

# European Political Cooperation

The Development of a Common Stance in the Middle East

# Abstract

In order to attain an understanding of the emerging of a collective foreign policy in Europe, the thesis sheds light over the Arab-Israeli conflict and how the interlocked crises of the 1970s in the Middle East affected the evolving of a European common position in the region.

The study is based on realist assumptions and uses the theory about states cooperating as a strategy of balancing global influence, to explain why the European countries choose to cooperate in foreign policy matters. In this study the European Community (EC) attempts to counterbalance the global influence will be seen in relation to the United States that here is interpreted as the most influential actor on the international scene.

By presenting the crisis in the Middle East during the 1970s and how the European Political Cooperation (EPC) reacted and responded to these in form of joint actions and statements, the thesis reveals the significance of the region for the development of EPC in its formative years. The thesis also demonstrates how transatlantic disagreement during the time spurred the European countries to increase their coordination of foreign policy and thus the strained Euro-American relations are as well a driving force behind the evolution of a European common stance in the Middle East.

*Keywords:* European Political Cooperation, Middle East, United States, Arab-Israeli Conflict, Influence

*Words:* 10207

# List of Abbreviations

AOPEC – Arab Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries  
CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy  
CSCE – Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe  
EC – European Community  
EPC – European Political Cooperation  
EU – European Union  
MEPP – Middle East Peace Process  
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization  
UN – United Nations  
US – United States  
WW2 – World War Two

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# 1 Introduction

Ever since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 there has been an underlying ambition of creating a political community. What originally was a project of strictly economic integration eventually moved more and more towards cooperation with foreign policy objectives and an increasing desire to speak with one voice in international affairs. Common foreign policy had been discussed since the 1950s but there were no formal coordination mechanisms until 1970 when the first step toward a political union was taken as the European Political Cooperation (EPC) was founded (Smith 2008:4).

France who took a prominent role and was one of the leading countries in the process of developing EPC, was a spokesman for the importance of coordinating the Community policy on external relations and international events and crises, not least the intensifying Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East (Ginsberg 2001:109). The fact that the by then six members of the European Community (EC) held different positions regarding the Six Day War of June 1967 led to the establishment of the EPC three years later since the member states realised that there was a need of discussing their policies regarding this kind of crisis and accordingly create a stable forum where the countries could confer their views on foreign topics. The Arab-Israeli conflict has drawn European attention ever since the first EPC meetings in 1970 and is thus one of the first foreign policy initiatives of the European Union (EU) (Smith 2004:116).

Given the geographic proximity, the colonial legacies and the strategic and commercial concerns, the Middle East was identified as an area ripe for the member states' coordination of foreign policy. The EPC work on the issues in the Middle East were ways of proving consensus, coin collective European interests in the region but also of formalizing a European foreign policy independent of Washington. The French wanted to showcase the new EPC as a forum for a new "active Europe" who from now on would be a political contributor and side by side the United States become influential in the international arena (Ginsberg 2001:109-110).

Today, 27 European countries coordinate their policy on external relations and international issues in EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) but this was not self-evident in the early stage of the EPC when the members were still unfamiliar and inexperienced to cooperate on foreign issues. What has the existence of a dynamic adjacent conflict region such as the Middle East meant for the evolving of EPC? How have the events of the 1970s in the Middle East affected the development of the collective foreign policy of the European Community? This thesis aims to elaborate the significance of the Middle East and its crises for the evolution of EPC during its formative years by analysing how the

events in the region created new impetus towards foreign policy cooperation among member states of the Community.

## 1.1 Question and Purpose

The thesis intends to examine the import of the Middle East and the crises in the region for the development of the European Political Cooperation and how the region was a key area for the EC's collective foreign policy in its formative years. In this study the focus lies on the first ten years of EPC and why and how the EC member states gradually increased their cooperation in foreign policy correspondingly to the events of the Middle East. The aim is to explain the development of EPC with the crises in the Middle East as a driving force behind the coordination of foreign and security issues. Thus the questions intended to be answered are the following:

- What significance did the Middle East and its crises have for the evolving of EPC in its formative years?
- How can we understand and explain the importance of the Middle East as an adjacent conflict region for the development of a collective European foreign policy during the 1970s?

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

In order to explain the development of EPC, an understanding of why the member states even choose to cooperate in foreign matters is required. There are a large number of theories explaining European integration and why countries cooperate; this is something the thesis has to relate to before pursuing with the rest of the study. By connecting on to an existing theory the research renders possible the study to theoretical generalization (Teorell – Svensson 2007:44). The thesis is a theory consuming study in which the theory will explain the case in focus. The analysis will be structured and the question answered in reference to the chosen theoretical framework (Esaiasson 2007:121-122).

The study is based on rational assumptions about cooperation between states. World politics reflect states' self-interest and their pursuit of power. States are assumed to be rational and to know their interests and thereby they are able to formulate preferences, desired outcomes and means and strategies to achieve these outcomes (Goldmann et al. 1997:237-238).

Maria Strömvik has made a study about the development of the EU's collective foreign policy and in her dissertation she comes to the conclusion that the most explainable reason behind the development of EU's collective foreign policy is the changing desire for global influence that has figured as a driving force (Strömvik 2005). Based on the theory in Strömvik's dissertation, this thesis

will use the theory about cooperation as a strategy of balancing global influence, where the EPC will be analysed as means of increasing the ability of the EC to influence events and outcomes in the international arena. The attempt to augment the global influence will be seen in relation to the most influential actor, which in this study will be interpreted as the United States (Strömvik 2005:48-49). As mentioned above, the geostrategic aspect of the Middle East has throughout history been important and during the Cold War the US, trying to contain communism, increased its influence in the region. The US has ever since maintained its great deal of power and influence as a major international actor in the Middle East (Hudson 2005:285-286). Therefore the chosen theory is fruitful to apply on this case study, where thus the development of a European collective foreign policy will be analysed as reactions and responses to the events in the Middle East as well as the influence of the US in the region.

## 1.3 Method

The method chosen in the thesis is a qualitative case study where the phenomenon of European collective foreign policy is intended to be explained by the impact that the events in the Middle East have had on it (Lundquist 1993:104). The aim is accordingly to illustrate and cover a causal relation between the Middle East and the development of EPC (Teorell - Svensson 2007:82). Given the chosen theory, the US and its role as an influential actor in the Middle East, has to be taken into account when analysing the events in the region. Thence, to attain an understanding of the evolving common foreign policy of the EC, focus in this thesis lies on the Middle East and its crises on one hand, and the EC aspiration to counterbalance the US influence on the other hand. The research will be based on the development of a European collective foreign policy during the 1970s and how the progress of EPC can be connected to and explained by the happenings in the Middle East at the time. In the thesis, the crises of the Arab-Israeli conflict will be presented to further examine how the EPC reacted and responded to these events by looking into the actions taken of the EC member states and the declarations and statements published on these issues. Moreover, the relation between the EC and the US will be presented in order to understand and explain how this affected the progress of a European common stand in the Middle East. With these two approaches, conclusions can be drawn on the impact of the Middle East on the development of the collective foreign policy in Europe.

### 1.3.1 Limitations

The research commences in late 1960s when the first significant conflict with decisive consequences occurred in the Middle East and concludes with the Venice Declaration in 1980 when the EPC achieved its first fundamental European common stance in the Middle East. Thus, the study will be limited to the first ten



years of the EPC's existence since this is the period of critical formative years of EPC evolution and the impetus behind the activities and progress are therefore of great interest.

The study of events in the Middle East will be focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict which gave rise to the Palestinian issue that the EPC embraced. Moreover, it is a conflict that yielded to other connecting crises in the region. In addition, the Arab-Israeli conflict is what mostly attracted the attention of EPC at the time. Certainly other important events occurred in the Middle East during the 1970s; unfortunately due to lack of space the events that are unrelated to the Arab-Israeli conflict will not be presented. The thesis is merely concentrated on the events and issues that have been crucial for the EPC to respond.

Furthermore, the thesis will only mention the EPC declarations and statements that have been decisive in the progress of creating a united position in the Middle East or those that demonstrate the EPC strive of acting internationally and counterbalancing the US influence in the region.

### 1.3.2 Definition of concepts

It is important to establish an understanding of what some of the key terms used in the thesis are taken to mean.

- **Middle East:**

This is a term of which its signification differs from case to case. There are divergences over the extension of the region; some use the cultural religious notion while others use the strictly geographical one. The concept used here will not cover the North African countries. In this thesis the Middle East consists of: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, the countries in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf area and also the non-Arab countries Iran, Israel and Turkey.

- **Common foreign policy:**

In this study the concept comprises all the political activities as well as attitudes towards international events or issues and states that are geographically outside the European Community respectively the European Union.

## 2 The European Community and its external relations

### 2.1 Collective foreign policy

Emerging as a project of economic integration, the European Community<sup>1</sup> (EC) did not include foreign relations objectives. The Rome Treaty that established the EC in 1957 does not contain goals on EC engaging on the international stage only that it can engage in external economic relations. However, with the enlargement of the community and the gradual evolution of a more political European integration, EC articulated foreign policy interests emerged increasingly. The interests were vague and general but nevertheless an important step towards a community that wants to engage internationally. Once common foreign policy objectives were articulated, the commonly accepted goals had been identified and thereof attempts of a system for mobilizing resources were necessary to fulfil the goals (Smith 2003:9-10).

#### 2.1.1 European Political Cooperation

In 1970 The European Political Cooperation (EPC) was created as a forum for coordinating the member states' foreign policy based on intergovernmental cooperation (Peterson 2008:203). This was the first step towards a political union.<sup>2</sup> It began as a separated forum, excluded from the Community institutions, which relied on the member states' commitment and particularly the crucial role of the presidency. The EPC procedures were designed for, maintained by and developed by the member states (Edwards 2005:51-52). The EPC was based on a private agreement among Foreign Ministries organizing regular meetings and thus it had no legal or formal status.<sup>3</sup> The movement of the EPC depended on events outside the EC instead of being generated from within the system. This was one of

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<sup>1</sup> The proper name is European Economic Community

<sup>2</sup> The Maastricht Treaty that entered into force in 1993, created the European Union composed of three pillars and also led to the transformation of EPC into Common Foreign and Security Policy ([www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu))

<sup>3</sup> With the entering into force of The Single European Act in 1987, the EPC became a treaty-based mechanism and received formal and legal standing (Peterson 2008:203)

the criticisms along with being called a private club operated by diplomats for diplomats (Nuttall 1992:11-12). However, the EPC gradually became more active rather than merely reactive. This will be elaborated further on in the thesis.

## 2.2 Europe & the Middle East – historical background

Dating back to the birth of Christianity, Europe and the Middle East have been intimately connected. The two regions became even more linked in the twentieth century when the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War spurred European great powers to take over the Arab World. That is when the era of European imperialism in the Middle East began, represented entirely by French and British endeavour (Hollis 2005:310). The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 split the Middle East region to League of Nations mandates of which Syria and Lebanon became French whereas Palestine and Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) became under British rule (Faure – Prost 2008:30). The European imperialism was concluded after the Second World War nevertheless the legacy of this period informs us about the significance of the Middle East for Europe and their contemporary history together. Besides the mark that the French and British left on their colonies and protectorates, they are held responsible for devising the lines on the map that shaped the political geography of the Middle East, as it is today (Hollis 2005:310).

After the end of the WW2 European influence in the Middle East diminished while the United States increased its power and influence in the region which gradually became a playing board for the Cold War and the two superpowers. Europe was part of the Western camp and came in the shadow of the dominated motif of the period which was the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union (Hollis 2005:308,314). Apart from the Cold War, the aftermath of WW2 is marked by the successive crises that have rocked the Middle East and whose echo affects Europe. The essential reason behind the explosive situation in the Middle East is the Arab-Israeli conflict that intensified after the creation of the state Israel in 1948. Given the geographic proximity, oil dependence and security needs, the Arab-Israeli conflict has a direct implication on Europe. Not to mention the historical role played by France and Great Britain who moreover were involved in the establishment of a Jewish state vis-à-vis an Arabic state. The Middle East and the evolution of its events are thus of great importance for the European countries that have tried to harmonize their different viewpoints regarding these events. Though, this has not always been easy since the EU member states have diverging interests and those in the Mediterranean area are more directly concerned by the conflicts than those in the north (Agate – Imperiali 1984:1).

## 2.3 The transatlantic relations

The Euro-American relationship has always been characterised by the economic ties as much as the political dimension. In the post-war period Western Europe's economic and physical security was provided by the EC together with NATO that was mastered by the Americans. Post-war economic integration in Europe, Germany's reconciliation with its neighbours and not least containing communism were of great concern to the US who solved these issues through the Marshall Plan. Therefore the general perception was for a long time that the US was the patron and the EC the client. However, as the EC developed and became more independent the political-security aspects of the transatlantic relations became more complex. By projecting its own foreign policy interests in the world, the EC developed an international presence that affected non-members' foreign policy, potentially the American as well (Ginsberg 2001:183-184).

Traditionally the US has held a positive attitude towards the European integration, seen as a project of stabilizing and energizing force. Although due to the development of an enhanced European foreign policy and the economic and increasingly diplomatic power that EU is today, it has during the past 40 years also been seen as a possible source of risk and danger (Smith 2009:606). According to the chosen realist framework, the US is operating in a structural anarchy and by those means it has to be aware of counterbalancing efforts despite the fact that the US it is a superpower (Heurlin 2007:134). From late 1960s, the increasingly involvement of Europe in the Middle East raised tensions in the transatlantic relationship. In particular, the EC has come to grow strong political positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict which have sometimes placed the Europe at odds with the US (Britz – Hallenberg 2009:5). This will be elaborated further on in the thesis where the EC statements and its disagreement with the US regarding the events in the Middle East will be elucidated.

## 3 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theory about balancing global influence will be elaborated as an explanation on why the European countries cooperate in foreign policy matters. The theory gives the perspective that countries choose to cooperate since acting collectively is more powerful and common actions resonates more internationally than if each state acts separately. This section also clarifies how the theory will be used in order to explain EPC and the EC member states developing a common stance in the Middle East and furthermore how it can be applied in the context of EC wanting to influence the events and outcomes in the Middle East.

### 3.1 Cooperation as a strategy of balancing global influence

As mentioned earlier, the thesis is based on realist assumptions and thereby the upcoming theories are rooted in the realist perspective. The collective EU foreign policy represents a least likely case according to realists since they generally are sceptical about states' will of cooperating internationally. Given the assumption about world anarchy, survival is the prime motive for states and the maintenance of their sovereignty. However, realists have been forced to give explanations to phenomena such as the EPC and the exception to the statements above would be that some states may cooperate with other states if they seek to achieve goals that they value more than survival (Andreatta 2005:25). A goal of that kind can be the desire to balance power.

According to the balance of power thesis states form alliances to protect themselves from other stronger states who can pose a threat with their superior resources. If the allied states do not prevent the stronger powers from dominating, they risk their survival. Therefore the hegemon, or potential hegemon, has to be hampered from becoming too strong. Stephen Walt argues that states prefer the safer strategy which is to join alliances with the weaker states rather than the dominating power, since in the latter case the new member gets little influence within the alliance besides getting easily dominated and vulnerable to the whims of the strongest partner. While, by joining the weaker side you don't get run over and the less strong powers need for assistance and thereby the influence of the new member increases and together the allied states can counterbalance the hegemon or the dominating state (Walt 1987:18-19). The power of balance thesis generates different types of power and in this thesis the influence over events and outcomes will be used as the type of power that a group of states are expected wanting to balance.

Outside influences such as international events and other actor's behaviour are often cited as reasons explaining cooperation among EU member states. The United States and their influence in world politics, not least the US policy in the Middle East, have also been cited as general motivation behind the increased cooperation in foreign issues. The CFSP allow the EU member states to express differences with the US and to be heard internationally when they can act and speak as a union (Smith 2004:97-98). This point of view is advocated by Maria Strömvik who asserts the changing desire for global influence as the driving force behind CFSP. By these means the EU is assumed wanting to enhance its power by increasing its influence and ability to act on the international arena. Thus, Strömvik uses the conception of "power over events and outcomes" (Strömvik 2005:47). Jeffrey Hart has done three measurements of power where power is observed as control over resources, control over actors and control over the events and outcomes. In international politics, the third one is the best approach to measure power according to Hart. In the context of interdependence and collective action, Hart claims that the control over events and outcomes is very useful for measuring power (Hart 1976:302). With this notion of power-balance the power of EC<sup>4</sup> will be measured as the ability of EC to influence events in its external environment. Besides seeking to maximize power strictly materialistically, states are inclined to maximize their ability to change outcomes and their influence towards the international system or all the other actors in the system, such as the superpowers. The desire of EC to balance global influence is seen in relation to the actor in the international system that has the greatest ability to influence outcomes and events on the international arena, which here is interpreted as the United States. The cooperation of EC member states in EPC should thus be seen as an attempt to increase the collective ability to influence events and outcomes that the US also wants to influence. More precisely, in the case of this thesis, the events and outcomes in the Middle East and how EC wants to balance the US influence in that region (Strömvik 2005:47-49).

## 3.2 Influence over the events and outcomes in the Middle East

One of the key sources of foreign policy activities are external stimuli. To understand and explain EPC actions we have to know the inputs stimulating the European foreign policy system (Ginsberg 2001:26). External stimuli are an important factor to the development of the EC as an international actor. By representing and defending collective interests and values EC can act abroad and respond to the external stimuli as one unit (Ginsberg 1997:15). In this thesis the events in the Middle East will be seen as the type of external stimuli that

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<sup>4</sup> In the context of the thesis it will be applied on the EC since the EU did not exist yet

contributed to the phenomenon of EC member states coming together and cooperate in foreign issues.

Being situated at the heart of the old world, within the same distance from Paris, Beijing, Singapore and Johannesburg the geographical location of the Middle East has always been significant. During the Cold War the region served as a board game for the two superpowers, in particular it was strategically important for the Americans to encompass the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US remained as the only superpower known for its interests and great influence in the Middle East (Amin 2004:44). Given the geographic proximity and the historical ties between the latter and Europe, the stability and future of the Middle East has always been significant for the EU. Therefore it is of value to study how the Middle East evoked incentives to new actions of the collective European foreign policy during its incipient years in the 1970s. Since the Middle East is an area where the United States is the dominating international actor, it is also fruitful for applying the thesis of balancing global influence. The desire of EC member states to increase their influence in the Middle East conduce them to coordinate their foreign policy which is vital in order for the EC to be perceived as an international actor. The more the Community acts internationally the more it affects non-member foreign policies, which in turn increases their demand on EC to act. Instead of acting separately on their own, members perceive that when they act together as a bloc, the voice of one resonates more and that they carry more weight and impact on the states with close ties to the EC, such as the Middle Eastern countries (Ginsberg 2001:27).

The significance of the Middle East for the development of the EPC and the collective foreign policy will be analyzed in two ways in this study. On one hand the US dominance and the periods of transatlantic disunity will be interpreted as a reason for the EC member states to coordinate their foreign policy to increase EC's influence in the Middle East. On the other hand, the EC declarations and statements regarding the Middle East will be interpreted as signs of not only EC attempt to counterbalance the US, but also signs of the impact of the events in themselves and the pressure and impetus coming from the region in itself.

The disunity approach implies that when there are disagreements between the balancing states and the most influential actor regarding the latter's policy, a collective action by the balancing states is expected in order to increase their influence. Even if the most influential actor is a friend or ally, like in this case between the US and EC, the diverging views between the two parts should lead to intensified cooperation among the balancing states due to the perceived need of coming together and influence the events and outcomes in "their way" (Strömvik 2005:143). Thus, we may assume that when the EC and the US have disagreed over how to manage important events in the Middle East this has resulted in development of the foreign policy cooperation within the Community. By analysing the tendency of new EPC actions whenever there is a crisis in the Middle East in combination with disunity between the US and the EC over events and policy in the region, we can draw conclusions about what significance the region has had for the development of European collective foreign policy.

# 4 Analysing ten years of European Political Cooperation

In this chapter the Arab-Israel conflict and the connecting crises in the Middle East will be introduced in order to demonstrate the reactions and responses of the EC to these events. The activities of EPC and their Joint actions will be presented and additionally the transatlantic quarrels will be elaborated with the purpose of explaining the impetus behind the development of the EPC and the creation of a common stance in the Middle East.

## 4.1 The Creation of EPC

“I felt ashamed at the Rome summit; just as the war was on the point of breaking out, we could not even agree to talk about it..” – The German Chancellor Kiesinger (quoted in Dosenrode - Stubkjær 2002:65)

When the Six Day War<sup>5</sup> broke out in June 1967 the EC collective foreign policy was non-existent. The six EC members had diverging views on the Arab-Israeli conflict and their national interests were too different to reconcile so at the Rome Summit, shortly before the outbreak of the war, no attempts were made to coordinate their positions. Afterwards, the Community members' national foreign policies were shown through their way of reacting to the war. France that initially had been pro-Israel gave the Arabs her full support and condemned Israel. Italy did likewise. Germany and the Netherlands gave Israel strong support and Belgium tried to find recourse in UN. This war clearly demonstrated the impotence of the EC members to coordinate their foreign policy and the fact that they could not come together in such a vital question became a stimulus to the evolving of a European foreign policy (Dosenrode - Stubkjær 2002:65).

In October 1970, the Foreign Ministers of the Six presented the Luxembourg Report<sup>6</sup> which was the starting point for the EPC. The Report comprised the need for political unification among the members and their growing responsibilities in

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<sup>5</sup> The conflict was between Israel and its neighbouring states Egypt, Syria and Jordan and ended with Israel gaining control over important land such as the Gaza strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Thus, the results of the war affected the region's geopolitics up to this day (Smith 2005:224-225)

<sup>6</sup> Also known as the Davignon Report of 1970



the rest of the world as the two key principles (Strömvik 2005:90). Barely one month after, the Six met for the first time in the framework of EPC and the two main topics were the CSCE and the Middle East, which was to dominate the EPC councils the years to come. France was determined to strengthen the support for the Arab cause among its partners and to achieve convergence of policy in the Middle East, where there were problems on which the EPC could be effective according to the French. Additionally, if such a movement could arrive, it would assert European independence of American policy, which in French eyes could be a potential merit of EPC (Nuttall 1992:55-56)

The national positions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict were too differing, although beginning to shift, for a joint paper to be published. Agreement was not easy, however in 1971 the Schumann Document was created but agreed to never be made public. The document was consistent with the UN Resolution 242<sup>7</sup> in which the Palestinians were referred to as “refugees”. The Six were not ready to go beyond this and thereby kept to the UN formulations instead of a publicly agreed document as a point of reference (Nuttall 1992:68).

## 4.2 The October War

The October War was launched on 5 October 1973 by Egypt and Syria who attacked Israeli forces in the Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula, land that was captured and occupied by Israel since the Six-day War in 1967. The Syrians were stopped by the Israeli forces in the Golan Heights but the Egyptians gave tougher resistance and held out in pockets in the Sinai. Nevertheless, technically Israel won the war against Egypt even though the latter left forces in the Sinai. This created a situation that brought on the future negotiations and intervention of Henry Kissinger, the United States Secretary of State (Smith 2005:227-228).

Just like in 1967 the EC members, that now were nine, adopted divergent positions during the days following the outbreak of the war. The immediate reactions to the war did not come from EPC but from its members. The positions of the member states remained unchanged basically. France continued supporting the Arab-side and was to varying degrees stood by Italy and Britain. Holland and Germany on the contrary, found this unacceptable and took up their pro-Israel stand, holding Egypt and Syria responsible for the aggressions (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:134). On 13 October, the Nine finally issued an official statement calling for ceasefire and negotiations based on the UN Resolution 242. It was under pressure from the French and the British that this effort to overcome the divisions occurred (Nuttall 1992:94). However, the situation evolved rapidly and the aftermath of the war made the EC members realise that observing the course of the conflict as passive spectators was not enough.

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<sup>7</sup> Adopted by the Security Council in 1967 (Nuttall 1992:69)

The Arab countries made an attempt to use oil as a weapon and on 17 October the Arab Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (AOPEC) declared an oil embargo against the Western countries supporting Israel in the October War. The embargo was to increase the price of oil and do cutbacks in oil production and delivered a profound shock to the developed economies (Luciani 2005:88-89). For example, the Gulf States warned they would more than double the price if Israel did not return to its pre-1967 frontiers and the Palestinian right to self-determination was not respected. The AOPEC made a classification and distinction between friendly, neutral and hostile countries. The French and British's supplies were untouched since they were friends. The US and Netherlands were enemies and suffered a total embargo. The rest of the EC members got a cutback of the monthly 5-per-cent reduction (Nuttall 1992:94). This raised the question about European "neutrality" in the Arab-Israeli conflict and made the EC members realise that each has to accept the consequences of their position. The oil embargo was unexpected and took the western countries by surprise. In particular it revealed how the European countries had become dependent on Middle Eastern oil (Marsh – Mackenstein 2005:38). The Arab expressed their demand on Europe to clarify its own positions regarding the conflict which they should attempt to put an end to. To make its voice heard effectively, the EC should conciliate its declared ambitions with some real actions. It was also required that the member states should in a positive way contribute to the framing of a peace plan (Khader 1984:165).

#### 4.2.1 The Brussels Declaration of 6 November

At a press conference on 31 October, the French President Pompidou urged the Nine to show their capacity of contribution to the settlement of world problems. One week after, the Foreign Ministers met and adopted the Brussels Declaration of 6 November which is a joint statement in which they define the principles that they believe should form the basis of a Middle-East peace agreement. The declaration demonstrated the European plan for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and urged for a just and lasting peace through negotiations within the UN framework (Khader 1984:165). The following points are what the Community members declared the peace agreement should particularly be based on:

- I. the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force;
  - II. the need for Israel to end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967;
  - III. respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;
  - IV. recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.”
- (The Brussels Declaration of 1973)

The declaration brought up sensitive topics such as the formal recognition of Palestinian rights which was the first time the EC raised the rights of the Palestinian refugees. The rebuke on what Israel should do and not do along with the emphasis on UN as the forum for negotiations, rather than the Geneva Conference represented by US and Soviet, were statements that clearly demonstrated on which side the EC was. Compared to the Schumann document of 1971, this declaration moved closer to the Arab position and indicated a step forward (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:134-135). This was a new and important movement in the process leading to a Europe with a common attitude towards international crises. The Netherlands was the one adjusting the most in the Middle East, with regard to the departure from their national policy. The quest (pushed forward by the French and British) for acting collectively and respond to conflicts with one voice became incentives for the Dutch and Germans to leave behind their proper positions to step in with the Nine (Smith 2004:118). Indeed, shortly after the Declaration, the OAPEC ministers expressed their satisfaction and decided to not continue with their oil cutback to the Community. The joint statement certainly raised critical reactions as well, not just by Israelis and Americans but also within Europe. Nevertheless, even the most hesitant governments were pleased that that EC finally had managed a first concrete result of the political cooperation process (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:135). It was an achievement to overcome the internal disagreement of the Community and to accomplish a joint statement on such an acute foreign policy issue. The originality of the declaration lay more in the affirmation of the role of EC on the international scene than the affirmation of Palestinian rights (Khader 1984:166).

Thus, the October War and its aftermath had an impact on the development of EPC which made the EC members come one step closer to a common stance in the Middle East. However, to be in line with the chosen theory the aforementioned events in themselves were not the sole impetus; an important factor that must be considered is the transatlantic disunity at the time.

### 4.3 Transatlantic Disunity

The rising of EC as an economic and political entity made the transatlantic relations more problematic. Ever since the end of the WW2 the US were responsible for the security of Europe and provided them large amount of money in order for the Europeans to reconstruct and develop their economies. But by the end of the 1960s the US started to face economic difficulties with the enormous price of upholding its hegemonic position. The Nixon Administration wanted to reduce the budget of the huge military expenditures abroad so the Mansfield amendment sought to reduce the US military presence in Europe (Faure – Prost 2008:99-101). Though, the amendment was overruled and resulted instead in a pressure on the European allies to take a share of the costs of its security. The Europeans had taken advantage of the American umbrella and become an economic rival and it was now time for them to pay. Henceforward the US

presence in Europe could no longer be taken for granted and the Europeans should share the burden of their own defence (Faure – Prost 2008:101). This suggestion was not very well received by the Community members who claimed they were uninformed and unprepared to the American plan. In addition, the EC member states felt excluded by the Americans who in the SALT I treaty had negotiated with the Soviet Union about ballistic missiles, without the other NATO member, most surprisingly the two nuclear powers France and Britain. The détente and improved relations between the superpowers were at the expense of the transatlantic ones and the EC perceived the American actions as prioritising the relations with Soviet over the relations within the alliance (Strömvik 2005:149).

This feeling consisted for a long time and the early years of 1970s was a period of increasingly strained transatlantic relations. It was in this context that Henry Kissinger proclaimed in April 1973 the launching of the “Year of Europe” intended to redefine and renegotiate the transatlantic relations (Faure – Prost 2008:101). The “Year of Europe”-speech originated in the American call for a new Atlantic charter and set up an Agenda for the future of the relations regarding economics, defence and diplomacy in an attempt to preserve the political leadership of the transatlantic alliance for the United States. The purpose was to achieve linkage and once more, the European support and share of the effort for the common defence was invoked from the US that expected reciprocity from its allies (Nuttall 1992:85).

However, the EC members were resented by the speech in which Kissinger said that the US had global interests and responsibilities whereas their European allies had regional ones. Furthermore he claimed that diplomacy is essentially being conducted by traditional nation-state. These statements clearly revealed how the American saw the new Europe and upset the Community members who meant that the pride of their nation-states as well as the pride of the emerging European political persona was hurt (Strömvik 2005:150).

Thus the relations were already tense between the US and EC which to a large extent also stemmed from the disagreements over how to handle events in the Middle East. The October War made it even worse.

#### 4.3.1 In the wake of the October War

The Europeans, already feeling insulted by the “Year of Europe”-speech a couple of months earlier, became even more irritated about the US attitude in the October War and their strategies towards the conflict. They perceived the US as obsessed by the Soviet threat which they thought were overestimated in the Middle East. They also questioned the hopeless wholehearted American support for Israel. The US on the other hand, claimed that the EC positions were unhelpful and principally based on pleasing the Arab oil producers at the expense of supporting Israel (Allen – Smith 1984:188). Moreover, the Americans were surprised and dismayed by the refusal of the EC members to allow the Americans use NATO military bases for flying resupply and war material to Israel (Faure – Prost 2008:101, 117).

Meanwhile, the US and the Soviet Union started to negotiate on the Arab-Israeli issue of the October War, and in the Geneva Conference which was limited to the parties of the conflict besides themselves; they sought to handle the situation on their way. The Europeans were indignant over that the Americans and Soviets appeared to move towards a solution of the conflict of which they were being excluded. Besides, this was a region with issues that they considered themselves to have traditional ties with. President Pompidou, who saw the danger of this situation, stressed the importance of the Nine to show that they too could contribute to the solution of this conflict (Nuttall 1992:94). Indeed they did, the abovementioned Brussels Declaration of 6 November was their answer. For the Americans, the Declaration was seen as a direct challenge to their diplomatic efforts which it was countering in every respect. Israel condemned the Declaration saying it gave little hope of actually influencing events. For the Israelis, the purpose of the EC statements were perceived as gaining Arab support and thereby oil for Europe rather than Peace for the Middle East (Nuttall 1992:95; Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:135).

## 4.4 The Copenhagen Summit

The 14-15 December in 1973 the EC Heads of State and Government met in Copenhagen to have a summit in which the Nine tried to build an active element into what initially was a reactive policy statement. The Nine reiterated and confirmed the political line that had been taken in the Brussels Declaration of 6 November. Although, in a search to maintain a certain balance between the pressure on Israel to evacuate the occupied territories and also the request of the Arabs to recognise Israel's existence and security, the following statement was added (Khader 1984:166):

“The requirements of security and sovereignty can be met through the conclusion of peace agreements including, amongst other arrangements, international guarantees and the establishment of demilitarised zones.” (quoted in Khader 1984:166)

This demonstrates that the disagreement with the US and critics from Israel affected the EC position to the extent that it resulted in this more moderate statement, even if still more biased toward the Arab side. The events in the Middle East were complex issues and the EC members had to find the lowest common denominator in order to act in concert.

The unexpected effect of the Brussels Declaration was the unannounced arrival of a delegation of Arab League foreign ministers who showed up at the Copenhagen Summit with a proposal of cooperation. They were responding to the declaration which was seen as an indication for collective pro-Arab stance. The EC was unwilling to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict since it would be an explosive subject, internally and internationally, but they agreed to discuss

economic issues (Smith 2003:75). The Arab Ministers proposed the initiation of a Euro-Arab dialogue and demanded an immediate reply. The EC members' initial response was positive considering that cooperation with the oil producers placed firmly in the discussions of energy policy which was an intense subject ever since the energy crisis. Nevertheless, the Community members were cautious due to the anticipated reactions of the US (Strömvik 2005).

The matter was complicated since only two days before, Kissinger had in an attempt to remedy some of the misunderstandings of the "Year of Europe"-speech, called for a reaffirmation of the transatlantic commitment to engage cooperatively in a common enterprise. The Americans had in mind a consumers' cartel under their own leadership which the French opposed to. There was a split among the Nine on this question and the energy dialogue with the Americans was worked out in the Community framework not in EPC. In the end, on the energy policy the Community followed the American line whereas on the Euro-Arab dialogue, which was to be handled in the EPC, the Nine followed the French line (Nuttall 1992:97).

This announcement about the new Euro-Arab friendship was not appreciated in Washington. Thus, not only did the US and EC disagree over how to handle the war and energy policy but also over the relations with the Arab oil-producing states. Besides, the Europeans were criticised for not being able to contribute themselves constructively in the Middle East and therefore the Americans were exacerbated over their meddling in this kind of affairs (Strömvik 2005:152-153).

#### 4.4.1 The Declaration on European Identity

At the Copenhagen Summit, the Nine also presented the "Declaration on European Identity" that they set out in 14 December 1973 as an apparent reaction to the negative American response to their aspiration of acting collectively in international affairs. A document on the European Identity was necessary for the Nine as it was stated that:

"This will enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs. They have decided to define the European Identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind. They have the intention of carrying the work further in the future in the light of the progress made in the construction of a United Europe."  
(Document on European Identity 1973)

This declaration can be interpreted as a reaction to all the shaking events of 1973 but in particular, a direct response to Kissinger's "Year of Europe" announcement. The declaration contains a list of 22 points where the accomplishment and aspirations of the Nine are stated as; for instance to solve the international problems, contribute to world development, the cooperation with

Soviet and to international progress by speaking with a single voice in international organisations such as the UN. The list of the Nine's ambitions throughout the international system was a signal that EC had global interest too, not only regional ones (Strömvik 2005:151). Furthermore, in the declaration the EC ambitions of playing its proper role in the Middle East were emphasized and stated that:

“The Nine intend to preserve their historical links with the countries of the Middle East and to co-operate over the establishment and maintenance of peace, stability and progress in the region.”  
(Document on European Identity 1973)

Most importantly, it stated that the close mutually beneficial ties between the US and the Nine must be preserved and that they “do not conflict with the determination of the Nine to establish themselves as a distinct and original entity.” The constructive dialogue between them was to be maintained and cooperation “on the basis of equality” would be developed (Declaration on European Identity). This indicates that the EC wanted to make itself heard and be taken seriously on the international arena, not least by the Americans who had negative attitudes towards the EC as a growing political entity. The Declaration on European Identity is noteworthy considering it is the first document in which the Nine's collective view on their global interests and strategies are formulated (Strömvik 2005:153).

## 4.5 The Camp David Era

The period following the turbulent year of 1973 was marked by the American suspicions towards the Euro-Arab Dialogue. Even though this special relationship became more economic than political, the anxiety in Washington remained. For the Americans the Arab initiative was an attempt to drive Europe and US apart and making sure that the Europeans took the Arab side in the coming deliberations about the future of the Palestinians (Allen – Smith 1984:189). Kissinger even said: “Europe reasserting its personality was bound to seek to redress the balance of influence with the United States” (quoted in Strömvik 2005:153). To solve the problems, such as the Euro-Arab Dialogue, in the Euro-American relations, the Gymnich formula was established in 1974. It was an agreement whereby the Nine would inform and consult the US on their foreign policy deliberations. This decision improved the transatlantic communication to the extent that it put an end to the openly hostile relations (Strömvik 2005:153).

The basis of transatlantic split had fundamentally changed by the time of Camp David accords from 1977 which became the Carter Presidency's centre piece. The Europeans had become more confident in international affairs and began to identify the nature of their own interests. Ironically they also began to

reciprocate the American irritation over the transatlantic relations that they themselves had expressed in 1973/1974 (Allen – Smith 1984:189).

The Community relations with the Middle East had ever since the first EPC meetings been specially focused on the Israel-Palestine issue and what role the EC could play in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). The EC had gradually developed a policy that clearly was supportive of Palestinian independence. (Britz – Hallenberg 2009:4). Slowly the Nine began to define the meaning of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and since the Brussels Declaration of 1973 the EC position on the Palestinian question had become more coherent. During a UN General Assembly debate in 1975, the Nine declared that the Palestinian people should have the right to “the expression of its national identity” which was reflected as a “homeland” (Khader 1984:170).

#### 4.5.1 The London Declaration of 1977

In June 29 the Nine presented the London Declaration of 1977 which was designed to go a step further by adding the reference to a Palestinian homeland. This supplement put the Palestinian question at the centre of the MEPP and thereby the declaration became one of the turning-points in EPC policy of the region (Nuttall 1992:102,159). Moreover there is another aspect which gives the London Declaration its originality; the statement that the representatives of the Palestinian people should participate in the negotiations. This vexed the Israelis who feared that it would lead to the participation of PLO-leadership (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:138). The declaration also caused a small enragement in the transatlantic relations. In compliance with the Gymnich agreement, the Americans had been informed about the intentions of the Nine to publish a new declaration including the crucial word homeland. Washington that temporarily was following a policy more favourable to the Palestinians, decided to upstage the EC plan by issuing a statement on 27 June which instead referred to the “need for a homeland”. This provoked strong emotions of the Nine since they realised that the European formulation was not as strong as the American. Certainly, a revised text was produced in order to take into account the *need* for a homeland for the Palestinian people (Nuttall 1992:102).

#### 4.5.2 Towards the Venice Declaration

After the London Declaration things evolved rapidly in the Middle East and the Nine were not prepared for the upcoming events. The most striking one was the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s visit in Jerusalem, a trip that further led to the Camp David Agreements in 1978 and the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979. Sadat’s initiative was not well received by the Arabs and thereby Egypt got excluded from the Arab League. For EC this complicated the matters. Egypt, the most important Arab country had recognised the state of Israel which meant that the two of them would negotiate about solving the Palestinian problem in



their own way. The concept of homeland did not appear in any of the Camp David documents. Thus the situation put Europe in a position where it would go ahead with its own stance on the Palestinian issue (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:137-139).

During the Camp David process the Nine kept a low profile and were confined to have the role of political observer since the US explicitly asked them to not interfere in the Middle East affairs and closed the door to wider international involvement. Consequently, the EC was pushed into the background while the US became the only decisive factor, prevailing over the role as exclusive arbiter in the MEPP (Nuttall 1992:159). However, the Nine attempting to react to the events in the Middle East, tried to stick to the London Declaration as much as possible and reiterate the need for a Palestinian homeland at various times. This was partly on account of outside pressure, such as when President Sadat pressed the Nine in 1978 to play a more active role and thereby ease the pressure on himself. Apart from that, the Nine preferred to await the outcome of the Camp David process and therefore made no effort to revise the positions of the London Declaration. When the Camp David agreement finally was concluded on 17 September in 1978, the Nine broke their silence (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:139; Nuttall 1992:160). Two days after, the EC Foreign Ministers published a Declaration in Brussels, emphasising anew the need for all parties concerned to participate in the peace process and expressing their hope that “the outcome of the Camp David Conference will be a further major step on the path to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, and that all parties concerned will find it possible to join in the process to contribute to that end” (quoted in Khader 1984:171).

During the Ford administration the EC relations with the US improved and continued so even after the election of President Carter in 1977. Nevertheless, the year of 1979 turned the transatlantic relations into the worse. A series of overlapping crisis occurred, the US brokering the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty among other things that the Europeans were concerned about (Strömvik 2005:154). The Nine feared that the Americans would preclude a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict so their judgement on the Camp David results was going to depend on whether it encouraged the global settlement or not. When the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed on 26 March 1979 it was a disappointment for the EC members in this respect (Nuttall 1992:160).

The Nine’s lack of enthusiasm for the peace treaty reflected their tendency to distance themselves from US policy. The Nine adopted the Declaration on 18 June 1979 in which they frown on the Israeli and Egyptian efforts and insist on the London Declaration statements but this time in a more offensive manner. After this Declaration the Nine felt that a concrete Middle East peace initiative was necessary and which would complement Camp David but contain new components, such as an unofficial recognition given to the PLO. Besides, the Arab countries stressed the EC to be more active and put forward its own proposals for solving the conflict (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:141). Later in autumn the same year, the Irish EC President O’Kennedy held a speech before the UN General Assembly stating that it was necessary for Resolutions 242 and 338

“to be accepted by all those involved – including the Palestine Liberation Organisation too – as the basis for negotiation of a comprehensive settlement in which all the parties will play their full part” (quoted in Khader 1984:171-172). This was a step forward in the position of the Nine and the first time PLO was mentioned by name (Khader 1984:171-172). Palestinian participation in the negotiations was a forthcoming phrasing and the EC would continue its Middle East policy, separate from American efforts.

## 4.6 The Venice Declaration

In the wake of the Camp David Accord brokered by the US, ten years of collective foreign policy attempts of the Nine culminated in the Venice Declaration, which went further than the US was prepared to go in recognizing the right of the Palestinians to a homeland (George – Bache 2001:397). The EC heads of state and government met in Venice on 13 June 1980 and adopted a fundamental resolution on the Middle East. This Venice Declaration is a milestone in the evolution of a collective European policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and it signalled the aspirations of EC to have greater involvement in the Middle East (Hollis 1997:18) In the Declaration it is written that the Nine base themselves on UN Resolutions and their positions expressed earlier through statements and speeches. In line with the other declarations they recalled the guiding principles of all the states’ right to existence and security, including Israel, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Though, this declaration went further than previous statements on the Palestinian issue with the following added:

“6. A just solution must finally be found to the Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees. The Palestinian people, which is 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.”

“7. The achievement of these objectives requires the involvement and support of all the parties concerned in the peace settlement which the nine are endeavouring to promote in keeping with the principles formulated in the declaration referred to above. These principles apply to all the parties concerned, and thus to the Palestinian people, and to the PLO, which will have to be associated with the negotiations.”  
(Venice Declaration 1980)

The most controversial novelty was the mentioning of PLO which the Nine wanted to include in the negotiations. They also wanted to “make the necessary contacts with all the parties concerned” which therefore would involve the PLO as

well (Venice Declaration 1980). This was deprecated by Israel who accused the EC for dealing with a terrorist organisation. Moreover, the Israelis were agitated about the Nine's statement that unilateral initiatives of changing the status of Jerusalem was unacceptable and that "these settlements, as well as modifications in population and property in the occupied Arab territories, are illegal under international law." (Venice Declaration 1980) When the EC wanted to make a point, it would often draw attention to what is inadmissible according to international law and that is the key to how EC has conducted its Middle East diplomacy (Hollis 1997:18).

The statements and the discussions that the holders of the EC Presidency have held with all the concerned parties have enabled the European countries to have a greater role in the MEPP. They are now acting collectively in the region whereas in the past they were acting as rivals to each other. The Venice Declaration is supposed to demonstrate *Europe's* intentions instead of focusing on the various positions of the EC member states (Hurd 1981:383). Above all, it was a sign that the collective position of the EC diverged from that of the Americans and ever since, the issue of Palestinian statehood remained a key to European collective foreign policy (Smith 2009:597-598). Although, proposing a different solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict than the one in Camp David peace process, was not appreciated by the Carter Administration. In accordance with the Gymnich formula, the Americans were informed about the European plan to publish a new crucial Declaration in Venice which would begin a process divergent of Camp David. The US, Israel and Egypt launched a full-scale campaign to prevent the Europeans from issuing their new statement. The EC member states were put under ruthless diplomatic pressure and their initiative was interpreted as an act of open hostility towards the US (Greilsammer – Weiler 1984:142). The Declaration was perceived as a rejection of the Camp David process of which Carter was the architect of. The presidential elections were looming and Camp David was the main asset for Carter who sought re-election. The President of the EC Council had to calm the anxieties and explain that the Europeans did not wish to oppose Camp David, only to be constructive (Khader 1984:172-173). The pressures on Europe were effective and the EC did not want to end up in a serious crisis with the US, so the references to the Palestinians were toned down and when the Statement was published it was much more moderate than it had been expected. Even if the Venice Declaration was modest in comparison with what the Europeans originally had envisaged, it was still striking enough, as described above (Nuttall 1992:164-165). For the Americans, any European Declaration was suspect, since it increased European independence in relation to American policy in the region (Khader 1984:172). In that respect, the Europeans had thus succeeded with their goal.

Even if the Venice Declaration failed to open a new way towards a settlement of the conflict, the most important is that it still provided a striking example of the valiant initiative of the EC members coming together and showing confidence in a time when a demonstration of that kind was needed. Even though the Venice Declaration was in a different line than US policy, the Europeans were criticised for giving in for American pressure. In fact, no matter how many transatlantic

quarrels, they could not afford to allow the differences to worsen and the EC could not ignore their fundamental dependence on the US for their military security. The essential here is that the EC member states have developed structures for foreign policy cooperation that have enabled them to identify a common stance and express different lines of policy than the American and by those means increased the EC influence in the Middle East (Allen – Smith 1984:190). The Venice Declaration demonstrates not only the accomplishment of European political cooperation but also how Arab pressure and the transatlantic competition of finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict has played a significant role in the outcome of the EC members' coordination of foreign policy.

The Egyptian and Israelis saw the EC as only marginal influential vis-à-vis the US, and the Europeans became the object of symbolic diplomacy rather than a fundamental part to the Middle East peace process. Notwithstanding, it is the act of EC member states cooperating that is of primary significance. For the development of the European collective foreign policy, any form of united action is of some importance for the goals and methods of a European integration. Thus, regardless of the impact of the declarations and statements, it is the achievement of the EC members to have progressed as far as releasing the Venice Declaration that is essential and should be seen as an end in itself (Allen – Smith 1984:192).

After 1980 the transatlantic relations had a couple of ups and downs but overall they improved increasingly. Notwithstanding, the EPC kept on evolving, because once a custom and habit to cooperate in foreign policy issues was established, it was self driven. Besides, once the initial questions regarding the Palestinian rights were solved, this enabled the EC to embark on a long-term program of assistance to the Middle East, political dialogues and a series of joint actions to increase their role in the MEPP. This would not have been possible without the groundwork laid in EPC (Smith 2009:118).

## 5 Conclusions

The main purpose of this study has been to attain an understanding of how the EPC developed from non-existent cooperation in foreign issues to a stable forum where the member states would be accustomed to coordinate their foreign policies. The thesis has shed light on the events in the Middle East during the 1970s in order to demonstrate how these have affected the EPC in its formative years and what impact they had on the development of a European collective foreign policy.

Thus, during the first ten years of the EPC, the Community members gradually developed a united stance on the Arab-Israel conflict and with each statement and declaration the European countries became clearer about what they wanted to achieve. The EC moving towards a political union and a common foreign policy was just a matter of time, but one can assert that it is thanks to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the following crises in the Middle East that the European countries took such a great stride forward in the progress of a collective foreign policy. The Middle East has been significant for the development of EPC partly due to the crisis in themselves that have yielded reasons and need for EPC to react and respond to these. The October War and the following oil embargo are illustrative examples in the thesis. But above all, the region has given the EC a scope to create an identity and carve out an individual position and policy that differs from that of the Americans. In so doing, the Europeans have attempted to counterbalance the US influence in the Middle East by showing their paces.

Moreover, the thesis have presented the transatlantic quarrels during the 1970s and how, whenever there have been disagreement between the EC and US over the MEPP, the Palestinian issue, security or other reasons, this has spurred the EC member states to increase their cooperation. Even when the Euro-American relations have been peaceful, the very dominance of the US as an influential actor has been a driving force behind the EC who wanted to be on an equal footing with the US on the international scene. In the study it is also revealed that the US has in between perceived the EPC progress as a source of potential threat and has therefore not been particularly in fond of EC's collective foreign policy ambitions. Both the US and EC have endeavoured to play an active role in the Middle East which have put them in a competing situation.

The thesis has revealed how the diverse national foreign policies of the EC member states have concurrently with the events in the Middle East merged into common positions. Thus, the goals of the EPC as a collective slowly became part of the national interests as well. The striking example is countries like Netherlands and Germany that along with the crisis in the Middle and the progress of EPC were given incentives to move away from their initial positions towards the Pro-Arab stand in order to step in with the rest of the Community. The release

of the Document on European Identity showed how the EC member states increasingly learned how to define a collective identity of the Community and thereby common values and goals. By acting on these collective positions in form of Joint actions and Statements such as The London and Venice Declarations the EPC demonstrated that a European common foreign policy was born.

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