments of the EU used in its foreign policy in the previous chapter, this chapter aims to better understand how effective the Union used those tools in the Middle East region and the MEPP. In the last section of this chapter, a short analysis of the transatlantic division over the peace process is done in order to clarify the position of the EU regarding the issue.

2.1. The Roots of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Middle East conflict and the Jewish question in the Middle East did not start after the Second World War or after the establishment of the State of Israel. Therefore, the roots of the conflict are confusing for outsiders who suppose that the Jewish question in the region just started after the establishment of the state of Israel. However, the roots of this conflict could be observed long before the war. For several centuries the Arab territories were governed by the Ottoman Empire. Because of the significance of the region, colonial powers such as France and Great Britain stimulated the Arab leader Sharif Hussein in order to revolt against Ottoman empire and sent him not only military

assistance but also advisers during that process. The British Lawrence of Arabia, for instance, was one of the important advisers of Sharif Hussein (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 67). While the colonial powers supported this Arab leader to free this region from Ottoman control, they divided the region into French and British spheres of influence. It was the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 that shaped the division and devolved the current Israel territory to Great Britain (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 68). The following year the British government promised the Zionist federation regarding the establishment of a 'national home' in Palestine for the Jewish People.

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country (The Balfour Declaration, 1917).

The Balfour declaration can be evaluated as an ambiguous declaration since it is possible to interpret it in different ways. For instance, the statement of "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" has several meanings. It could be establishment of a national state or just letting Jewish people live in Palestine. While the Zionist federation has built their demands based on this declaration as the ground since 1916, the declaration caused anger among the Arab leaders who allied with the British government. So, the declaration can be evaluated as the launching of the conflict which still exists over the region. Furthermore, it was the San Remo Conference in 1922 that gave the Great Britain to mandate over Palestine.⁶ In order to calm the Arabs, Mr. Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, stressed that the White paper of 1922 denied the Zionist demands that Palestine would become Jewish just like England as English (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 75). According to the Paper, the Jewish national home would be in Palestine.

The attitude of British government towards Jewish to establish their homeland increased the opposition among Arabs. This situation resulted with conflicts during the 1920s between two societies. The 1930s witnessed the more Jews immigration to the regions

⁶ More information available at: http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_ww1_british_mandate.php

as a result of persecution against Jews in Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe. In 1914, total population of Palestine was around 700.000 and Jews were around 85.000 (Isseroff, 2009). Number of Jews people increased and reached around 110.000 in 1925 and 500.000 in 1939 (Şenel, 2002: 58). This immigration movement increased the tension between the communities and resulted with the participation of voluntary Arabs from other Arab states. To decrease the tension, Britain proposed some solutions based on a small Jewish state and a larger Arab state but it was not accepted by Arabs (Şenel, 2002: 58). To decrease the tension, Britain also applied some limitation on the number of Jews immigration to the region.

In the interwar period, in order to calm the Arabs, in several white papers and reports the Great Britain promised that Palestine would not be converted to a Jewish state and would limit the transition of Jewish people to Palestine. This policy of Britain was an outcome of the Arab revolt between 1936 and 1939 against the Jews and British people in the region in the form of military uprising and economic boycott (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 78). Just before the approaching Second World War, a new White Paper was introduced at the St James Conference in 1939, in which the new policy implied limited Jewish migration to region and building common buildings for Jews and Arabs while the document continued to underline equivocal idea of a Jewish national home in Palestine (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 80). As a result, this document was rejected by both sides.

During the Second World War period, the Zionist forces within Palestine revolted against British forces and Palestinians in order to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. At the same period, Palestinians demanded withdrawal of Britain and independence from Britain. The pressure from both sides as well as economical difficulties to govern all colonies triggered the Great Britain to hand over its mandate over the region to the newly established United Nations (Musa, 2008: 6). It was the United States that replaced the role of the United Kingdom in the region as the principal force. So, in February 1947 the mandate of Palestine was handed over to the United Nations by the Great Britain.

In order to solve the Palestinian Question, the United Nations established a special committee called the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), formed by eleven members of the UN. During that period, this committee prepared reports to be submitted. First one, a majority report, proposed partition of Palestine into two separate states. The second report, minority plan, advised the establishment of a federal state composed of two governments (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 90). While Palestinians refused both plans and accused the Western states because they were paying their war debts to Jews through the land of Palestinians, the Jews accepted the majority plan and supported the implementation of it through campaign. The majority plan was voted by the UN General Assembly in November 1947 and approved by a two-thirds majority. So, the UN passed the resolution 181 which allocated 56% of old Palestine to Jewish People (Appendix, Map 1) (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 91). Rejection of the resolution 181 by Palestinians formed the Palestinian question just a refugee problem dramatically (Musa, 2008: 7). Moreover, the Palestinian Question became a concern of the Arab League which established in 1945 in order to provide closer collaboration among Arab states regarding their independence and interests.

On May 14, 1948 under the leadership of David Ben Gurion, Jews declared their independent State of Israel. As a reaction to this declaration, Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq together with Palestinians attacked against Israel. This war resulted with the victory of Israel. At the end of the War, Israel occupied the territories more than the UN partition plan, around 78% of the western part of Jordan River (Appendix, Map 2). Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan, and rest of the territories of the Arab state was under the control of Jordan and Egypt. So, the land of Palestinians allocated by the UN was reduced to almost half. During that process, approximately, 780.000 Arabs have become refugees in other Arab countries (Kekeç, 2004: 8). This is one of the milestones of the conflict that there is no clear solution yet. At the end, the Arab states refused the sign peace agreement and rejected recognition of Israeli state. After that period, while the USSR was mainly supporting Arab countries, the US was the main supporter of Israel policies. They were logistically supporting the parties as the reflection of the Cold War atmosphere in the region (Isseroff, 2009).

Another conflict in the region occurred in 1956 when the new leader of Egypt, Gamal Abdul Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal on 29 July 1956. This time not only Israel but also France and United Kingdom attacked and conquered Sinai from Egypt. However, involvement of the US in the process changed the balances against the European partners. Israel was forced to withdraw from the Sinai region by the UN, leaded by US, and Suez was opened for international shipping (Şenel, 2002: 63). After the crisis, the UN forces were settled in the Sinai for ten years period. The crisis together with problems in Indochina and other regions, the Europeans were no longer capable for independent actions in the Middle East region. Therefore, they reduced their size of army and focused on decolonization process. After that period, European powers focused mainly on their integration process (Kekeç, 2004: 9).

After the end of UN mission in the Sinai Peninsula in 1967, Nasser dismissed the UN force sand closed the Straits of Tiran for Israel shipping in May 1967. With the support of Syria, Jordan and Iraq, Egypt attacked against Israel state. Although Israel was in disadvantaged position at the beginning, Israel won the war which was called the ‘Six Day War’. At the end of this war, Israeli soldiers re-conquered Sinai and Gaza from Egypt; West Bank and Jerusalem from Jordan; and Golan Heights from Syria (Appendix, Map 3). So, in June 1967, Israeli forces occupied a territory which is three times bigger than Israel just in six days. At the end of the war, Israel forces controlled entire old Palestine territories (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 116). This war and its results changed the balance in the region and on 22 November 1967, the UN adopted the Resolution 242 that formulated “land for peace” in the region (Şenel, 2002: 64). The resolution 242 urged Israel to withdraw from occupied territories in the last conflict and insisted on an agreement between all parties. Since the resolution did not mention Palestinians, their problem reduced to a refugee problem (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 116).

Israel and Egypt signed the cease-fire in August 1970 under the pressure of the US after Nasser died and replaced by Anwar Sadat. However, hostility between the communities survived and leaded to another war between Israel and the coalition of Egypt and Syria called the “Yom Kippur War” in October 1973. Although Israel was surprised at the

beginning, it re-conquered the Golan Heights and the West of Suez. With the diplomacy of US Secretary Henry Kissinger, cease-fire signed and Israel withdrew from Sinai Peninsula (Isseroff, 2009). After the war in 1973, Israel and Egypt negotiated about the occupied territories of Egypt in 1967. Even though there was European pressure to include the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) during peace talk to find out lasting solution, Israel refused the offer since the PLO was accused being of a terrorist organization. Moreover, Israel even rejected to add a chapter about the Palestinian question to the Camp David Agreement (de la Gorce, 1997: 11).

At Rabbat Summit on October 1974, the PLO gained recognition from the Arab League as the representative of Palestinian people. Just a month later the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, was invited to the General Assembly of the UN to give a speech. It was a week later that the General Assembly passed two resolutions over the issue, 3236 and 3237. While the first resolution declared the right of self determination, national independence and sovereignty of Palestinians and the return right for refugees, the second one affirmed observer status for the PLO within the UN (Harms and Ferry, 2005: 130). Thus, the PLO has become the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people even though both Israel and the US refused this resolution not to recognize the PLO. It was the case until the Oslo peace talk in the 1990s.

2.2. The Significance of the Middle East for the EU

The Middle East region as constituting the EU's near abroad, is taking an important place in formation of the EU policies. Importance of the Middle East region can be analyzed mainly under three main categories: religious aspect, geo-economic considerations and geo-strategic reasons. States developing policies towards the region generally consider all these factors to be successful. From religious point of view, the region is the birth place of three religions namely; Judaism, Christianity and also Islam. The Holy City, Jerusalem, has special place for all these three religions. Related with this situation, the region has multi-religious, ethnic, and linguistic feature that give more importance to the

region (Kemp and Harkavy, 1997: 3). So, religion has an important role in the regional politics.

The Middle East region, as a crossroad connecting Asia, Africa and Europe, has witnessed the struggle among different powers during the history to be dominant in the region. The power that control the region would also has a special place in world politics because of advantages of the region in terms of trade opportunities and geo-strategic location. Although technology and diplomacy have been developing, the region still remains as vital for the great powers because of its energy resources and strategic importance. The region has approximately 70% of proven oil reserves of the world and 40% of the natural gas reserves; therefore great powers put the region at high level on their agenda (Kemp and Harkavy, 1997: 3). It should be noted that the involvement of the US in the region started with Suez Canal Crisis that could threaten the energy supply of the region towards the US after the control of the Canal by European powers. Due to the lack of oil and gas resources in the Western states, they had to consider the region as a priority, at least for economic concerns. The 1973 oil crisis showed the dependency of Europeans to energy resources in Middle East.

Since Europe and America have developed consisting interests in the region, they should be complementary instead of competitive. Although Europeans have 'longer, closer and broad' relations with Middle East region because of economical, cultural, geographical and religious reasons, the US dramatically has developed a more decisive role in the region (Şenel, 2002: 13). This dilemma is the result as well as cause of the limited actorness of the EU in the MEPP.

Collapse of the USSR had mainly two implications for the European Union (Şenel, 2002: 14). On the one hand, it provided a chance for the European Union to expand towards new republics of Eastern Europe to create more democratic and stable environment in the Eastern parts of the continent. On the other hand, elimination of Soviet threat and the establishment a secure environment in the East leaded the Southern European states like France, Italy and Spain to focus on the Mediterranean region which was among the

sources of the threat towards Europe. For Europeans not only hard security but also soft security issues like illegal immigration, environment and drug trafficking were important. Therefore, the region has become one of the priorities for the Union. Instability in the Middle East region would lead to the radicalization in the region; trigger terrorism and illegal immigration towards the European continent. Therefore, in addition to regional stability, solution of the immigration problem and energy resources, the establishment of lasting peace and cooperation between Arab states and Israel in the region is an essential requirement as a European concern (Şenel, 2002: 15).

The dependency of European states on Middle East energy resources examined during the 1973 oil crisis⁷ which increased the oil prices and showed the possibility of interruption of energy supply to the Europeans. This energy dependency together with European norms and values has led European states to initiate proposals in the peace process among the conflictual parts to establish a lasting peace in the region. Because economic and political instability in the region directly or indirectly affect the Europeans, the presidency conclusions of the European Council refer to the peace process as a 'vital interest' of the EU.

2.3. Explaining the EU efforts to end the Middle East Conflict

The role of European Union in the conflict can be analyzed from different perspectives. From the US point of view, involvement of the EU in the process could be helpful for the burden sharing. While the US has been focusing on political dimension of the problem, the EU would focus on economic and social aspects of the peace process. And some authors argue that, the EU would also participate in the political dimension of the conflict if it is ready to share also military burden and the potential risks of the region in return (Perthes, 2000: 42). From European perspective, in the context of realist perception, the EU would replace the Soviet Union in the new period following the collapse of bipolarity. Therefore, the EU should not accept unilateral policies of the US in the region to protect its own economic, strategic and political concerns. On the other hand, in the

⁷ During the crisis, the OPEC countries applied embargo against the Netherlands, Portugal and the US.

context of European ‘common denominator approach’, the EU should involve in the process to promote peace, democracy and provide secure environment around the continent (Perthes, 2000: 43). The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was an outcome of these policy ambitions. In below, the main considerations of the EU in order to explain the involvement in the peace process are analysed.

2.3.1. Legacy of the Past

The EU has developed historical and cultural links with region especially during the colonial period. Among other members of the EU, France and the United Kingdom had more ‘legacy’ in the region. In the minds of Palestinian people, Britain has been recalled with Balfour Declaration of 1917 which permitted the establishment of a Jews Homeland. For the Israeli people, the EU should support Israel due to its tragic past. Even though both sides argued that Europe is more or less connected to the conflict, they have not accepted the EU as a credible and capable mediator in the region even by the Arabs at the beginning (Söyler, 2004: 25). Currently, the EU is the main donor to the region to sustain basic needs of the Palestinian people and establishment of democratic institutions, but its role is still limited.⁸

2.3.2. Politics of the EU

The politics of the EU includes both high and low politics issues. In the context of ‘high politics’ of the EU, there are mainly two important concerns that should be taken into consideration. The first one is internal cohesion among the member states on common positions and the second one refers the common sanctions against the infringements of international norms and principles as well as human rights in different regions (Söyler, 2004: 23). The EU conditionality as part of its low politics developed based on the Copenhagen criteria is the main instrument used during the relations of the EU regarding the third parties. However, the CFSP of the Union is not effective and coherent enough as

⁸ “Total EU assistance to the Palestinian people reached € 700 million in 2006, of which €340 million from the Community budget.” Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/gaza/intro/index.htm#2.1

impact of the economic relations of the Union. In the Arab-Israel conflict, the EU wanted to use its conditionality as a facilitator through its free trade and association agreements to become an effective mediator. However, in general context, it has developed limited level of internal cohesion and capability to find out solution to the crisis in the region. Although in several presidency conclusions the EU has underlined the necessity of withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and the necessity of development of social, economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people, the EU is not capable to put any compensation and material sanctions against Israel like the UN would act.

2.3.3. Europe's new security understanding

Especially after the end of Cold War period, the security understanding of the EU has changed significantly. During the Cold War period, the security understanding of the Union was one dimensional and natural which meant that military was the only dimension and the source of threat was whether the USSR or the US relatively. In the new period, following the end of Cold War, the security understanding has become multi-dimensional and natural. Today, not only military but also other factors would threat the security such as immigration, instability, terrorism, drug trafficking, environment etc. And there is no direct address of the threat (Dağcı, 2007: 177). As Solana underlined in the European Security Strategy in 2003, regional conflicts are one of the key threats to the European security just like terrorism, the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), organized crime and failed state. Therefore, the EU has been developing its holistic security approach based on cooperation among the member states and good relations with neighbour states. In this context, the Middle East region and the existing Arab-Israeli conflict has important place in the EU agenda as J. Solana, high representative of the CFSP, stated in his speech during Tampere Conference on 28 November 2006:

...unresolved conflicts; the rise of extremism and fundamentalism; the increasing role of non-state actors; the problems of modernization; the risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the excessive role of violence and the weakening of diplomacy. ... All these require a comprehensive regional approach towards their solution to be developed by reinforcing our

political dialogue. In the long run, we need a Euro-Med Security Architecture in order to ensure that our efforts will be best coordinated and most efficient (Solana, 2006).

2.3.4. Choice between being “a payer or a player”

The involvement of the EU in the peace process is based on the Association Agreements on trade and Cooperation with the parties based on Mediterranean Partnership and Financial Assistance Programs of the Commission. This is the reflection of ‘civilian power’ dimension of the EU in the region to improve economic and social conditions of the region and develop institutional reforms. However, in the context of political settlement and establishment of a lasting solution, the EU has very limited role (Asseburg, 2003a: 11). Chris Patten in his speech in 2003 also underlined this dilemma by stating that the EU should be “player” rather than “payer” in the process (Söyler, 2004: 29). “The process is like a ship with the US on the bridge and the EU in the engine room, shovelling coal” summarize the position of EU in the MEPP (Bretherton and Vogler, 1999: 186). Some evaluate the separation of the EU and the US regarding the peace process as a division of labour. It is clear that the EU can not buy the peace but without its aids to the Palestinian people and administration the peace process can not be sustained properly (Dosenrode and Stubkjaer, 2002: 140). It was debated that what kind of player the EU should be in the process: a football player or a tennis player? Position and the responsibility of the player will change according to rules of the game chosen (Söyler, 2004: 29).

2.3.5. The existence of the US in the region

It is clear that especially after the 1970s, the US has become an indispensable actor in the peace process. Not only Israel but also Palestine accepted the US as the mediator who can bring Israel into the negotiation table and to some extent put pressure for solution. However, especially after the Iraq war in 2003 it is understood that what the US wants in the Middle East is related to increase its military control over the region and minimize the role of EU and the UN rather than establishing peace, democracy and stability (Söyler,

2004: 31). Although the US is an inevitably existing power in the region, the EU can not leave the region to the sole control of the US to protect its own interests in the region and sustain its multi-dimensional security concerns. Moreover, because the EU is dependent on Middle East oil, the absolute dominance of the US would damage the interests of the Europeans in this context. The appointment of the EU Special Envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos, in 1996 showed the EU's desire to become more active in the region and act as a complementary actor to the US's leading position (Perthes, 2000: 44). Pro-Israel policies of the US as well as the US veto in the Security Council decisions regarding the Israeli position increased the EU suspicions over the American position and its policies in the conflict. The EU's desire to get more political role in the peace process was not welcomed by the US because the EU has no capability and instruments to play such a role and Europeans lacks of a coherent approach. So, to some extent the involvement of the EU in the political process of the conflict would complicate the issue rather than contribute (Perthes, 2000: 46).

2.3.6. The Religious dimension of the Conflict

Religion also plays a significant role in the conflict. It is clear that both sides use religious antagonism to justify their violence against the other side. In the conflict, the parties have different level of economic, social and democratic systems. Therefore, the weak Palestinian people under the organized groups as Hamas and Hezbollah using force in the form of violence to show their resistance as a strategy by the weak against the strong power. Many Palestinian people voluntarily participates these organizations and some of them are willing to sacrifice themselves for their people in the name of Islam, while Islam does not permit such an action. So, without the economic and political development in the Palestine it is very difficult to establish a lasting peace among the parts. In this context, the EU plays a key role to overcome regional problems of the Palestinian people and establishment of a lasting peace.

2.4. The European involvement and role in the MEPP

During the conflict in 1948, European states were recovering the catastrophic effects of the Second World War. They especially worked to rebuild their economies which were deeply damaged during the war. It was the trust problem among the Europeans that prevented their cooperation psychologically. Related to these existing problems, influence and policies of colonial powers of the Middle East region such as France and Great Britain replaced by new great powers: the Soviet Union and the US. The main reason behind this change was inability of colonial powers especially in economic context to rule over the region. The Suez Crisis, for instance, approved the declining power of these powers in which they were forced to stop their joint attack on Egypt by the US. Based on the new conditions and power shift in the region, European powers lowered their role in the region. In other words, they evaluated the region as secondary compared to their own problems and avoided to involve directly in the region. However, this does not mean that European states, later the European Community and finally the European Union were not involved in the region and peace process at all. During the process, not only European states but also many states in the Middle East region supported the involvement especially because of their emphasis on economic assistance, human rights, democracy, and balanced approach.

During the period between the Suez War and the Six Day war, Europe partly lost its influence in the Middle East region because of some factors. The first one was about the growing Arab nationalism in the region after the decolonization process of the major Arab countries. For instance, in 1952 a group of nationalistic military officers in Egypt introduced republican system instead of the royal political system and opposed any colonial involvement in the region (Musa, 2008: 9-10). Therefore, European involvement was not welcomed because the region was mandated to Britain and France. The second factor mostly related to internal dynamics of Europe. It was lack of policy coordination among the European states especially after the Second World War restricted the common policy approach of Europe. Even though there were signs of the cooperation and integration in Europe, it was just constructed and had to be developed in time (Musa,

2008: 10). Third factor is not independent from the second one. There was strong alliance between the United States and European countries instead of developing European way of alternative solution or own strategy regarding the region.

Last but not least, presence of the Soviet Union as an alternative ally and her strong relations with some important Arab states such as Egypt and Syria restricted the influence of Europe in the region (de la Gorce, 1997: 8). In addition to these general factors, individual differences among the leading European states, such as Germany and France, should be taken into consideration. While Germany did not want to take a part in the conflict individually due to its history, France had better relations with Israel until the end of Algerian War of 1962 (de la Gorce, 1997: 10). So, these internal and external factors one way or another had significant influence on the presence of European influence in the region from 1950's to the first years of 1970's.

European Policy towards the Middle East, especially the conflict, developed during the 1970s. The formulation of initial common policies regarding the region was an outcome of the some developments. The fruitful outcome of economic cooperation among the European states contributed the trust building between European countries. The most important factor was the oil embargo from Arab oil exporting countries towards some European countries, which showed the vulnerability of Europe. In geographical context, Europe is a closer neighbour of the conflict and should take more contributing role compared to the United States for instance. Furthermore, Europe is more dependent on Middle East oil than the United States. So, these factors triggered European states to formulate common policy towards the region. In 1972, France stimulated other European states in Munich to agree on a common text referring to the Palestinian Question as not just a refugee problem (Musa, 2008: 10).

Until the Hague Summit of 1969, the European Community failed to reflect common decision regarding the conflict in the region. The meeting following the Six Day War showed the lack of common position among the member states. While France was more pro-Arab oriented and condemned the policy of Israel, the Netherlands supported the

Israel (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 131). Germany preferred to stay in neutral position even though it was in favour of Israeli foreign policy; Italy was divided into two groups between the supporters of Arabs and Israelis; and Belgium was referring the UN institutions and resolution in order to solve the conflict (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 131). This diversity among the members of the EC triggered the establishment of new mechanism of European Political Cooperation (EPC) at the Hague Summit in 1969. The EPC was initiated to “provide a collective response mechanism in the form of common positions and political declarations” (Peterson and Sjurssen, 1998:136). During the period of EPC, oil played the core factor among members as the “element of urgency” (EP DGR, 1999: 13). Within the framework of European Political Cooperation (EPC), the EC was able to adopt its first three common positions regarding the conflict in the Middle East: the Schuman Paper (1971), Brussels Declaration (1973) and the London Statement (1978).

The Schuman Paper was approved on 13 May 1971 after the French efforts to persuade the EC to adopt a common position regarding the existing Arab-Israeli conflict in the region. The paper was approving the UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, which was referring the ‘land for peace’ formula in order to solve the conflict. The Paper was also stating the need for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and the right of Arab refugees to return their home (EP DGR, 1999: 14). Despite the Paper did not change the position of the EC regarding the conflict and the Palestinian problem, it led Israel to get worried about the EC and its EPC because the Community would take decisions at the expense of its security and interests. From the perspective of the EC, the Paper was not an activation of a foreign policy goal but an application of the EPC framework (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 133). However, despite the Paper was approved by the members, some member states who were in pro-Israeli stance like the Netherlands, Germany and Italy put some reservations and avoid the paper to become public (EP DGR, 1999: 14).

Following the Yom Kimpur War in 1973 and the Oil Crisis, the EC declared its second common position in Brussels on 6 November 1973, stressing the importance of a political

settlement based on recognition of all states and withdraw of Israel from the occupied territories in 1967 (de la Gorce, 1997: 10). The Brussels Declaration, for the first time a declaration adopted by the Nine, reflected their position regarding the Arab-Israel conflict and legal rights of Palestinians (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 4).

..... a peace agreement should be based particularly following points:

- I. the inadmissibility of the acquiring of territory by force;
- II. the need for Israel to end territorial occupation, which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967;
- III. respect for sovereignty territorial integrity, and independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized territories
- IV. recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians (Hill and Smith, 2000: 300).

On the one hand, the declaration stressed the role of the Security Council and requirement of international guarantees for peace settlement; on the other hand, it stated the necessity of withdrawal from all occupied territories and recognition of legitimate rights of Palestinians (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 134). While the Declaration was welcomed by the Arabs, Israelis evaluated the declaration as the concern of Europeans regarding oil rather than their concern over the peace in the Middle East (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 135). The Brussels Declaration adopted in the Copenhagen Summit in December 1973. After the declaration, there were signs of close cooperation between Europe and Arab countries. While the declaration was asking international guarantees and the establishment of demilitarized zones, as part of the EC's balance policy it stated the issue of recognition of Israel's security and right to exist in the region (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 167).

After the declaration, a delegation consists of Arab Foreign ministers met with European leaders during the Summit of Community in Copenhagen in December 1973. They wanted to establish cooperation and dialog with European Community and use Europe against the influence of the US. The nine did not accept to discuss the issue in the Euro-Arab dialogue initiated after the oil crisis, but they preferred the dialogue

under the EPC framework to focus on technical, economic issues and trade cooperation (Hill and Smith, 2000: 297-8).

In spite of American efforts to limit European relations with Arab world, on 6 March 1974 the Europeans announced their willingness to launch the Dialogue between Europeans and the Arabs; this initiative was welcomed by the Arab countries during their meeting in Tunis on 28 April 1974 (Allen and Pijpers, 1984: 168; House of Lords, 2006: 9). The Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) was organized as a “form of associative diplomacy” (Greilsammer and Weiller, 1988: 255). However, the expectations were different between parties. While the EC was motivated to provide flow of oil at a reasonable price, the Arab partners desired to get a breakthrough regarding the Palestinian issue (Çetin, 2005: 14). In order to balance its position in the region, the EC signed a free trade agreement with Israel in 1975 and developed its Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP). After the several meeting between the Europeans and Arab within the EAD, in 1978 after the signing of Camp David Agreement and the following exclusion of Egypt from the League of Arab states, the EAD came to a stalemate (Greilsammer and Weiller, 1988: 255). Even though there were attempts to refresh the EAD, unfortunately it lost its significance and cooperation of the EC states within the EAD had little influence to shape policies over the Middle East conflict and problems in the region (Greilsammer and Weiller, 1988: 307).

In the wake of the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt, the EC issued a common declaration in 1974 urging the necessity of involving Palestinian people in this process without mentioning the PLO (Tomkys, 1987: 430). However, this declaration was not welcomed by both sides because of the divided position among the Arabs regarding the peace process and the refusal of Israeli government to negotiate with the PLO directly or indirectly. The Camp David Peace process that started after the visit of Anwar Sadat to the Jerusalem in November 1977 was resulted with peace agreement among the parts under the mediation of US. The Egyptian- Israeli peace agreement in 1979 resulted with excluding Egypt from Arab league and suspension of Euro-Arab dialogue. Therefore, Israel was careful in relations with the EC (Hill and Smith, 2000: 298).

Following the elections in Israel in 1977, the EC issued the London Statement. The statement stated, for the first time, necessity for the participation of Palestinians' representatives in the negotiations. Moreover, the Europeans recognized the right of Palestinians to a home as the basic requirement for the solution of conflict. Even though the statement reflected the common position of the EC on the Middle East question, the EC did not recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative. So, this created disappointment among Arab countries. When the negotiations in the Camp David reached a deadlock, the Community issued Venice Declaration in 1980 as a remarkable step regarding the conflict and its position over the process.

In order to improve relations with Israel, the EC signed a trade and cooperation agreement with Israel in 1975 and this agreement extended in the following years through new protocols. These protocols gave special privileges to Palestinians living in the occupied territories (Hollis, 1997: 19). A similar project was launched with the Arab countries within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean partnership, which provided these countries one way trade concessions (Hollis, 1997: 23). Main concern of these programs was the impact of economic relations on politics. In the 1980s, these agreements were used as a catalyst to persuade political reforms in Arab countries. In 1988, the European Parliament voted to block the implementation of three protocols with Israel as an outcome of the Israeli response to the Palestinian Intifada and Israeli limitation on the implementation of special provision for Palestinian exporters in the occupied territories adopted by the EC (Hollis, 1997: 19).

2.5. Evaluation of the EU policy instruments in the MEPP

In the previous section, the EC's efforts to involve in the peace process were reflected in order to understand to what extent and how the issue became a European concern. It is obvious that the efforts of the EC and later the EU are limited to declarations or common statements. This section analyses the main policy instruments of the EU regarding the MEPP developed after 1980 and their contribution to the peace process.

2.5.1 Venice declaration, June 1980

At the beginning of 1980s, Member states underlined the necessity of European involvement in the region due to the traditional ties and common interests that obliged Europe to take more concrete and special role towards the establishment of peace in the region (EP DGR, 1999: 15). As a new initiative, the Venice Declaration was issued in June 1980 as a clear and common European position concerning the Arab-Israel conflict. It pointed out the collective position regarding the process and the concerns to be considered for the peaceful and lasting solution of the conflict. The Declaration, as a bold step of the EC, still is the reference point of the European policy regarding the Peace Process. In the declaration:

The nine member states of the European Community consider that the traditional ties and common interests which link Europe to the Middle East oblige them to play a special role and now require them to work in a more concrete way towards peace.

A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which are conscious of existing as such, must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully its right to self-determination (Venice Declaration, 1980).

The declaration referred the more involvement of the Europe in the process and reflected again the European approach towards the Palestinian rights that not only concerning refugee issue but also self-determination. During that process, the member states

underlined the fact that “the Palestinian issue is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict” (Soetendorp, 2002: 285). Therefore, they called the involvement of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the peace process as a requirement. After thirteen years, it was the Oslo Accords that gave its fruits (Hollis, 1997: 18).

The ten members of the Community reflected their support for the UN Security Council Resolutions of 242 and 338 in the Venice Declaration, which is favouring the ‘land for peace’ formula in order to solve the conflict. Since the EC did not consult the conflicting parties to learn their concerns and opinions as a handicap of the declaration, the Venice Declaration was evaluated to some extent as the EC’s desire to ‘impose’ definitive solutions to the conflict (EP DGR, 1999: 15). Despite the declaration placed a reference point in the following initiatives, it failed to convince the parties of the conflict to accept “formula of mutual and simultaneous recognition” (Nuttall, 1992: 168).

Israel denounced the declaration and the cabinet declared a statement about the Venice Declaration: “Nothing will remain from Venice decision but a bitter memory. ... all men of good will in Europe, all men in who revere liberty, will see this document as another Munich like capitulation to totalitarian blackmail and a spur to all those seeking to undermine the Camp David Accords and deny the peace process in the Middle East” (Peters, 1999: 299). From Israeli point of view, the declaration was not acceptable because it was calling Israel to negotiate with the PLO, which considered as an organization performing ‘terrorist activities’. Despite the fact that the EC underlined the necessity of Israel’s right of existence and security, it was not enough to change perception of Israel regarding the EC as “self serving mediator” who was considering its own interests rather than security of Israel and the peace in the Middle East (Soetendorp, 2002: 285). This perception led Israel to keep avoidance of the European involvement to the peace process for a decade.

The Arabs were not satisfied either by the declaration since they argued that the EC avoided to recognize the PLO due to the pressure from the US and could not provide

concrete proposals to apply ideas stated in the declaration. So, the EC unfortunately lost its credibility and the role of ‘powerful broker’ in the eyes of both Arabs and Israelis.

The US’s reaction to the Venice declaration was negative in general perspective, especially regarding the demands for the involvement of the PLO in the peace process which was a ‘terrorist’ organization according to its perception. Another concern of the US was that the EC did not consult to the US before the Declaration and therefore, the European initiative was interpreted by the US as a “threat to its monopoly of crisis management” (Greilsammer and Weiller, 1988: 28).

The EC continued to issue new declarations especially against the Israeli frustrations observed in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 and following the start of Palestinian Intifada at the end of 1987. During that process, the EC openly criticized the policies of Israel and started to express its endorsement of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and their right to self determination (Peters, 1999: 300). In 1988, the European Parliament voted to deny the finalization of new trade protocol with Israel while issuing new right to farmers in the occupied territories of Palestine to “export their products directly to the EC without the intervention of the Israeli agriculture export authority” (Sotendorp, 1999: 110). The EC had signed the trade and cooperation agreement with Israel in 1975 and Israel also wanted to develop its relations with the Community (Hollis, 1997: 20). In November 1988, during the Algiers session of the Palestine National Council (PNC), Yasser Arafat declared the establishment of the State of Palestine on Palestine territory with its capital of Jerusalem. The PNC accepted the division and two-state solution based on the UN resolution taken in 1947 (Çetin, 2005: 18).

2.5.2. Madrid Peace Process

Following the Gulf War in 1991, Europeans had lack of unified policy towards the peace process due to the internal division among the member states. For instance, while Britain and Germany was in favour of emerging American initiative, France supported the initiatives based on the Venice Declaration (EP DGR, 1999: 26). In addition to this

internal diversity, emergence of the ‘New World Order’ with the dominance of the US in the international system marginalized the role of EC in the region since the US wanted to develop a multilateral approach to the region including “wider Arab world and other interested parties such as the EU, Japan and Canada into the peace process” (Sotendorp, 2002: 286).

The Madrid peace process started after the end of Gulf War and collapse of the Soviet Union. The collective UN action against the Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait increased the hopes for an international peace conference on the Peace Process. In this context, the EU would increase its participation in the process. The Gulf War and end of the Cold War not only changed the attitude of the main actors but also included geo-economic factors in addition to the geo-political concerns (Nonneman, 2003: 37). Although Madrid was the host country for the conference in October 1991, the European Community had the limited minor role in the conference in which the US and Moscow were the leading powers although the declining power of the latter. Neither Israel nor the US was willing to give the EU a full participant position and the EU was invited just to attend the Conference, not to participate (Hollis, 1997: 21). The EU only invited for multilateral talks

During the negotiations, there were both bilateral and multilateral talks running in parallel. While former was focused on political issues and not included the EU, the latter was focus on mainly economic, social and environmental issues. The EU was invited to multilateral track of the Madrid Conference since American policy makers expected the EU to contribute the funding of the peace process in a substantial share (Sotendorp, 2002: 286). The involvement of the Europeans in the various multilateral committees welcomed by Israel since this would contribute the development of security and prosperity in the Middle East (Sachar, 1999: 343). The European Union was responsible for the Regional Development Working Group (REDWG) which was the most active multilateral talks among the five. The logic behind the multilateral talks which focused on low politics issues was to establish a kind of functionalist spill-over effect among the parties (Kekeç, 2004: 14). The REDWG was important as a platform to bring parties together and talk

about the economic problems of the region, especially the Palestinian people. However, like the bilateral talks these multilateral talks slowed down and lost their efficiency in the following years. Therefore, the European Union to sustain its goals in the region established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a new platform in 1995 (Peters, 1999: 301).

2.5.3. Oslo Accords

When the peace talks came to a halt within the Madrid framework, the secret negotiations between the PLO and Israel had already started in Norway. Thanks to positive outcomes of the negotiations, officials from the PLO and Israel agreed on an Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles in September 1993. So, a settlement was reached not in the peace conference but outside of it. By this process the parties recognized each other's political and legitimize rights. According to Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements:

The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1993).

The declaration of principles, called Oslo I, includes three stages to be implemented: the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip and Jericho ares, the interim arrangements for self-government of Palestine and the final status of the Palestinian territories (EP DGR, 1999: 31). Sensitive issues such as refugees, Jerusalem and illegal settlement of Israel in the occupied territories were left out to be discussed later. They planned to have a permanent status agreement during the five years transitional period. During that period, the EU and Israel developed their economic relations and the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU approved the Commission's new trade agreement with Israel (Hollis, 1997: 20).

In September 1995, the PLO and Israel signed the Interim Agreement (the Taba Agreement, or Oslo II) on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip regarding the control of these regions. Following this agreement, the Palestine National Council amended the Palestine Charter and removed the statement that was denying the Israel's right to exist (Çetin, 2005: 23). Even though the EU did not play an active political role in the Oslo peace process, it used its economic power to contribute peace process through financial contributions (Sotendorp, 2002: 288). At the Washington Donor Conference of 1993, the EU established a special program and committed ECU 700 million by the end of 1997 (EP DGR, 1999: 32). This EU aid to Palestine aimed at continuation of Palestinian administration which would play leading role in the formation of Palestinian State and prevent individual terrorist activities against Israel.

2.5.4. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The European policies towards Mediterranean region started in 1970s based on the bilateral agreements. In December 1990, the “New Mediterranean Policy” was introduced by the EC in order to develop its relations with the region. All these attempts linked the security concerns together with economic considerations. These security concerns were also in mind during the Essen Summit of December 1994 (Kekeç, 2004: 15). The EMP, or the Barcelona process, was launched at the Barcelona conference in 1995. In order to achieve the objectives of the partnership, the EU provided \$ 1 billion through the Mediterranean developmental assistance program (Hollis, 1997: 25). In addition to this partnership program, the EU launched negotiations with the Arab Gulf states in order to achieve free trade agreement with these states (ibid.). The EMP is important not only because of its number of participant but also its political, economic, social and security concerns. The EMP includes three chapters:

1. **“Political and Security Chapter:** to create ‘a common area of peace and stability’ through supporting ‘political and security dialogue’.
2. **Economic and Financial Chapter:** targets to establish ‘a zone of shared prosperity through an economic and financial partnership’ and establishment of a free-trade area by 2010.

3. **Social, Cultural and Human Chapter:** purposed to establish ‘a social, cultural and human partnership’ based on understanding other cultures and cooperation between civil societies” (Barcelona Declaration, 1995).

The declaration purposed to have a regular political dialogue among the signatories, more EU aid to the southern Mediterranean partners, and the control of migration, drugs and crime (Marsh and Mackenstein, 2005: 187). The declaration also mentioned the issues such as anti-terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation and self determination. The EMP also purposed to establish a security cooperation among the members including both ‘hard and soft security’. At the beginning of 1990s, the Mediterranean states of Europe like Spain, Portugal, France and Italy were expressing their desire for a ‘Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean referring mutual security framework (Marquina, 1999: 44). Although the EMP aimed to establish a working mechanism including also security concerns in addition to its economic, social and cultural aspects, the EMP would have very limited action and problem solving mechanism without the institutional framework. Because of problematic nature of the Partnership, the EMP should not be expected to overcome the problems of the region. Moreover, lack of the US in the EMP, given only an observer status, also implies that EMP will not be potential platform as a contributor to the peace process as stated in the 1996 WEU report (Kekeç, 2004: 16).

The European policy towards the region within the EMP can be criticized from different perspectives. The first one is about the size of assistance provided to the region in order to complete ambitious objectives of the Union. While the EU gives only 1 billion euros yearly for the establishment of peace, stability, democracy and a free trade zone, the United States provided Israel and Egypt alone around \$5 billion yearly in order to maintain their peace agreement (Carpic, 2001: 26). Second point is related to attitude of Europeans towards region, which reflects a North-South division and the European partners are not equal with the Southern partners, except Israel. Moreover, due to European history of involvement in the region and close partnership and position with the US, the partners in the Mediterranean are not certain about the motives driving European policy in the region (Carpic, 2001: 27). Furthermore, there are also suspicions about the realization of peaceful and secure region in the Mediterranean region since Arab partners

are not yet ready to cooperate on security issues. This is not only because of the conflict between Israel and Arab countries but also sensitive relations among themselves (Attina, 2003: 12). For example, there are ongoing disputes between Morocco and Algeria regarding the status of the Western Sahara and Israel and Lebanon are officially still on war. These and similar conflicts constrain the development of a regional cooperation on security. At this point partnership with the EU would not be sufficient benefit to solve these tensions and establish a regional cooperation. Furthermore, some Arab countries consider the European involvement and demand for political reforms as a violation of their sovereignty because their political system is different from Europeans (Attina, 2003: 13). Last but not least, some criticize the membership of Israel in this partnership because of the restrictions in region integration provided by Israel.

The Barcelona Process served as a forum to bring Israel, Palestine and the Arabs states together until the stagnation of the peace talks when Benyamin Netanyahu elected as the Israeli Prime Minister in May 1996. Even though parties continued to meet within the Barcelona process, the total impact of the EMP regarding the peace process has been limited since Europeans made a distinction between the partnership and the Arab-Israeli peace process and avoided to use this framework to apply pressure over Israel (Hollis, 1997: 25) Although the EMP is an important platform where Palestinian and Israeli delegation contact with each other, the conflict itself is a deadlock for the development of EMP in other sectors. Asseburg (2003: 174) argues that Arab-Israel conflict has been the main block to progress in the EMP. It was examined during the Marseilles meeting of EMP in 2000 that Syrian and Lebanese members did not participate to protest Israel's forceful reaction to the second Intifada (Asseburg, 2003: 174).

2.5.5. From Oslo to Second Intifada

In the post-Oslo period, there was a closer relation between the US and the EU. The Joint Action Plan which included in the transatlantic agenda and adopted in December 1995 referred to the Middle East Peace Process and underlined the necessary requirements and steps to be considered. However, the assassination of Prime Minister

of Rabin as a reaction to agreement with PLO and the new Netanyahu's period slowed down the peace process because of his intensive security concerns. Although the EU was ineffective to influence parties for peace, it has helped Palestinian people for economic development. During the Berlin Summit on 24-25 March 1999, the EU expressed its willingness to recognize Palestine state:

The European Union reaffirms the continuing and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination including the option of a state and looks forward to early fulfillment of this right. The EU declares its readiness to consider the recognition of Palestinian state in due course in accordance with the principles referred above (Hill and Smith, 2000: 315).

The election of Ehud Barak as the Prime Minister of Israel in May 1999 increased the hopes for peace process after the Netanyahu period. To improve the peace process, conflicting parties met in Egypt and as a result they signed the 'Sharm al Sheikh' agreement. Parallel with this process, Israel withdrew from Lebanon and parties (Barak and Arafat) came together in the Camp David for peace settlement. However, the negotiation was not concluded since the opposition leader, Ariel Sharon visited Temple Mount (Haram al Shari) on September 28 together with military and police forces as an escort. As a reaction, the Second 'Al Aqsa Intifada' of Palestinian people started. As a response, Israel used the military forces to react the Intifada and many people lost their life during the events. Although both sides, Barak and Arafat, accused each other, the result has not changed and the peace process ended again without any result. Despite the Camp David talks were not effective, the US participation in the process continued with "Clinton Parameters" in December 2000. It was the semi-official Taba talks that parties became closer under the observer status of EU special Envoy in the region, Miguel Moratinos, without the US participation. Although there more positive signs from the talks, the next Israel elections did not permit for an agreement (Nonneman, 2003: 39). So, it can be argued that Israeli position in the peace process is directly connected the leader in power.

Although the Clinton administration worked intensively for peace process and changed the attitudes of the parties, he ignored the fact that the peace process requires more time

and patience. He also persuaded Arafat not to add denying Israel's right to exist in the Palestine Charter as a good will towards the peace process (Arnaud, 2003: 249). During the president Bush era, the US was more pro-Israeli and preferred *laissez faire* policy. However, he was the first American leader who explicitly talked about the establishment of the Palestine State.

2.5.6. September 11 and Iraq War

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 were not only against the United States but also, the common values of Western democracies. As a result, these events changed not only security understanding of states but also shaped the 'new world order' (Anderson and Apap, 2002: 7). The 9/11 attacks showed that all Western states are vulnerable for terrorist attacks and therefore, single nation states are not capable to tackle this problem (Spence, 2004: 78). So, this situation dramatically influenced the European approach to the issue directly and other related issues including the MEPP indirectly.

One of the important measures of the Action Plan issues after the the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001 was related to coordinating the European Union's global action (Council of the European Union, 2001). The document underlined the necessity of the EU's involvement in world affairs due to the links between terror issue and problems of other regions like the Middle East. Therefore, based on the UN resolutions or recommendations, the EU should become more active in order to build peace and stability the region.

The September 11 terrorist attacks changed the priorities and the foreign policy of the US. Therefore, the peace process has lost its priority on the American agenda although there was pressure from the European side. Americans mainly focused on the 'war on terrorism' in general and specifically the Afghanistan issue. In November 2001, Bush in his speech in the UN expressed his approach to the conflict and supported the two state solution, Palestine and Israel living separately. This approach welcomed by the Europeans. Later on, the US focused on Iraq issue and postponed the peace process.

During that process, many Americans started to percept a link between Islamic organizations in the region like Hamas and Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. Some provocative demonstrations in Palestine in favour of Usame Bin Ladin also supported this argument relatively. During the spring of 2002, conflict among the parties started again and Arafat's security buildings in the Ramallah were destroyed and hopes for peace again disappeared. American permission to Sharon's policies was criticized by both Arabs and Europeans (Celso, 2003: 75). After that period, number of suicide bombing increased and Israel followed its policy of assassination against the targeted people. Israel also occupied again most of West Bank and Palestinian areas. Saudi Prince Abdullah, in March 2002, prepared a peace plan to solve conflict based on return of Israel from occupied territories, Golan Heights and reasonable agreement on Jerusalem and the refugee issue. This plan was accepted by the Arab league and also the UN included it in the UN Security Resolution 1397 (Isseroff, 2009).

2.5.7. The Quartet and the Road Map

The Quartet group which consisted of the representatives from the UN, the EU, Russia and the US was formed to establish a 'Road Map' to solve the existing conflict on 10 April 2002. This group increased the expectations because it included all the credible powers in the same project. In the joint statement, it was stated that they will work to establish peace among the parties and for this purpose both Palestine and Israel should show their good will. Palestine should stop a suicide bombing which is a tool of terrorism and Israel should refrain to use of force and withdraw from the occupied territories (Solana, 2002). They also underlined the importance of Quartet group for consultations and special envoys in the region. The two state solution was also stated in this document. Although US president Bush in his speech in June stated that peace would be established under a new Palestine leader instead of Arafat, the Europeans were against this idea because they recognized Arafat as an elected leader for Palestine. Although there were four different participants in the group, the European Union was the leading actor for Road Map (Kekeç, 2004: 23-24). The Road Map was the most

comprehensive plan for solution because it included not only security related issues but also political issues and institutional reforms in Palestine (Kekeç, 2004: 24).

Members of the Quartet were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair on 26 June 2009 in Trieste. During the meeting, the Quartet confirmed its determination to establish peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1850, the Madrid principles including “land for peace”, the Roadmap, and the existing agreements between parties (Middle East Quartet Statement, 2009). It restated the requirements of the viable and lasting solution: ends the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, “independent homelands through two states for two peoples, Israel and an independent, contiguous, and viable state of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security” (ibid.). Moreover, the Quartet asked the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders to implement their obligations within the framework of Roadmap and asserted that unilateral actions damaging the negotiations will not be recognized by the international community (ibid.).

2.5.8. Recent Developments

Iraq War in 2003 shifted the US policies in the region. Although the other partners of the Quartet group try to convince US to give priority to the peace process, the US focused on Iraq issue and postponed the peace process. To support the institutional reforms in Palestine, ‘A Palestine Task Force’ under EU authority and World Bank worked together (Hollis, 2004: 194) Although Road Map was prepared in December 2002, the US postponed it up to new elections in Israel. The Road Map was released after the election of Mahmud Abbas as the PM of the Palestine. Although the plan was the will of four participants, the US presented the Road Map alone. During the Aqaba meeting in June 2003, Sharon and Abbas talked about the conditions to fulfil the requirements of the Road Map together with the US president Bush. In the meeting the EU who was the main donor of the peace process and implementation of the Road Map was not allowed to be presented (Kekeç, 2004: 26). As a result of the meeting, Mahmud Abbas promised to unify Palestine security forces and finish the terrorist attacks. As a

result terrorist groups in Palestine declared three months truce, which was called 'Hudna'. On the other hand, Israel withdrew from some settlements in the West Bank and released around three hundred Palestinian prisoners (Kekeç, 2004: 26).

Time showed that these promises were not enough for peace among the parties. The Road Map which was proposed based on three stages starting in 2002 and to be completed in 2005 was declared late and the parties were reluctant to keep their promises. Moreover, the radicals from the both sides were against the peace settlement. As a result, 'Hudna' failed and suicide bombings started again. As a result, Mahmud Abbas resigned and replaced by Ahmed Queria. During those events, the US was also reluctant to pressure over Israel for peace and Washington was dealing with the Iraq issue. The Europeans blamed Israel for its threatening and using high level of force. At the end, Israel in addition to keep West Bank and Gaza occupied started to construct the Security Wall that would collapse the establishment of Palestine state. Although international community argued the illegality of the wall, Israel has continued to construct it for its own security concerns.

At the end of 2003, Sharon introduced his new unilateral withdrawal plan to be implemented by end of 2005. The plan was welcomed by Bush administration and evaluated as a historical one. On the other hand, Europeans were critical because plan was different from the agreed plans before. Therefore, the EU called the Quartet group to come together and discuss the issue. Assassination of the leader and founder of Hamas, Sheikh Yassin, by Israel increased the tension. It was not the last case because the same assassination method also used in April 2004 to kill new elected Hamas leader Aziz Rantissi (Kekeç, 2004: 27). All these suicide bombing and associations open new doors for new events and revenge for both sides.

In January 2006, Hamas won the elections in Palestine and came to the power. Not only the US but also the EU responded negatively to outcome and the aids to the region cut down. As a result of the reactions and pressures, in March 2007 Hamas established a coalition government with Al Fateh. Currently, relations between West and Palestine

have been getting normalized especially through Al Fateh. Government in Israel also changed and Olmert is the new leader of the country because of health problems of Sharon. In the last meeting of Arab league in 2007, the leaders discussed the Saudi peace plan but there were no clear result yet. Currently, there were also conflicts between the Hamas and Al Fateh supporter in Gaze Strip in addition to Israel attack on the Palestinian settlements. So, the future of the peace process is still under the shadow of regional conflicts and lack of international capability to persuade both sides.

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union issued a declaration regarding the settlements of Israel on 9 September 2009. In the declaration, the EU stated “its serious concern over Israel’s approval of additional settlement construction” since the settlements are illegal according to international law and represent an obstacle to peace (Council of the European Union, September 2009). Therefore, the EU asks Israel to end its settlement activities in East Jerusalem.

Regarding the Gaza Crisis, the Council states the urgency of a durable solution based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1860 and calls unconditionally opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza (Council of the European Union, Juni 2009). The council also expressed the requiremnt of end the violence activities and arm smuggling into the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the Council supported the mediation attempts of Egypt and the Arab League. In the document, the EU also expressed its commitment to develop bilateral relations with Palestine based on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ibid.).

2.6. Understanding Transatlantic Division over the MEPP

Regarding the transatlantic division over the MEPP, it is very helpful to underline the structural differences between the US and the EU in order to evaluate their involvement and influence in the region. While the US represents a single state which capable to use military forces or diplomatic measures in its relations to other actors, the EU is composed of nation-states that are free for their national policies and interests and keep their right to

veto in sensitive high politics issues. Although the EU has communitarized the economical issues in the first pillar, in the CFSP issues it still requires intergovernmental process and needs consensus in most of the important issues. Another difference can be found on duration of the policies, or flexibility of the policies. For the US, policies over the region have depended on the President therefore the policy priorities can be changed from election to election. On the other hand, the EU has been producing long term policies over the region as seen in the EMP. Despite the change of leaders in the member states, they keep their dependence on long term plans arranged in the past. In contrast to the EU, the US policies on the region are personalized as seen in Clinton and Bush period. When the president Clinton wanted to be more active in the peace process during his period, the MEPP was developed in a good way. However, during the Bush period's *laissez faire* policy slowed down the process towards peace (Perthes, 2000: 46). However, the EU prefers to contact with regional actors and give more attention to socio-economical problems of the region instead of personal contact.

The main reason behind the difference between the US and the EU is their different priorities and approaches rather than their vital interests in the region. Despite the argument that regional actors want to play the US and the EU accordingly as a card against each other, neither Brussels nor Washington has been willing to sacrifice their transatlantic cooperation for the conflict (Perthes, 2000: 40). The reasons behind the division between the US and the EU over the MEPP can be analyzed under mainly four subtitles.

a) Geographical Proximity: European continent has closer geographical position in contrast to the US. Therefore, instability, economic problems as well as terrorism in the region directly or indirectly affect the European states. Political crisis together with economic instability in the region has been triggering the immigration and criminal activities towards Europe. The Euro- Mediterranean Partnership was established to overcome these problems in regional context.

b) Economic Factors: In terms of economics, Europe has more intensive and long economic relations with the region. In the context of energy resources, the EU is more dependent on oil from the Middle East compared to the US. Therefore, the EU sustains its economic and financial support to the Palestinian people based on; prevent the radical movements emerging from the poverty, establishment of 'democratic and viable' Palestine state, more balanced position of Palestine against Israel, and increase the living standards of the Palestinian people (Asseburg, 2003a: 12). Although economic development is not a precondition for peace settlement, the absence of it would danger the establishment of political solutions.

c) Domestic Considerations: It is a well known fact that domestic demands of a country would shape the foreign policy priorities and objectives of the country. In this context, we can separate the transatlantic partners. The different approaches of the US and the EU to the conflict can be explained by the Jewish population in the US and Muslim population living in the EU (Nonneman, 2003: 35). Strong Israeli lobby groups in America and Arab as well as non-Arab Muslims in Europe can not be ignored when they approach the issue (Nonneman, 2003: 35).

d) Historical Perspectives: The close relations between US and Israel can be explained through the large number of Jews people living in the US, the existing sympathy towards them and their similar historical background as being migratory societies. Moreover, the Soviet Union's support to the Arab countries during the Cold War period also leded America to develop close relation with Israel as an ally in the region. Within the European context, there are different approaches to the MEPP due to the historical ties. For instance, Britain and France have their own approach regarding the region. While Britain accuses Israel as the reason of instability in the region after the Second World War, Israel remembers the country in the context of restrictions for immigration to the region. However, the UK is careful not to antagonize the US because of Israel issue. France has close relations with Arab countries especially because of mandatory control over Syria and Lebanon (Arnaud, 2003: 250).

2.7. Conclusion

The Middle East region and especially the MEPP are located in the priorities list of the EU due to the region's geo-strategic, geo-economic and religious significance. The involvement of the EU in the MEPP is related to several reasons including its historical connection to the region, the new security understanding of the Union in the post-Cold War period, new policies of the EU, existence of the US in the region as a decisive actor, religious dimension of the conflict and the energy resources of the region. The roots of the conflict can be observed before the establishment of State of Israel. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire triggered the emergence of the Jewish question in the region. During the British control over the region, the conflict started to emerge. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 has become the reference point of the Jews to establish their homeland in the region. After a huge number of Jewish immigration to the region and the establishment of the State of Israel in the territories of the Palestinian people, the Arab-Israeli conflict has started and continued in time.

While the Europeans were silent against the conflict during 1950s and 1960s due to their internal and external considerations, the Oil Crisis in 1973 emerged as a catalyst to stimulate the EC's involvement in the process. Although there were a number of initiatives before the Venice Declaration to present the EC's position regarding the solution of the conflict, it is the Venice Declaration that reflected a common European position, supporting the 'land for peace' formula. The involvement and effectiveness of the EU in the process are not independent from the European integration process and the dynamics of the international politics. During the Cold War period, the EC was under the shadow of two great powers, the US and USSR. In the new period, the EU was more willing to contribute to the MEPP as seen in the Madrid peace process. However, it was not accepted as the main initiator of the process and excluded from the political aspects of the negotiations. The Oslo Accords showed that peace would be promoted within Europe but out of the EU.

The EMP was the new platform initiated by the EU to bring members of the Mediterranean over the same table to establish a 'Free Trade Zone'. As part of 'peace by

pieces' approach, the EMP provided Israel and the Arab states to cooperate in soft issues such as culture, environment and trade. However, its role in the peace process is very limited and the EMP was criticized because of the amount of aid provided by the EU. The negotiations between Israel and Palestinians have very sensitive and fragile nature. Change of leader in Israel and new approach towards the issue would abolish the existing agreements and developments as seen in the Second Intifada. The September 11 terrorist attacks and the following Iraq war changed the priorities of the US in the region. This indirectly provided opportunity for the EU to enhance its role in the MEPP. However, fragile structure of the conflict and the recent developments prevents effective and positive contribution of the Union to the process. The division between the EU and the US regarding the MEPP can be explained through their structural differences. Their domestic considerations, bilateral relations, geographical position and historical ties shape their role and involvement in the process. To sum up, the EC, later the EU has been working to contribute to the peace process but its effectiveness is depended on both its own internal dynamics and the external factors: other actors in the region and the attitude of the parties in the conflict against the EU as a mediator.

Chapter III

Turkey and the Middle East Peace Process

This chapter presents the involvement of Turkey in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) and analyses its consistency with the EU's policies. Turkey, as an important regional actor, has been developing good relations with actors in the Middle East, especially with Israel and Palestine. Although the capabilities and instruments available for Turkey are limited regarding the establishment and development of the peace process, the process has priority for the Turkish foreign and security policy in the Middle East. As seen in the previous chapter, the EU has been involved in the MEPP actively since the 1970s in different platforms; however, its impact over the process is limited due to the several factors as discussed in the previous chapter. Therefore, this chapter purposes to reflect to what extent the presence of Turkey in the MEPP would contribute to the peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. In this context, the first section analyses the significance of Middle East regarding Turkey's foreign and security policy formation. In the following section, Turkey's position towards both Israel and Palestine is examined in order to assess the significance of Turkey for the parties and its credibility as a mediator in the peace process. In the last section, a sort of comparison between Turkey and the EU regarding the MEPP is made in order to reflect to what extent they have converged their policies in the region, especially in the MEPP and how Turkey would contribute to the actorness in the region in case of the membership.

3.1. Turkey and the Middle East

Turkey's relationship with the Middle Eastern countries has been complicated since the establishment of new Republic in 1923 due to the emerging factors after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 130). A legacy of territorial grievances, historical resentments and mutual suspicions more or less formed a psychological barrier for the parties in the region and naturally it takes time to overcome this factor by Turks and Arabs (Rouleau, 1993: 72). The Islamist tendency in the Middle East also did not welcome Turkey's Western orientation and the secular character of the regime in Turkey

(Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 130). In spite of the geographical position of Turkey to the Middle East, Turkey preferred to isolate itself from the developments in the region. This situation was not only because of the problems experienced during and after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, but also the Westernization policy of Ataturk whose determination focused on transforming the republic into a modern and a Westernized state, an equal member of the nations of Western world (Martin, 2004: 158).

During the last decade, Turkey has become an important actor in the Middle East region through its 'new activism'. This activism changed the neutral Kemalist foreign policy in the Middle East (Martin, 2004: 157). In the minds of Turks, the Middle East has been perceived as a region of risk rather than sphere of opportunity. Turkey's foreign policy formulation has been shaped by the internal dynamics of the country. Developments and crises in the region were evaluated within the context of internal security understanding (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 127). For instance, Turkey's Kurdish problem is not independent from the developments in Northern Iraq, Syria and Iran. Therefore, position of neighbours in the Middle East is a significant factor while struggling against the internal problems in Turkey (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 128).

To some extent, Turkey's engagement to the region can be explained in the context of trade relations and energy security (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 128). In the past, the business community in Turkey entered into closer trade relations with West, especially quest for membership in the EC/EU and potential risks in other regions because of the political instabilities. However, especially during the Özal's period Turkish economy expanded and private sector started to enhance economic relations not only with Europe but also other regions such as Eurasia and the Middle East. In current situation, Turkish private sector has been developing good trade relations and thus affecting Turkey's approach to the region (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 128). In the context of energy security, the region plays a significant role in energy supply at reasonable price which affects Turkey's growth rate and economic activism. Turkey's energy demand has been increasing every year and domestic energy supply is limited, therefore the region is on the Turkish agenda regarding the energy security (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003: 129).

Turkey's objective was not mainly oriented towards have good relations with the states in the region but to prove to the West that Turkey is necessary cooperative partner in regional affairs (Criss and Bilgin, 1997: 4). So, it can be argued that Turkey's Middle East policy was an extension of its pro-Western policies and a tool to strengthen its alliance with the West. In this perspective, Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern states reflected the alliance where Turkey and Western powers were in the same path and in cooperation (Martin, 2004: 160). So, it can be argued that Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East has been aimed to minimize the potential dangers to its security, independence and the Westernization project emanating from the region.

During the Cold War period, the Turkish foreign and security policy was under the shadow of developments in Europe and the confrontation between the two leading blocs (Kirişci, 2000: 39). However, in the post-Cold War period, Turkish foreign policy as well as national interests has become directly related to stability and security in its surrounding regions, including the Middle East. As a part of the Middle East region, Turkey is not independent from the developments and crises in the region. In this context, a regional cooperation in the region can not be developed apart from the Arab-Israel peace process (Kirişci, 2000: 39).

Turkey was a partner of the Western in preventing the Soviet expansion and its influence in the Middle East region during the Cold War period. For this purpose Turkey supported the pro-Western Baghdad Pact and Central Treaty Organization. However, the regime change in Iraq in 1958 by a new pan-Arab regime ended the Pact (Kirişci, 2000: 39). So, during these years, Turkey preferred the 'non-interference and non-involvement' as principles in her foreign policy towards the region (Kirişci, 2000: 39). However, Turkey developed its relations based on bilateral agreements. Until the 1970s, Turkey had a balanced policy between Israel and Arab countries. Nevertheless, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, a common sense of support among Islamic countries and also the rise of pro-Islamist National Salvation Party in Turkey gradually changed the Turkish foreign policy in favour of Palestine (Kirişci, 2000: 39). Negative affects of the 1973 oil crisis over Turkish economy led to the development of better commercial relations with Arab

countries (Kirişci, 2000: 40). The election of Likud government in 1977 and its harsh policies toward the occupied territories and Lebanon triggered the downgrading of diplomatic relations with Israel. Nevertheless, during that period Turkey had good relations with the PLO (Robins, 2003: 243).

The rapprochement between Turkey and the Arab countries during the 1970s, especially after the oil crisis in the region, should not be interpreted as a closer cooperation. While Turkey was expecting support of Arabs regarding the Cyprus issue in 1964 and 1974, their approaches towards Turkey's policies were negative and they supported the UN resolutions calling the withdrawal of Turkish forces in the region. And interestingly, none of Arab states recognized the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (Larrabe and Lessen, 2003: 131).

The 1980s reflected Prime Minister Turgut Özal's "activist and internationalist approach in relations with the Middle East" (Kirişci, 2000: 40). During the Özal period, the economic relations with Arab partners fostered because of the efforts of Özal to attract Arab capital to Turkey and his encouragement of Turkish firms to trade with the region. As a part of his expansion policy, he introduced the 'peace pipeline' project related to water distribution; however, this was not welcomed by Arab partners due to their fear to become dependent on Turkish water as well as goodwill (Kirişci, 2000: 40). In political context, he also played an active role especially in the Gulf crisis in 1990 where Turkey played a role during the process of expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the creation of safe havens for the Iraqi Kurds in the Northern Iraq (Fuller, 2008: 41). Nevertheless, these efforts and policies were not enough for Turkey to claim a role in the Arab-Israeli peace process. While during the Özal years Turkey had moved closer to the Western stands compared to Turkey's position in the past, it did not mean that Turkey deviated from its traditional approach regarding the Middle East (Criss and Bilgin, 1997: 2). After the death of Özal in 1993, Turkey's Middle East policies revert to its "cautious and conservative nature" (Kirişci, 2000: 41).

In the 1990s, the Middle East has become a priority for security and political elites in Turkey due to the new threat perception and transformation of external conditions in the post-Cold War era (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 125). In the new period, Turkey argued that threat comes from the South. In this context, the ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ and ‘Kurdish separatism’ defined as the main security concerns of the country which emanated from the Middle East (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 125). While the Turkish foreign ministry and military were the driving force behind Turkey’s foreign policy during the Cold War period, in the new period the public opinion and political parties⁹ play a significant role (Kirişci, 2000: 41).

Erbakan’s Welfare Party (RP) was opposed the traditional Turkish foreign policy (Fuller, 2008: 42). It was against the 1995 Customs Union agreement between the EU and Turkey and formulating alternative initiatives such as Islamic United Nations, an Islamic customs union and an Islamic NATO (Kirişci, 2000: 42). Iran was the first country that Erbakan visited as prime minister in 1996 and never visited the West officially. Even though Erbakan was calling for closer ties with Arab states, most of moderate Arab states had suspicions about his policy due to his visits to Iran and Libya as well as his close contacts with radical Islamic groups such as Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood (Kirişci, 2000: 42). The RP’s position regarding the peace process was not clear enough. On the one hand, some officials from the party criticized the Oslo accords and Arafat’s recognition of Israel as part of their anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist discourse, on the other hand a group of RP legislators travelled to Israel (Kirişci, 2000: 42). Despite the Erbakan’s approach and post of prime minister, military and foreign ministry stayed as the dominant actor in foreign policy formation.

The complexity of formulating foreign policy towards the region was illustrated in the spring of 2003 when Turkish Parliament rejected the American demand to use Turkish military bases for the invasion of Iraq (Martin, 2004: 157). Despite the US was a long-

⁹ While the Anavatan (Motherland) Party (ANAP), the Dogru Yol (True Path) Party (DYP) and the Cumhuriyet Halk (Republican People’s) Party (CHP) were in favour of pro-Western policies and economic interest within the West despite the setbacks from the EU, the Demokratik Sol (Democratic Left) Party of Bülent Ecevit was more critical about the relation with West and supported the closer relations with other regions, including the Middle East (Kirişci, 2000: 41).

term strategic partner of Turkey, especially within NATO, against the Soviet threat, the WMD, and disarmament of Iraq, Turkey risked its alliance while formulating the new term foreign policy. Turkey's new policies in the region were shaped based on the calculation of costs and benefits deriving from the region. The instability in the Middle East and the multidimensionality of national security concerns of Turkey has influenced Turkey's approach to the region. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the Iran-Iraq in 1980, the Civil War in Lebanon in 1975, Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represent important examples of the conflict in the region as source of instability (Martin, 2004: 162). Turkey's new national security concern includes not only military threats to the country but also non-military issues such as political legitimacy of the regime, economic crisis, ethnic and religious strife, availability of energy sources, etc. (Martin, 2004: 164).

The Europeans increasingly perceive Turkey as a strategic partner in the European periphery since Turkey opens a door towards Middle East and Eurasia. While Europe and the US affected Turkey's policy regarding the region during the Cold War years, currently situation they have limited role in Turkey's relations and policies over the region (Larrabe and Lessen, 2003: 129). Following the September 11 attacks, Turkey has been faced with three problems regarding the Arab Middle East region: the US's campaign against Taliban regime in Afghanistan, intention of the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the situation in Palestine by the spring of 2002 which would provoke a wider conflict in the region (Tschirgi, 2003: 113). So, in the post- 9/11 period, foreign policy concerns of Turkey shifted towards the Middle East region and the peace process as part of its security concern.

3.2. Turkey as a mediator in the MEPP

The establishment of lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is one of the aspirations of Turkey which is shared by the international community as well. The peace and stability in the region are the precondition for the security of all states in the region and its neighbours. In this context, Turkey supports 'dialogue and cooperation' as the

tools to end this conflict in the region (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 1). In the eyes of Turkey, other methods are not enough alone to bring peace and stability to the region and sometimes they would lead the conflict even worse. So, it is obvious that since beginning of the conflict, Turkey has been a strong supporter of the MEPP, which was interpreted as a 'golden opportunity' (ibid.). In this context, Turkey's relations in the Middle East have not only purposed to develop bilateral relations in the region but also dedicated to the creation of a regional cooperation as much as possible (ibid.). So, Turkey's role as a mediator in the MEPP process depends on the credibility of Turkey over the parties of conflict, especially Israel and Palestine.

Based on the UN Security Council Resolutions (242, 338, 1397, 1515), the principle of 'land for peace', the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiatives, Turkey desires the just and lasting settlement in the Israel-Palestine conflict, two states living together side by side within a secure environment. According to Turkey, the Israel-Palestine conflict is the core of the Middle East Peace Process which also requires the peaceful settlement in other tracks such as Israel-Syria and Israel-Lebanon (ibid.). In this context, Turkey evaluates the conflict in region in a wider perspective, not only limited to resolution of Israeli-Palestine conflict but also other existing conflict. This reflects the inter-connection of the problems in the region. In this context, Turkey's efforts, as a mediator between Israel and Syria, to start the peace negotiation between the two showed Turkey's willingness to play more active role in the region and the MEPP.

Turkey as a facilitator in the peace process presents a balanced policy towards the parties in the conflict and this is the answer why Turkey has developed certain level of confidence of both Israel and Palestine. The confidence as a key word is the heart of the MEPP. Turkey evaluates the current crisis between Israel and Palestine as the crisis of confidence (ibid.). Since Turkey has good relations with both parties, Turkey would play a significant role in confidence building between the parties. In the context of bilateral relations, Turkey was the first country with a predominantly Muslim population recognized the State of Israel in 1949 and one of the countries that recognized the Palestine State established in 1988 in exile. Turkey's good ties with Israel, Palestine and

other Arab countries as well as good will of Turkey in the process increase the credibility of Turkey to establish an atmosphere of confidence between the parties.

Turkey supported the Madrid Conference in 1991, the first and second Oslo arrangement in 1993 and 1995 as the steps toward success in the MEPP. The negotiation process between Israel and Palestine was interrupted following the Second Intifada in Palestine in 2000. It was the conference in Annapolis, US, on 26-27 November 2007 that the negotiation process was re-launched with the participation of 46 countries and a number of international organizations (ibid.). In order to contribute to the process, Ali Babacan, Turkish Foreign Minister at that time, visited Syria, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia in October, just before the conference (ibid.). Within the Annapolis framework, Turkey supported the political process and the “Common Understanding” document between Israel and Palestine to develop bilateral relations based on good will to achieve the settlement of unresolved issues, targeting the establishment of two states living side by side in peace and security (ibid.). Turkey evaluated this meeting as an opportunity for peace and stated its readiness to make necessary contribution in the post-conference process.

The most outstanding indicator of Turkey’s contribution to restoration of peace in the economic fields was the establishment of the Ankara Forum. It was a project aiming to establish industrial zones in Palestine. The Forum established in 2005 by the initiative of Turkey and included the businessmen from Turkey (Union of Stock Markets and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey-TOBB), Israel (Israel Manufacturers’ Union) and Palestine (Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Trade) (ibid.). Since its establishment, the Forum conducted seven meeting in different places. In the final meeting of the Forum, held in Ankara on 13 November 2007 under the co-presidencies of President Abdullah Gül, President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres and the President of the PNA Mahmoud Abbas, they decided the establishment of an industrial zone in Tarqumia/West Bank (ibid.). An “Industry for peace” project of Ankara Forum is expected to be helpful regarding the creation of job opportunities in Palestine and investment towards the region. Thus, economic and social structure of Palestine would be developed in time. So,

these projects will contribute the confidence-building process between Israel and Palestine (ibid.).

As the official invitees of President Abdullah Gül, President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres and President of the PNA Mahmoud Abbas organized concurrent visits to Turkey on 11-13 November 2007 and 12-13 November 2007 respectively. It is significant to underline that these visits were organised before the Annapolis Conference and had a symbolic message. On 13 November 2007, they addressed to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). “These speeches had historical importance in terms of being the first speech ever delivered by an Israeli leader to the Parliament of a country with an overwhelmingly Muslim population, being an address made by a PNA President to the Turkish Parliament for the very first time, and being the very first speech that was delivered concurrently by the Israeli and the Palestinian Presidents in a foreign Parliament” (ibid.).

In the following section, Turkey’s position towards Israel and Palestine is analysed in order to clarify to what extent Turkey has developed good relations and ties with these countries and how credible partner Turkey is in the region and the MEPP. It should be underlined that Turkey’s relations with Israel or Palestine are not independent from each other and was influenced from the internal and external dynamics.

3.2.1. Turkey’s relations with Israel

Turkey’s strategic partnership with Israel reflects an example of Turkish activism in the Middle East. Since the establishment of Jewish state, Turkey has developed long-standing and cooperative relations with Israel (Larrabee and Lessen, 2003: 140). Especially after the mid-1990s, the bilateral relations between the two moved to ‘significant realm’ (Larrabee and Lessen, 2003: 140). Multi-dimensional relations between them include defence-industrial collaboration, intelligence sharing, economic development and tourism.

In order to understand the rationale of this relationship between Turkey and Israel, it is useful to underline Turkey's main concerns. First, the dominance of the Kurdish problem as the top of Turkish security agenda led Turkey to use Israel as a leverage against Syria's role in supporting PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party) operations and especially over Damascus (Larrabee and Lessen, 2003: 140). Second, even though Turkey is a partner of Europe and the US as well as a member of NATO, Ankara experienced difficulties to transfer military equipments and technology from Europe and the US. This was mainly because of Turkey's struggle against PKK and the human rights records of the country. In this context, Israel offered more opportunities regarding technology transfer, modernization and training (Larrabee and Lessen, 2003: 141). According to the 1997-plan of the Turkish military, Turkey planned to update its weaponry at cost of \$ 150 billion over 25 years (Martin, 2004: 184). Third, the closer relations with Israel seen as a door to enhance relations with Washington who want to develop alliance with pro-Western states in the region (Larrabee and Lessen, 2003: 141). Moreover, the Turkish-Israeli relationship would contribute to their shared security concerns related to counterterrorism, Islamic extremism, monitoring and prevention of proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles (Larrabee and Lessen, 2003: 142).

3.2.1.1. Turkey's Relations with Israel in the Cold War Era

The features and development of relations between Turkey and Israel during the Cold War period directly related to Turkey's relation with the West, Arab countries and the Soviet Union. Even though Turkish policies time to time reflected pro-Arab orientation, its relations with Israel never break off completely (Altunışık, 2000: 60). This is a significant feature of the relations between two countries of the region. Moreover, as a NATO member and an ally of the US, Turkey developed good perceptions in the eyes of Israel. In addition to that the political elites in Turkey wanted to get support of pro-Israel lobby and Jewish American organizations active in the US (Altunışık, 2000: 60).

During the Cold War years, the Soviet threat was a leading concern for Turkey and the Western powers, therefore Turkey took the Soviet threat into consideration while

formulating its policies related to security. When Turkey opposed the UN partition plan in 1947 regarding the establishment of a Jewish state, it was due to the concern of Turkey to avoid the expansion of Soviet Union influence in the region through Israel (Robins, 2003: 241). As a remedy to the Soviet threat, Turkey wanted to get support of Western bloc and for this purpose Turkey softened its opposition regarding the establishment of a Jewish state. While Turkey granted 'de facto' recognition of State of Israel in 1949, it was formalized in 1950 with the appointment of a 'minister plenipotentiary' to Tel Aviv by Turkey (Robins, 2003: 241). As part of its balanced policy in the region, Turkish governments explained its recognition based on legal perspective by arguing that recognition of a state which admitted to the UN was a requirement of international law (Çetin, 2005: 33). In addition to this law perspective, motivation behind Turkey's recognition of Israel could be found in the perception of Israel as an outsider of the region and defining itself on the side of West. So, in a sense they had similar perspectives regarding the West. Moreover, military victory of Israel in 1948 showed the power of Israel and led Turkey's admiration to establish good relations with Israel.

As a reaction to Turkey's recognition, Israel wanted to develop the bilateral relation with Turkey. However, an attempt of Israel faced by Turkey's hesitation because of the latter's existing ties with the Arab states and its efforts to motivate them to join regional pro-Western defence pacts against the Soviet threat (Robins, 2003: 242). The distant position of Turkey towards Israel was the motivating factor of Arab states to trust Turkey.

During the mid 1950s Israel introduced the 'Periphery Doctrine' as part of its foreign policy and it aimed at the establishment of good relations with friendly Middle Eastern states including Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia (Martin, 2004: 181). The hesitation of Turkey was overcome due to the emerging regional and international circumstances that affect the Turkish interests. There were mainly three factors that led to willingness of Turkey to accept Israel's proposal to establish such a secret alliance. These include "Iraq vote against Turkey over Cyprus at the UN in 1967, the establishment of the United Arab republic between Egypt and Syria in February 1958 and the fall of pro-Western Hashemite regime in Iraq in July 1958" (Çetin, 2005: 34).

In addition to these international developments, in order to understand the formation of such an alignment, it would be useful to mention commonality between two states as being non-Arab in the predominantly Arab Middle East and positive historical heritage comes from the Ottoman period where peaceful relations experienced. The Israeli-Turkish Pact of 1958 committed the parties to cooperate in military and intelligence fields (Çetin, 2005: 34). These include mutual aid in emergency cases, Turkish support at NATO and in Pentagon in order to improve Israeli military, technical and technological know-how exchange and Israeli support of Turks in industry, agriculture and the building of airports (Çetin, 2005: 34). However, when the factors triggered the peripheral alliance started to disappear, the 1958 agreements lost their significance in time without being fully materialized properly. So, Turkey's trade relations with Israel decreased and the diplomatic relations were downgraded.

In the early 1960s, Turkey wanted to decrease its dependence to the US and NATO due to the Cuban and Cyprus crises. After the Cuban crisis it was clear enough that neither the US nor the SU were willing to war against each other. Therefore, Turkey preferred to develop multi-dimensional policy rather than only Western oriented policies (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 109). Moreover, after the Cyprus crisis in 1964, Turkey received a letter from the US President Lyndon Johnson about the possible intervention of Turkey to Cyprus and impossibility of NATO protection in such a case (Çetin, 2005: 35). In addition to this letter, the UN vote in December 1965 on Cypriot sovereignty and against outside intervention clarified the international isolation towards Turkey. So, Turkey as a reaction started to seek multi-dimensional foreign policy, developing relations with the Soviet Union and Arabs (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 109). Therefore, relations between Israel and Turkey get down eventually.

The 1973 oil price hikes were another factor that led Turkey to develop closer relations with the Arab countries in the region. In addition to economic concerns, Turkey's need for diplomatic support regarding the military operation in Cyprus in 1974 motivated Turkey to develop good economic and political relations with Arab states (Martin, 2004:

181) As an extension of this closer relations and concerns, Turkey supported the Arab resolutions in the UN General Assembly during 1970s, including the 1975 resolution labelling Zionism as a form of racism (Çetin, 2005: 35). Moreover, Turkey developed closer relations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) even though the organization developed “intimate relations with Armenian and left-wing terrorist organizations operating against Turkish interest” (Kirişci, 2000: 40).

Relations between Israel and Turkey got worse and complicated; when the Israeli parliament, Knesset, declared unilaterally that Jerusalem was united in its entirety and is the capital of Israel on July 1980 (Robins, 2003: 239). Süleyman Demirel, Turkish Prime Minister of that period, “found it necessary, even before the bill became law, to issue a statement strongly denouncing the move and calling for ‘political action’ to thwart it” (Liel, 2001: 208). Later on, Turkey protested Israel by announcing the closure of its consulate general located in Jerusalem.

The military regime of 12 September 1980 reshaped Turkey’s political agenda and priorities in foreign policy. So, domestic issues became the prior to bilateral relations with Israel (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 111). During that process, Turkey decided to downgrade diplomatic relations with Israel to the second secretary level despite the fact that this step would damage the relation with the US (Martin, 2004: 181). Nevertheless, continuation of good relations with Arab partners contributed to Turkish economy and decreased the vulnerability of Turkey in case of oil fluctuating. In this context, it can be argued that downgrading of diplomatic relation with Israel provided better Arab sympathy towards Turkey, but there was no intention to break off the relations with Israel (Robins, 2003: 248).

The decline of Middle East market in Turkish trade profile and falls in oil prices during the mid 1980s negatively affected the political and economic leverage of the Arab states regarding Turkey. Especially collapse of oil prices in 1986 resulted with the decline of Turkish export towards Arab countries from 47% of its total exports in 1982 to 12% in 1994 (Yavuz, 1997: 27). Moreover, The Arab pressure over Turkey regarding Israel

decreased following the signing of Camp David Accords, a positive phase in the Arab-Israel relations. So, Turkey has more space to have good relations with Israel and improve its diplomatic relation. Dependent on these developments, in 1986 a new momentum has emerged in Turkish-Israeli relation by appointment of a senior diplomat as the head of Turkish delegation to Tel-Aviv. The step of Turkey positively responded by Israel and Israel initiated a similar diplomatic response by sending a higher diplomat higher than a secondary secretary (Liel, 2001: 211). This positive atmosphere disappeared when the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli occupies territories broke out in 1986, the First Intifada. As a response to oppressive measures taken by Israel during that process and to support the ‘right of self-determination’ of Palestinians, Turkey issued statement to denounce reaction of Israel, lack of proportionality (Çetin, 2005: 36). Turkey sent a senior diplomat to Tel-Aviv in 1986 in order to contribute to the attempts for peace in the Middle East while it was represented at low level prior to this date (Liel, 2001: 211). Even though the response of Israel to the 1987 Intifada criticized and denounced by Turkey and Turkey recognition of Palestine in 1988 was protested by Israel, they continued to develop good trade relations and cooperation in different issues.

3.1.1.2. Turkey’s Relations with Israel in the Post-Cold War Era

During the 1990s the relationship between Israel and Turkey entered a new period, a normalization process of the bilateral relations as result of the MEPP, especially at Madrid (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 126). Turkey’s problematic relations with its neighbours in the Middle East and difficulties in its relations with the West facilitated and contributed to Turkey’s good relations with Israel in 1990s. In addition to these external factors, there were also domestic concerns which motivated Turkey to have closer relations with Israel. These were connected to the new “national military strategic concept” which called political Islam and Kurdish separatism as internal security threats. Therefore, Israel was seen as an important partner in improving Turkish economy and securing arm sales without any sort of conditionality (Martin, 2004: 164).

After 1991, there were a number of high level inter-state visits between Israel and Turkey, and cooperative schemes especially on economy and military. In January 1992, Turkey upgraded its diplomatic relations with Israel to the ambassadorial level (Martin, 2004: 181). Following the visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin to Israel in 1993, the first time at ministerial level, parties signed a memorandum in order to develop cooperation between intelligence services. Good relations continued with the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller in 1994. This visit was the first one ever to Israel by a Turkish Prime Minister and reflects the changing dynamics of the relation. During this visit, a number of agreements signed between parties like on security cooperation (Altunışık, 2000: 63).

Turkey developed its close relations with Israel without considering the concerns of the Arabs (Liel, 2001: 212). In March 1996, a Free Trade Agreement and an agreement on mutual investment and the prevention of double taxation were signed to develop economic relations (Baç, 1998: 122). As the extension of these agreements, parties signed a trade agreement on industrial and agricultural technology in June 1996 and an economic cooperation agreement on decreasing the existing customs and tariffs in December 1996. The election of Netanyahu as Prime Minister of Israel in May 1996 contributed the Turkish-Israeli relations. Netanyahu, unlike Yithzak Rabin and Shimon Peres, called PKK as a terrorist organization and stated that Israel did not support the establishment of a separate, independent Kurdish state (Altunışık, 2000: 66).

The bilateral relations were developed in different fields and included new sectors in time. In the strategic field, Turkey and Israel signed a military education and cooperation agreement in order to exchange personnel and open their ports and air bases for mutual use in February 1996 (Martin, 2004: 182). This agreement expanded in August 1996 to include provisions on technology transfer; training of technicians and researches; intelligence sharing; biannual strategic dialog between security and foreign policy officials of these two countries and joint military exercises (Altunışık, 2000: 66-67). Thus, Turkey could benefit from Israeli experience and expertise while Israel would have

opportunity to use large air space of Turkey in order to train its officials (Robins, 2003: 259).

The Turkish-Israeli strategic partnership was realized mainly by leading role of military and contributed the development of defensive and offensive capabilities of both countries. This cooperation even was not downgraded during the Islamist and pro-Arab Welfare Party led by Erbakan (Bölükbaşı, 1999: 33). The rapprochement between parties was not welcomed by the neighbouring countries in the region, despite the statements by Israel and Turkey were declared that the agreements were not against any third party in the region (Tschirgi, 2003: 111). Multi-dimensional and transparent relations between Turkey and Israel do not target any third party. These relations are cultivated and developed to serve the mutual interests of both countries as well as to bring about peace and stability of the region (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 1). Syrian vice president evaluated the partnership as “the most dangerous alliance ever we witnessed since the Second World War” (Inbar, 2001: 6). Similar statement came from Egypt and Iran. While Egypt argued that the military cooperation between Turkey and Israel “would lead to instability and possibly war in the Middle East”, Iran stated that the joint military exercise would increase the risk of a crisis in the region (Inbar, 2001: 7). The positive implication of this partnership observed when Turkey used Israeli ties as leverage against Syria and Greece (Altunışık, 2000: 64).

Turkey and Israel has developed good trade relations¹⁰. The economic relations between the two developed in favor of Turkey. For instance, while the trade with Israel was \$ 450 million in 1996, it was around \$ 1.2 billion in 2002 (Martin, 2004: 183). The trade volume with Israel was \$ 2,7 billion in 2007, while in 2006 Turkey’s total trade volume was \$ 2,3 billion (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 3).

¹⁰ Trade cooperation between Turkey and Israel based on “The Free Trade Agreement between Turkey and Israel (1997), Agreement on Trade, Economic, Industrial and Scientific Cooperation (1997), Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment (1998), Agreement on the Prevention of Double Taxation (1998), Cooperation Agreement on Military Industry (1996) and the Cooperation Agreement in Agriculture (1999) form the legal bases of bilateral economic relations. Moreover, the most recent Joint Committee on the Free Trade Agreement was held in Ankara between 11-12 July 2005 in Ankara, while the 3rd Joint Economic Commission was held in Tel-Aviv between 6 and 7 March 2007 and the most recent Business Council was held on 13 October 2004” (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 3).

Although Turkey is a Western oriented, liberal and internationalist country, its foreign and security policy has been influenced by the military elites. However, the EU membership process has been balancing this dominance. The role of Turkish military in politics has diminished. It should be underlined that in Turkish security understanding, defence of territorial and political integrity and the protection of secular nature of the country against internal enemies play an important role (Karaosmanoğlu, 2000: 213). From this perspective, Israel and Turkey share similar security culture which is based on 'realpolitik', in which actors consider practical issues and threats rather than ideological or moral ones.

The November 2002 national elections changed the political context in Turkey. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power and the relations with Israel were expected to be cool down. However, the relations have not cooled down as expected and AKP has pursued a more balanced policy in the region, having good relation with all parties and taking the support of Israel in respect to certain policies such as the EU membership. The election of AKP led to a sort of dilemma in Turkish-Israeli relationship since the party described itself with a Islamic background. However, the cooperation continues more or less in the same path. This is not only because of the existing cooperation agreements and historical relations between the two but also because of the support of Israel for Turkey's membership to the Union. So, the new AKP government has not disrupted the bilateral relation due to the shared interests in different fields like military, economy and technology. The government has issued remarkable adjustments in the Turkish constitution and reform for the EU membership. Even though there were suspicions over the politics of AKP government and their ideology, it seems that they does not produce policies against secularism structure of the country and in favour of the modernization and democratization process especially within the membership process. In addition, as a 'moderate' Islamist government, the AKP would play an active and constructive role in the MEPP.

3.2.2. Turkey's relations with Palestine

Turkey shares a long history, close social and cultural ties with the Palestinian people. Turkey established official relation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1975 and was among the first countries, the first non-Arab country, which recognized the Palestine State in 1988. Since the establishment of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in 1996 within the Oslo I (1993) and Oslo II (1995) Agreement, Turkey attached importance to the PNA in the peace process and organized bilateral visits at all levels (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 4). In 1947, Turkey voted in the UN together with the Arab states against the partitioning of Palestine (Kirişci, 2000: 48). However, Turkey was the first predominantly Muslim populated country that recognized the State of Israel in 1949. After that period Turkey supported the Palestinian rights in the UN resolutions by voting in favour. Since the PLO was in contact with radical groups involved in terrorist activities in Turkey, the PLO office at Ankara opened in 1979 (Kirişci, 2000: 49).

After the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, Arafat visited Turkey and later on Tansu Çiller became the first prime minister that visited Arafat in Gaza. In several visits to Turkey, Arafat underlined the significance of Turkey's involvement in the peace process and Turkey's role and support in economic development of Palestine (Kirişci, 2000: 49). Moreover, Arafat and the PLO were sensitive about Turkey's concerns and therefore, they presented balanced reactions to Turkish-Israeli relations and cross-border operations of Turkey in order to protect its borders against terrorist attacks (Kirişci, 2000: 49).

When the peace process was in deadlock during the late 1990s, Arafat expressed his concerns regarding the Turkish-Israeli relations while Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem was visiting Israel and Palestine Authority in July 1998. He said that close ties with Israel were hurting the Palestinian people (Kirişci, 2000: 49). In some cases Turkey disappointed Palestinians. For instance, in January 1996, Turkey sent only four of the sixty Turkish monitors that Arafat requested personally from Demirel in order to join

international observation of the Palestine elections. Many other countries sent more monitors than Turkey (Kirişci, 2000: 49).

Turkey has been following the Arab-Israel conflict closely since the early stages. The issue as resonance for Turkish public and Turkish society has increasing sympathy towards the Palestinian position (Larrabe and Lessen, 2003: 142). However, Turkey's balanced position can also be observed in participation of the 9th Turkish President Demirel in the Mitchell Commission which was established internationally to investigate nature of violence in West Bank and Gaza (Larrabe and Lessen, 2003: 142-3). Since the beginning of Arab-Israel conflict, Turkey generally supported the Arab resolutions in the UN and played a role in the post-Madrid peace process. Turkey was a mentor in Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) talks which was part of multilateral track (Larrabe and Lessen, 2003: 143). These negotiations were important to provide regional-confidence building.

Turkey has not ignored the economic dimension of the MEPP and therefore, Turkey gives importance to the establishment and development of an economic and institutional structure within a Palestinian State. In this context, development of 'viable and sustainable' socio-economic infrastructure of Palestine is milestone of the process. This is the responsibility of international community. Turkey, within this framework, presented a comprehensive economic and social action plan for Palestine in December 2003 which is coordinated by the Coordinator for Economic and Social Cooperation in Palestine (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 4). The total amount of assistance provided by Turkey to the Palestine from government to government or indirectly through the international organization like the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is more than US\$ 30 million (ibid.). During the International Donor's Conference for the Palestine State, organized in Paris on 17 December 2007, Turkey pledged US\$ 150 million of financial aid in the context of the Palestine Reform and Development Plan, presented by the Prime Minister of the Palestine National Authority. Total amount of donation was approximately US\$ 7.7 billion (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 1). "In line with the

growing role of Turkey in this field, Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) has opened a branch in Ramallah in May 2005, with a view to ensuring more effective and on site coordination of Turkey's development assistance" (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 4). As mentioned above, the Ankara Forum (Ankara Forum for Economic Cooperation between Palestine, Israel and Turkey) is another initiative of Turkey regarding the economic development of Palestine, aiming at the establishment or rehabilitation of industrial zones in Palestine (ibid.).

Turkey totally supports the reform process in Palestine and the efforts of the PNA. Turkey sent a group of 17 observers in order to monitor the Palestine Legislative Council elections on 25 January 2006. Moreover, "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey has been offering a special education programme since 2004, in the framework of which a number of young Palestinian diplomats find the opportunity for professional training" (ibid.).

The clashes between Fatah and Hamas in Gaza occurred in June 2007 and outcomes of the conflict increased the concerns of Turkey towards the region. Turkey argues that as long as these internal problems and conflict remain unsolved, the institutions and the foundations of future Palestine States will not developed and function properly (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 5). Therefore, Turkey suggested the parties to come together and solve their problem through dialog and avoiding the use of violence. In this context, Turkey also asks the international community to play a constructive role for a national agreement rather than separation or isolation in the region. Moreover, Turkey believes that the intra-Palestinian conflict would be overcome through the constitutional process without any interruption (ibid.). Last but not least, Turkey has been providing humanitarian aid to the Palestinian living in Westbank and Gaza Strip for their suffering.

There are also bilateral trade relations between Turkey and Palestine. Trade volume in 2007 was around \$ 22 million almost the same as 2006. "The legal framework of bilateral economic relations are formed by the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (1998),

Agreement on Cooperation in Tourism (1999), Protocol on Cooperation in Health (2003), Temporary Free Trade Agreement (2005), Donation Agreements (2004 and 2006) and the Agreed Minutes on Cooperation in Agriculture (2005)” (ibid.).

Following the Al-Aqsa intifada of 2000, Ankara wanted to play an active role in the Palestinian problem. As a response to the efforts of the Turkish government, Yasser Arafat welcomed the efforts of Turkish government and support of Palestinian people in all level (Çetin, 2005: 46). After the death of Arafat, the condolences of Turkish official reflected the sympathy over Arafat’s leading role for Palestinian people.

Turkey has been developing a balanced approach regarding the parts of the Arab-Israel conflict, condemning Israeli violence and radical elements in Palestine at the same time (Tschirgi, 2003: 117). Turkey is in favour of security of Israel on the one hand, the establishment of viable Palestine on the other hand. However, Turkish society is sensitive on the violence against Palestinians and provocative actions of Israel. For instance, Ariel Sharon’s offensive approach in 2002 criticized by government and public opinion which was in favour of Palestine (Tschirgi, 2003: 117). It should be underlined that Turkey has been performing less than its potential contribution to the peace process. Turkey is one of the rare countries that reserving good will among Israelis and Palestinians. Since the instability in the region and negative developments in the peace process affects Turkey’s domestic politics, security concerns and regional politics, Turkey should be more active to use its good relations to promote peace in the region.

3.3. Policy divergences and convergences between Turkey and the EU regarding the MEPP

The policy divergences and convergences between Turkey and the EU regarding the MEPP depend on the internal dynamics, international developments and bilateral relations between the actors. Palestine and Israel have developed different level of cooperation with Turkey and the EU based on their national security concerns, priorities, and historical, cultural, economical and political consideration. In this section, the divergences and convergences between Turkey and the EU will be presented in the light of their bilateral relations, priorities and the international developments.

During the Cold War period, the expansion of Soviet threat and security of oil flow were the factors that shaped the policies of Turkey and the EU regarding the conflict in the region. Especially following the oil crisis in 1973, they became more supportive regarding the Arabs against Israel. Turkey has followed a balanced policy regarding the Arab-Israel conflict and cooperated with Israel during the Cold War period. This was supported by the periphery approach of Israel in the region in order to establish allies with partners who share the similar interests. Nevertheless, the European Community was criticizing the Israel's policy against Palestinian people which constrained and damaged the relations between them. Therefore, Israel has rejected the EC as a credible and leading actor in the peace process.

Following the end of Cold War, Turkey's relations with Arab countries started to decrease which facilitated the development of an active policy towards Israel. As an outcome of these close relations, two states signed important agreements. During that period, Israel's approach towards Turkey was more positive to play a mediator role compared position of the EU. In the eyes of Israelis, there was no place and need for European mediation in the process. However, the EU continued to play an active role as much as possible. During the 1990s, the structure of EU integration has improved and assigned the post of High Representative for Common Foreign and Security policy and later a special envoy to the region.

The divergence in the EU's and Turkey's policies regarding Israel was not derived from their differentiated or unilateral policies but Israel's different approach to them. While Israel developed close relations with Turkey, its cooperation with the EU was limited. There were mainly two reasons behind the closer ties between Turkey and Israel: their threat perception in the Middle East region and the way of their prioritizing national security. During the 1980s and 1990s, fight against the PKK terrorist organization was priority for Turkey. However, Turkey was criticized by the EU and especially anti-Turkish lobbies in Europe because of the human rights records and their cooperation was affected negatively (Altunışık, 2000: 66). At the same period, Israel did not put any precondition to develop relations and sign agreements on economic and military cooperation with Turkey. So, common interests between Israel and Turkey facilitated their cooperation in various sectors.

The involvement of the European Union in the MEPP and relationship with Israel represents the complicated interaction of different factors. From economic perspective, the EU is the major trade partner of Israel, around 40% of Israeli import comes from the EU and about 30% percent of Israel export goes to the EU members. Furthermore, within the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement the parties have been using trade concessions mutually. In addition to these economic indicators, they co-operate in technical and scientific fields since Israel became a part of the Community's Framework Program for Research and Technical Development in 1996.

The moral dimension can not be ignored when the relations between the EU and Israel analysed. The memories of tragic events and the existing Arab-Israel conflict shape the background of their relations. Due to the memories of the tragic events, Israel has the problem of trust towards Europe. From an Israeli perspective, Europe owes a 'moral debt' to Israel and therefore, it should provide privileged position to Israel in their relationship (Greilsammer and Weiler, 1988: 2).

One of the remarkable differences between the EC and Turkey was that Turkey has developed friendly relations in the 1950s. Turkey as the first predominantly Muslim populated country recognized the Israeli State in 1949 and in 1958 the relationship between them was good enough to issue a secret alliance. This was an outcome of the Periphery doctrine which designed to create a common image that the region is not exclusively Arab and there exist multi-religious, cultural and ethnic groups (Brecher, 1972: 278). Turkey and Israel shared the common sense of 'otherness' in the region since they are the only democracies in the region with the Western orientation and the secular regimes. This perception led them to develop good diplomatic relations. Unlike the EC, policy suggestion of Turkey welcomed by the Israel because Turkey would be the potential partner in the region against the hostile Arab countries in the eyes of Israel.

During the Cold War period, the core element of policies of Turkey and the EC towards Middle East in general, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular was oil. Once the Arab states started to use oil as a political weapon, both Turkey and the EC noticed to what extent they are vulnerable to changes in the international system. This dependency on Middle East oil, led Turkey and the EC to support the Palestinian cause. Fluctuations of the oil prices enforced the EC members to reach a consensus regarding to produce a common policy to the international crisis since it was a threat to their economic prosperity, which was the first time since the Second World War (Soetendorp, 1999: 113). After the oil hikes, the members of the EC shared the position of France which was supporting the Arabs in the conflict and challenging the US policies in the region (Nuttall, 1992: 56). The attempts of the EC to establish closer relations with Arab countries shaped the perception of Israel towards the Community as biased and dishonest.

From the Israeli point of view, Europe was exclusively concerned with the oil issue and its own interests rather than the peaceful settlement in the region. European attitude has become obvious during the Suez crisis. Even though Israel was not able to get support from Europeans before the crisis, France and Britain support Israel during the war against Egypt in 1956. So, this was the anger of France and Britain against the nationalization of Suez Canal by Nasser rather than protect Israeli interests (Greilsammer and Weiller,

1988: 36). Europeans' refer to Israeli violations of human rights, international law and democratic rules increased the Israeli suspicions on Europe's honesty.

During Cold War period, the prevention of Soviet expansion was the main concern of Turkey and the EC. Therefore Turkey allied with Western Block while the Arab states were cooperating with the Soviet Union in order to balance American influence in the region (Karaosmanoğlu, 1996: 12). This situation restricted close relations between Turkey and the Arab states. During the 1970s, Turkey like the EC felt the negative effects of the oil crisis even though there was no oil embargo against Turkey. Therefore, developing good relations with the oil producing countries became the priority objective of Turkey towards the Middle East region. For instance, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Turkey tolerated the over flights of Moscow over Turkey but refused the demand of the US to use the refuelling and reconnaissance (Karaosmanoğlu, 1996: 12). Moreover, the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, unilateral change in the status of Jerusalem and the harsh treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories damaged the perception of both Turkey and the EC over the Israeli policies.

While Turkey and the EC were in the same path during the Cold War regarding the cooperation with the US against the Soviet expansionism and the critics over Israel, there were divergences in their approach to the Middle East. For instance, during the Cold War era, the US and NATO capabilities in Turkey were not available for non-NATO military actions in Gulf or any region in the Middle East without permission of Turkey in order to keep its balanced policy and good relations in the region with the Arab states (Altunışık and Tür, 2005: 108). Despite Turkey was in favour of Arab states regarding the voting of certain UN resolutions against Israel and issued statements to condemn Israeli violence, Turkey has been careful not to hurt Israel (Liel, 2001: 212). This is related to bilateral relations with the US which would be damaged by the worsened relation with Israel indirectly.

The 1970s witnessed the cooperation moments between Israel and the EC. For instance, in 1975 they signed a free trade agreement within the framework of EC's Global

Mediterranean policy. However, due to the psychological barriers between the parties, they were not able to broaden the content of agreement and include new areas of cooperation like military and education. The 1980s reflected the differentiated policies of the EC and Turkey. The EC issued the Venice Declaration in 1980 to clarify its position regarding the conflict and in the Gulf War supported the American policies to get distinguished role in the MEPP. However, the European role was secondary to the role played by the US as also seen in the Madrid Conference. So, even though the EC was willing to play a significant role in the process, it was not able and allowed to do so. During that period, Turkish foreign policy has changed due to the decrease of the oil prices. So, the Arab countries lost their oil weapon against other actors. Moreover, volume of trade between oil producing Muslim countries and Turkey gradually diminished; therefore the dependency of Turkish economy to the Arab partners has decreased. This situation provided extra political sphere for Turkey to develop relations with Israel.

Because of its geographical proximity to the Middle East, the EU would be influenced negatively by any turbulence occurred in the region. Since there are millions of Turkish, Arab and Iranian immigrants living in Europe and also reverse links with Israel, the EU is more interested in stability and peace in the region (Hollis, 1997: 16). In addition to concerns about risk of conflicts in the region and immigrants, the EU is dependent on oil transferred from the region, which is around 5.5 million barrel (Hollis, 1997: 16). In addition to strategic and economic concerns of the EU, the involvement of the Union in the MEPP can be explained through the protection and promotion of basic norms and values of the EU such as democratic principles, human rights and rule of law. So, it can be argued that any instability in the region would threaten the interests of the Union and the conflict between Israel and Palestine is the main source of instability in the region. Therefore, the EU for a long time has the ambition to play a central role in the Arab-Israel peace process (Soetendorp, 2002: 283).

The US and the EC has developed different policies regarding the security of the Middle East, Israel, oil producing countries and the MEPP (Gordon, 1998: 8). Even though the

US and the EC members were in different position regarding the Suez crisis in 1956, the Arab- Israeli wars of 1967 and Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, their common approach to the common enemy of Soviet Union come over these disagreements and protected the alliance despite the divergences in some issue. Due to its super power status, economic power and close ties with Israel, the US has been playing a leading diplomatic role in the Arab-Israel conflict and the peace process through its military and economic aids to the region (Gordon, 1998: 15). From the American perspective, Israel was the potential force in the region against the Soviet threat. Therefore, the US supported Israel when it is required as seen in the 1967 war where Israel won the war despite its disadvantaged position. While the US was on the side of Israel, the EU's has developed closer policies towards the Arab states due to its dependence on oil and threat of Palestinian terrorism in the European continent.

The real-politic of Israel requires survival within a hostile geography. From this perspective, Turkey and Israel have similar strategic cultures as real-politic which facilitated the rapprochement between the two. While Turkey shared the Cold War strategic culture especially against the Soviet threat, in the post-Cold War era the EU redefined its security understanding based on the promotion and protection of the values such as human rights, democracy and rule of law. This discourse also led the discussion of 'Europeanness' of Turkey. This caused mainly due to the domestic differences and considerations between them.

Turkey's alliance with the US in the first Gulf war proved that Turkey would be a strategic partner in the Middle East region where instability exists because of the Arab-Israeli conflict, terrorism and other regional conflicts (Aykan, 1996: 346). During the war, Turkey sent its troops to Iraq and permitted the US to use its soil. Although some people assume that Turkish-Israeli relations are highly depend on the changing dynamics of the relations between Turkey and the US, the partnership between Turkey and Israel has been developed independently and has its own vision and priorities. The willingness of Turkey to develop its relations with Israel would enhance its role in MEPP.

Even though there are common European interests in the Middle East and ongoing relations with parties of the conflict, there is divergence between the members of the Union regarding the MEPP, based on their cultural, political, geographical and historical link to the parties in the conflict. For instance, France, Britain, Spain and Italy have historical, economic and cultural close relations with the Arab Middle East. Therefore, they have been developing close relations with the Arab states. However, the Netherlands and Germany follow the policies in the same line with the US and behave pro-Israeli (Çetin, 2005: 61). There are also small states that lack of their own initiative and prefer involvement of the EU and its institutions in the MEPP. This division would slow down the active and effective involvement of the EU.

The European approach to the MEPP was between the US and Israel, and closer to the pro-Western Arabs (Greilsammer and Weiller, 1988: 28) In the 1990s, the US has taken the leading role. Although the EU is the biggest donor to the peace process and made it visible in the region as an international actor, it plays a secondary role while the US has been given the leading role and Israel refuses the mediator role of the EU. Turkey has always approached this conflict with an objective view and has expressed her objection to the flawed practices and wrong attitudes of both of the parties. As such Turkey is among one of those rare countries which both the Israelis and the Palestinians trust (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n/a), 2).

Turkey would be a bridge between the EU and the Middle East on the one hand, and between the EU and Israel on the other hand, if Turkey develops its position and credibility through its political liberalization and economic power. Moreover, Turkey would play a role model for the members of the Middle East who want to transform their structure. This would led Turkey to become a regional power in case of Turkey's capabilities are enough to do so. Turkey's aspiration for membership and commitments to fulfil required reforms and criteria has positive impact over the capacity formation and development of Turkey. Therefore, Turkey would contribute the EU's role in the MEPP.

3.4. Turkey's contribution to EU's actorness and the MEPP

Turkey as a strategic partner and a candidate state for the EU would contribute to actorness of the EU in general and effectiveness of the EU in the MEPP in specific. This can be evaluated through the contribution of Turkey to the EU's actorness in several ways. First of all, Turkey through its geographical position, historical and strategic relations with states in the Middle East region provides better opportunities to involve actively in the MEPP. The EU is aware of the fact that the MEPP depends on collective support of the actors in the region and the involvement of credible mediators. Until now, the role of the EU in the process has restricted to limited initiatives. Turkey with its geographical position, security culture and existing historical ties in the region would provide new opportunities for the EU to become an effective actor in the process. Secondly, thanks to Turkey's proactive policies and diplomatic relations in the region, Turkey would contribute to presence of the EU. The developing good diplomatic relations not only with Israel but also other actors in the region such as Palestine, Syria and Iran can be regarded as significant examples of this approach. Therefore, Turkey within the EU would increase the ability of the Union's external influence on the actors in the MEPP. Thirdly, Turkey with its capabilities such as its diplomatic relations and availability of military, technical and economical tools would support the EU's effectiveness regarding the peaceful settlement of the conflict and monitoring of the process. So, the EU would benefit from Turkey's presence, opportunities and capabilities.

Involvement of Turkey together with the EU in the MEPP positively contributes to inclusive and exclusive roles of the Union. Regarding the inclusive role which refers to value-based nature of the Union and asks the EU to promote and protect these values in different parts of the world especially in conflicts, Turkey would inevitably support the EU's role in this context. Turkish public is very sensitive about the human rights violence in the region and politicians condemns the violence in different platforms because Turkey believes that the MEPP would be succeed through peaceful means and good will of the parties. In this context, Turkey shares the EU's norms and values, therefore Turkey would contribute to the soft power functions of the Union. In other words, Turkey

supports promotion and implementation of the European norms and values not only in Turkey but also other regions which could be regarded guarantee peace and stability in the region. Turkey would also contribute the exclusive role of the EU where the Union is expected to protect its citizens from external threats. Today's complex problems and conflicts require cooperation among the actors in different platforms, collective response and preconditions regarding the threats. In this context, Turkey would contribute to the EU since Turkey has its own security culture in consistency with the European norms.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed to what extent Turkey would contribute the effectiveness of the EU in the MEPP. In order to answer this question, the paper has, first of all, reflected the significance of the Middle East for Turkish Foreign Policy. In this context, the region is one of the important trade zones of Turkey, holds huge amount of energy resources and is vital for the national security concerns of the country. Apart from these material factors, Turkey as a predominantly Muslim populated and secular country has historical and cultural ties with the countries of the region. Many experts present Turkey as a role model for the rest of the region, concerning their modernization and secularization process. During the Cold War period, prevention of the Soviet expansion also shaped Turkey's concerns in the region, which is near abroad of the country.

Turkey's attitude towards the Middle East region has changed from an isolation policy to activism in the region. During the first decades of the new Republic, Turkey ignored the region and focused mainly on the West. To some extent, the Westernization project prevented the establishment of good relations between Turkey and the Arab states in the region. However, the oil crisis in 1973, ties of PKK in Syria and Iraq, the first and second Gulf War, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict showed that Turkey is vulnerable to the crises in the region and therefore it should develop active policies regarding the region and existing conflicts. Turkey has also developed good relations with Israel. Turkey was the first country in the region that recognized the State of Israel. Although the relationship between Turkey and Israel has not developed on stable line, currently

Turkey is one of the strategic partners of Israel and signed significant agreements in various topics, especially in modernization of military.

Turkey's role as mediator in the MEPP is dependent on the balanced policy of Turkey. This is the milestone of Turkey's significance in the region. Turkey has been developing good relations not only with the Arab states but also with Israel. Both parties of the conflict accept Turkey as a partner at different levels. Turkey supports the UNSCR, Road Map and other peace initiatives. Apart from them, Turkey is also willing to develop its own initiatives such as Ankara Forum. The establishment of peace and stability in the region is also priority of Turkey and for this purpose Turkey supports 'dialog and cooperation'. Israel argues that the policies of the EU are more pro-Arab, therefore Israel rejects the involvement of the Union in the peace process. However, Turkey as partner of Israel in the region would be mediator between the parties. So, if Turkey keeps its balanced policy in the region, it would be credible and effective mediator and thus would contribute to the effectiveness of the EU in the region when it becomes a member of the Union.

Conclusion

This study focused on the involvement of the EU in the MEPP and tried to reflect to what extent Turkey's relations with Israel and Palestine would contribute to the effectiveness of the EU regarding the issue. This research considered not only actorness of the EU in world politics and its capabilities but also historical dimension of the process and the policy divergences and convergences between the EU and Turkey regarding the actors of the MEPP.

Despite the fact that the EU is not a global or military power in world politics, it is still an indispensable actor of the international system due to its civilian instruments. As part of its foreign and security policy, the EU uses instruments such as common positions, declarations, development and humanitarian aids, conditionality in its relations with third parties. These tools are used not only to promote the basic European norms and values but also to establish new regional cooperation, bilateral relations, prevention of conflicts and in crisis management. In the MEPP, the EU has been using these tools to enhance its effectiveness in the process. In the context of Turkey and its contribution to EU's actorness and effectiveness in the MEPP, Turkey with its geo-political and geo-strategical position in the region would contribute a lot to the Union. Turkey would increase not only capabilities and presence of the Union but also provide new opportunities based on its economic, historical and diplomatic relations towards the Middle East.

Based on the European norms and values, the EU wants to establish peace and security not only within the continent of Europe but also in different regions since today's security understanding requires holistic approach rather than regional or national approach. Especially, after the September 11 terrorist events it was argued that every state is vulnerable such an attack and the response to today's complex problems and threats requires collective action and cooperation to produce effective and lasting solutions. In the European context, the Middle East and particularly the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine in the region increase the concerns of Europeans. The EU as a whole and its member states has paid particular attention to the region due to the several factors

such as Muslim immigrants living in the EU, their dependence on the Middle East oil, historical ties, and economic, social and cultural links. Since the 1970s the EU has formulated its own policies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. During the 1980s, the European Community developed a unified position towards the region and the conflict. Although the EU is an effective and capable actor in the context of economic assistance, development and humanitarian aid and monitoring human rights violations in the region, it is not yet a credible actor mediating the process. Therefore, the EU should go beyond its declaratory diplomacy.

As Solana stated in the European Security Strategy of 2003, the resolution of the conflict in a peaceful way is ‘a strategic priority’ for the European foreign policy. If the EU does not involve in the process of settlement of lasting peace in the region between Israel and Palestine, cost of the conflict will come to the borders and also inside of the continent. However, the EU position in the peace process is not effective as expected and therefore generally evaluated as complementary to the US, the main arbiter of the peace process. The European Union in order to increase its effectiveness in the process and balance the US’ role would develop its relations with some bordering countries of the conflict like Turkey, Iran, Egypt as well as India. Moreover, the EU can establish closer security cooperation with Russia through Black sea region and Caucasus. As a result, credibility and effectiveness of the EU would increase in the region.

There are mainly three reasons that restrict the effective policies of EU in the region. First of all, the attitude of the conflicting parties regarding the peace process and their relation with the EU which is not accepted as credible and effective mediator especially by Israel. Moreover, the complicated nature of the conflict prevents the effective involvement of the EU. Secondly, the EU decision making system in the CFSP can be considered as an obstacle because most of the time working mechanism prevents the common applicable policies but provide the coordinated policies. To be more effective in the process, the EU should speak with one voice and go beyond the declaratory diplomacy. The last restriction is related to the US which is the most credible and only mediator in the process restrict the independent actions of the EU. Therefore, the EU has

secondary role in the process. While the US is dealing with political and diplomatic dimension of the conflict, the EU has focused on economic, social and institutional aspects of the conflict. From this perspective, there is a kind of division of labour, which is not a voluntary process but a necessity. However, especially after the Iraq war in 2003, the role and the credibility of US in the peace process have been damaged because of the instability in Iraq. People started to question the policies and the purpose of US in the region as a whole. What does the US want in the Middle East? The answer would be the establishment of democratic systems, stability, better human rights, controlling the energy sources, more dominance position etc. It is important to underline that there is no clear policy orientation of the US in the region as the EU pointed out in its statements and declarations. In this context, the current developments and the coherent position of the EU can be evaluated as a chance for the European leaders to be more active and trusted mediator in the peace process.

There are several reasons behind the involvement of the EU in the peace process. The new security understanding of the EU, the new Neighbourhood policy, promotion and protection of the European norms and values as well as economic considerations are among the concerns of the EU while formulating the policies regarding the region and the peace process. It is obvious that there is a consistent relation between the development of the CFSP and the EU involvement in the process. Since the Venice declaration in 1980, the EU has become more active to establish proposals and new platforms to bring parties together to talk about possible peace plans. From this perspective, it is necessary to mention the EU efforts in the Madrid, the EMP, and the Road Map processes. They established a better atmosphere for future peace projects and established a culture of negotiation. The EMP is one of the leading initiatives of the EU: Although the EMP faced several problems due to the regional conflicts, it still plays an important role to bring the parties under the same umbrella.

The EU has been supporting the Palestinian Authority since its establishment through its financial and technical assistance. Moreover, the EU is supporting the development of political institutions in Palestine and monitors the elections whether they are consistent

with the democratic norms. The EU believes that a legitimate, capable, and responsible Palestine would be a constructive peace partner in the process. Despite the fact that the EU is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority; it has been excluded from the political aspects of the peace process. It was the case in the Wye River Summit and the Second Camp David Summit where the EU was not invited even as an observer. The reason behind this exclusion is the US dominance and the Israeli refusal of the EU as a mediator who emphasizes the international law and the United Nations.

The EU approach to the solution is based on mainly the Venice Declaration, the Road Map and the existing UN resolutions over the issue. The EU's approach to the peace process was well defined and unified during the 1990s. The EU supports the right to existence for Israel in a secure environment, the self-determination right for Palestine and the establishment of two state solutions. However, both the US and the EU have limited power in the process. They can promote, support and finance the stability and peace attempts but they can not make the peace in the name of Israel and Palestine. Without the political will of the parties, external actors can not be effective. Addition to international mediation, economic aid for Palestinian people; there should be mutual recognition and a culture of peace between the communities. Moreover, if the EU wants to be more credible mediator in the process, it should pay more to public diplomacy to convince Israel people for the goodness of the EU's policies and mediation and end the prejudice among the Israeli people about the EU's unilateral Palestine oriented policies. In other words, EU should show its natural position in the process. In fact, the EU has also developed good trade relations and cooperation in different sectors with Israel. However, the MEPP process requires political will and therefore, other factors would be complementary.

After the failure of the Camp David process, the peace process slowed down and almost collapsed. The involvement of the EU, the US, the UN and Russia in the same initiative, the Quartet group, and the formulation of the Road Map increased the expectations and moved the issue to the international community in a concrete way. In the EU context, the Quartet provided the involvement of the Union in the political process of the

establishment peace in the region. Although the Road Map was expected to be completed in 2005, it was not completed properly due to the ongoing conflicts in the region and the victory of Hamas in the elections. A working transatlantic coordination would contribute to the peace process because the US has developed special relations with Israel and the EU has good relations with Palestine and the Arab states. So, their economic and political capabilities would facilitate the process.

This study paid special attention to Turkey's involvement in the peace process since the EU's role in the process is limited and Turkey has its own interests and bilateral relations in the region. As part of the Middle East region, Turkey has to develop its own policy priorities and strategies based on its national concerns. Moreover, Turkey's membership to the Union will make the EU closer to the Middle East region. The resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict, providing peace and stability in the region, the prohibition of WMD and fighting against terrorism are among the vital common interests of both Turkey and the EU.

Although Turkey and Israel developed relations during the Cold War period especially based on the periphery approach of Israel, their cooperation was under the pressure of Arab states. This situation was experienced especially during the 1973 oil crisis. Similarly, in order to protect the cooperation with Arab states; the EU did not hesitate to criticize the Israeli policies against the Palestinian people. Therefore, Israel has rejected the EU's position as a credible actor in the peace process. Due to the steps towards the peace process at the beginning of 1990s and the decrease of the Turkish-Arab relations in trade, Turkey was able to enhance its cooperation in several sectors especially in military and economics with Israel. In addition to their cooperation, their realpolitik and security understanding has facilitated their closer relations. Thus, it is not reasonable to ignore the importance of internal dynamics while comparing the approaches of the EU and Turkey towards the MEPP and Israel.

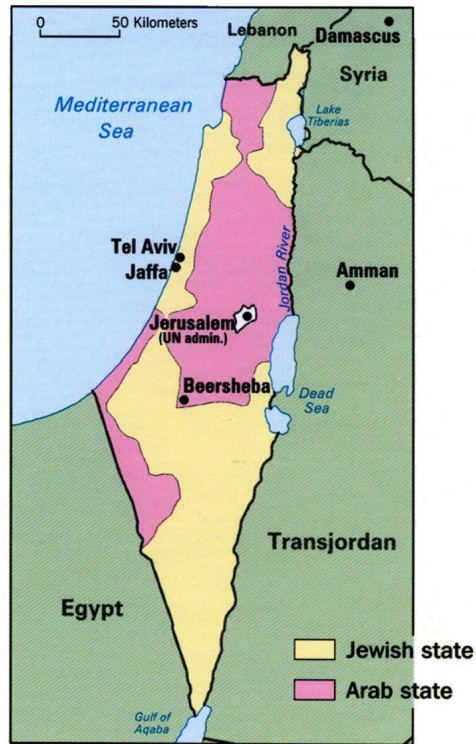
Turkey's good relations with Israel and Palestine would lead Turkey to become a principle mediator in the MEPP. Since Turkey's capabilities are limited in the region,

Turkey as a predominantly Muslim populated, liberal and secular state would play a leading role in the MEPP and thus would contribute to the effectiveness of the EU. One of the preconditions of that is the continuation of the balanced policy of Turkey towards Israel and Palestine.

In conclusion, although the EU has paid more attention to the MEPP, its effectiveness is limited due to the suspicions of Israel against the EU and the dominance of the US in the region. During the process, the role of EU has been transformed from declaration to the involvement in the Quartet group. Turkey's good bilateral relations with Israel and Palestine as well as its willingness for the promotion of peace in the region require more involvement of Turkey in the peace process. In this context, Turkey within the EU would contribute the effectiveness of European Foreign policy in general and the MEPP in particular.

Appendix:

Map1: the UN partition Plan of 1947



Map 2: Israel between 1949-1967



Map 3: Israel and Occupied Territories Since June 1967



Source available at: www.globalsecurity.org/.../images/israel04.jpg

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