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**Israel and the European Union's Normative Identity:
Challenges of Diverging Historical Narratives**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the Israeli-EU relations since 2015 when the Israeli government has decided to cooperate further with Eurosceptic governments in the EU to undermine EU policies. This thesis aims to implement historical culture theory to make sense of the recent developments in the Israeli-EU relations and in what manner they challenge the EU's narrative as a normative power. Through a qualitative content analysis of speeches held by Benjamin Netanyahu, Federica Mogherini, and Donald Tusk, the leaders of Israel and the EU at that time frame, the historical and normative narratives of the EU and Israel were extracted. The findings show that Netanyahu and EU leaders use history to legitimize either their policies or set of norms. Additionally, the historical culture of Israel had shifted and diverged from the EU consensus and thereby shares greater similarities with that of Eurosceptic governments in the EU, such as the Visegrád group. The thesis concludes that the transformations in the Israeli historical culture led to the formation of Netanyahu's alliance with Eurosceptic governments, but it did not undermine the EU's normative identity in the international community. Although the EU's normative power did not result in the restart of the Middle Eastern Peace Process, it succeeded in exerting some of its values to Netanyahu's rhetoric and the EU's bilateral agreements with Israel. While the Israeli-EU relations have suffered on a political level, the EU and Israel continue to have close bilateral relations as they hold to their respective historical and normative narratives.

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Introduction

The 2010s have brought many challenges to the European continent. While beginning to recover from a Euro debt crisis, a destabilized Middle East forced a high number of people to flee to Europe, resulting in a refugee crisis that put European cooperation to the test. A couple of years later, the rise of Euroscepticism culminated in Brexit and continued with intense talks between the European Union's institutions and the UK. At the same time frame, Europe's neighbor in the south, Benjamin Netanyahu, was elected for the fourth time as Israel's prime minister. Soon thereafter, this Middle Eastern partner built a coalition that sought to challenge the international consensus and possibly the EU. Connected by a shared history, Israel and the EU have sworn – 'Never Again'. That promise, however, was interpreted differently by the two, paving conflicting paths in healing the trauma of the Holocaust. While Europe chose to pursue peace and justice through international frameworks and charters – Israel's longest-serving prime minister has committed to ending Jewish persecution and Israel's dependency on international support. That year, Netanyahu had the support in his government to follow that commitment with no other centrist party to block his further right-wing policies. What do these recent developments in Israel and Europe mean for their relationship and partnership?

One of the outcomes of the Israeli elections in 2015 is a change in Benjamin Netanyahu's government policy in Europe. Instead of negotiating and communicating with the EU as a single actor, Netanyahu forged new alliances in Europe with governments of the Visegrád¹, Baltic, and Balkan member states to stop certain decisions made by the EU regarding Israel's control over the territories in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Some of the parties comprising these governments were previously not seen as partners for Israel to cooperate with², or that they might even hold antisemitic views³. This new European policy adds another layer to the research questions discussed in this thesis. Why did the Israeli government decide to cooperate with these countries? A possible answer

¹ Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

² Gordon, Neve, and Pardo, Sharon, "Euroscepticism as an Instrument of Foreign Policy", *Middle East Critique* 27, no. 4 (2018): 402. DOI: 10.1080/19436149.2018.1516338.

³ Schlagwein, Felix, "Rising anti-Semitism in Hungary worries Jewish groups", December 17, 2020, Accessed April 22, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/rising-anti-semitism-in-hungary-worries-jewish-groups/a-55978374>.

could lie in the role of historical culture and the transformation of Israeli historical thinking.

This thesis aims to make sense of the EU-Israeli relations and the shifts of Israeli policy in Europe through the prism of history and historical culture. Using that theoretical framework, combined with the theory of *Normative Power Europe*, in the analysis of the speeches held by Netanyahu, Federica Mogherini, and Donald Tusk together and separately – I will attempt to answer the following questions: Why did Netanyahu adopt a more critical narrative regarding the EU? How does the theory of historical culture can explain the shifts in Israeli attitudes towards the EU? And how does this new Israeli narrative impact the EU's identity as a normative power in the international community?

Several academic researchers on the topic have attempted to analyze and theorize the EU-Israeli relations in the past and today under Netanyahu's rule. However, the aspect of history was rarely considered in their analysis. Their focus was mainly political, taking into account theories of international relations or offering political explanations alone to the developments in the Israeli-EU relationship. Nonetheless, these political factors play a major role and are considered in this research, but my view is that the theory of historical culture could unfold an additional layer in the analysis of the EU-Israeli relations. Without understanding and theorizing the role of history in the relations of Israel and the EU, it is more difficult to rationalize Israel's explicit criticism of the EU despite their deep economic and academic partnership. It is almost impossible to understand the EU's normative identity on the international stage without taking into account the history which constructed that identity. I hypothesize that history did not only define each actor's identity, but it has also formed their narrative regarding one another. EU's normative narrative is impacted by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, just as much as it is threatening the national and historical narrative which legitimizes Netanyahu's policies in Israel. Thus, by analyzing Netanyahu's speeches and press conferences held by the EU's leaders one could provide an answer to the thesis' main research question: 'How does historical culture explain the recent developments in the EU-Israeli relations and how do they challenge EU's narrative as a normative power?'

The Historical Background of Israeli-EU Relations

Israel's diplomatic relations with the EU were established in 1957 in its early form – the European Economic Community (EEC)⁴, months before the ratification of the Treaty of Rome. The Israeli political elite was in close contact with their European counterparts and was even considering a full political and economic membership in EEC's early days⁵. About 20 years later, Israel signed a free trade area agreement with the EEC reducing limits on exports of Israeli manufactured goods⁶. In June 2000, came into force Israel's Association Agreement with the EU, bringing it even closer to Europe. In terms of economic and scientific cooperation, Israel is one of the closest non-European partners of the EU⁷.

Politically, however, Israel's relations with the EU in its current and previous forms suffer difficulties. One of the main areas of contention is the conflict of Israel with the Palestinians and especially the issue of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Already back in 1977, the European Community defined settlements as illegal under international law⁸. EU's reactions to the conflict and the issue of Israeli settlements were mostly declarative and they did not result in the European Commission's decisions against the Israeli government. That would change in 2013 when the European Commission had decided to exclude products originating in Israeli settlements outside of the 1967 UN-recognized borders in their free trade agreement with Israel, as well as in the conditions of Israel's membership in Horizon 2020 – EU's expansive scientific research initiative⁹. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be the central challenge of these actors' relations, both between member states within the EU and in the different EU's external relations frameworks and European institutions. One probable conclusion is that the relationship of the EU with Israel is central to the EU's image as a peacebuilding force in the international community and as a normative actor.

⁴ Pardo, Sharon, "Israel and the European Union", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (August 28, 2019): 2, DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1135.

⁵ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 2.

⁶ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 3.

⁷ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 4-5.

⁸ Persson, Anders, *EU Diplomacy and the Israel-Arab Conflict 1967-2019* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 32-33.

⁹ "Official Journal of the European Union", Vol. 60. no. C 205, *EUR-Lex*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, June 29, 2017, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:205:FULL:EN:PDF>

In this chapter, I will explore the different political frameworks in which the EU communicates and interacts with Israel bilaterally and multilaterally. In which the latter, due to design flaws in its structure or due to the complexity of the Middle East, rarely resulted in concrete measures to enforce stability and peace in the region. In recent years, especially since 2015, a shift in the Israeli government's foreign policy with the EU, coordinated by Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was made. This shift in policy is probably not arbitrary considering national and international factors – such as growing attitudes of Euroscepticism among several EU member states and the establishment of Israel's most conservative government to date comprised of only right-wing parties. Both factors are a part of an international context, with the resurfacing of nationalism and populism in Europe¹⁰ and the US.

Barcelona Process, European Neighborhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean

The European Union, since the Treaty on the European Union, sought to establish a common European foreign policy (CSFP), to speak in a united European voice, and become a relevant actor in international affairs. One of the areas in which the European Union focused on in terms of external relations is the Middle East region and the Middle East Peace Process. Already back in October 1973 with the war that led to Europe's oil crisis, the EC¹¹ realized the importance of having a unified European position and a common foreign policy. The Middle Eastern region is an important matter not only in terms of oil export but also in terms of its proximity to Europe, directly affecting European security¹².

Israel joined each of these frameworks and while Israel did get closer to the EU in terms of economic, cultural, and academic cooperation, the multilateral frameworks seeking to encourage regional integration in the Middle East have been disrupted by political tensions. As a consequence, the EU's Middle East Peace Process did not come to fruition and the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians remains to be unsolved.

¹⁰ Henley, Jon, "How populism emerged as an electoral force in Europe", *The Guardian*, November 20, 2018, Accessed April 22, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/how-populism-emerged-as-electoral-force-in-europe>.

¹¹ The European Community

¹² Persson, *EU Diplomacy*, 14-39.

In 1995 the Barcelona Process was initiated in the first attempt to create a framework promoting peace and regional cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. This framework is also known as the EuroMed. The Barcelona declaration document that Israel, among others, signed on, addresses several areas of cooperation between the Mediterranean countries. In this declaration, there is an emphasis on respecting international law, promoting peace and security, developing the rule of law and democracy, and respecting human rights¹³. The goal of this framework was to create a common free trade area that will also lead to political collaboration and greater stability in the region based on a multilateral approach. That same year, Israel signed the EuroMed Association Agreement with the EU replacing its previous trade agreement and making Israel the first non-European member in EU's research programs¹⁴. However, the EuroMed did not lead to a stable region. Political tensions and skepticism among the Arab countries, Israel, and the Palestinians shadowed discussions on other technical matters, such as economic collaboration¹⁵.

In an attempt to bypass these political tensions, the EU initiated another framework – the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The nature of this new framework is bilateral, facilitating negotiations between the European Commission and a non-EU partner in its Eastern and Southern neighborhoods. Israel, the neighbor from the south, signed an action plan with the EU within the ENP in December 2004¹⁶. While of a bilateral nature, the EU emphasized that this framework does not replace the EuroMed and only acts as a parallel platform to create incentives for single members to collaborate based on the ideas and values of the Barcelona Declaration¹⁷. The EU-Israel action plan was defined as an upgrade of the partnership between the two actors and a possibility for Israeli membership in several European Union programs¹⁸. As it is written in the action plan itself, the EU sees this bilateral framework as a continuation of the goals of the Association Agreement Israel signed with the EU back in 1995. It is based on similar values like respect for human rights, international law, and democracy. The goals for this action plan were to deepen

¹³ "Barcelona Declaration", *European Union External Action Service*, Accessed April 17, 2020, https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/euromed/docs/bd_en.pdf.

¹⁴ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 5.

¹⁵ Persson, *EU Diplomacy*, 77-78.

¹⁶ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 8.

¹⁷ Cardwell, Paul James, "EuroMed, European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean: Overlapping Policy Frames in the EU's Governance of the Mediterranean", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no.2 (2011): 227, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02119.x.

¹⁸ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 8-9.

EU-Israeli political cooperation, developing relations further, and increasing Israel's economic integration within the EU¹⁹. Though pulling Israel closer to the EU in terms of economic and academic agreements, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has continued to shadow over the political plane. It was especially operation Cast Lead in 2009, or The Gaza War, that put the high-profile political talks between Israeli and EU officials on hold²⁰.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) as yet another framework for EU's external relations with the Middle East was an initiative by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy back in 2007 and was officially established with the Paris Summit in July 2008. The idea for this framework was to separate controversial political issues from technical projects in the fields of energy and transportation, for example. Some suggested that Sarkozy's approach was based on the theory of neo-functionalism in which economic collaboration will eventually lead to political integration²¹. The UfM, building onto the prospects of EuroMed, facilitates multilateral talks between fifteen Mediterranean states and EU member states, and its aim is "...increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion"²². However, shortly thereafter came criticism from Israel regarding the Arab League's membership in the UfM secretariat, warning of a pro-Arab bias. In that very same year, the Gaza War led to a protest as Arab states refused to participate in multilateral meetings²³.

In his article, Gillespie points out what he claims to be "...an unconvincing institutional design"²⁴. One factor of this unconvincing design is the background of the formation of the UfM. It was a French initiative that had a rough start, and it was not clear how it relates to the EuroMed. Moreover, it left Mediterranean countries questioning the significance of the UfM when they already move forward bilaterally with the ENP and when multilateral agreements pose struggles between member states of the framework,

¹⁹ "EU/Israel Action Plan 2005", *European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations*, Accessed April 17, 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/eu-israel_action_plan_2005.pdf.

²⁰ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 11.

²¹ Gillespie, Richard, "The Union for the Mediterranean: An Intergovernmentalist Challenge for the European Union?", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 6. (2011): 1208, DOI: 0.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02193.x.

²² "Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean", *Union for the Mediterranean*, July 13, 2008, Accessed April 17, 2021, https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ufm_paris_declaration1.pdf.

²³ Gillespie, "The Union for the Mediterranean", 1217.

²⁴ Gillespie, "The Union for the Mediterranean", 1218.

especially Arab states, and Israel. One of the key issues of its design, though, is the core idea in itself that technical cooperation between states in the region will eventually resolve political conflicts and lead to regional integration²⁵.

Since the Barcelona Process in 1995, the European Union designed frameworks in which it promotes its values and norms in the Middle East and encourages countries in the region to increase their economic and political cooperation. Even before 1995, the EU's relations with Israel revolved around Israel's geographical position in the Middle East and its conflict with the Arab neighbors, but especially with the Palestinians. The conflict is a topic the EU simply cannot escape when it interacts with Israel. Upgrades to their relationship often came after a breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, whether it was the Oslo Accords in 1995, Camp David in 2000, and the unilateral Israeli disengagement from Gaza in 2005. The deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 2009 with Operation Cast Lead did not stop all the agreements between Israel and the EU, but it did create a more skeptical Israel which refuses to hold high talks with EU officials or meet with their European counterparts.

EU's external relations frameworks throughout the years continue to face disruptions and challenges. Some go far to argue, like Gillespie, that they are dysfunctional and lead to no real progress of EU's policies in the Middle Eastern region. In virtually every multilateral framework, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict brought tension and halted discussions on a range of issues, even technical issues. The conflict remains to be central for the EU, not only in its policies in the region and its relations with Israel but also when it comes to its role as a promoter of peace and its normative power in the international community. That being said, in parallel to the political tension that the conflict poses, Israel's bilateral relations with the EU have improved as both actors continued signing agreements on Euro-Mediterranean aviation and research such as the ambitious research project – Horizon 2020²⁶.

Struggling to reach an agreement with the EU's perspective on political issues, a new Israeli approach to their relationship came to fruition in 2015. This new approach has opened a new chapter of EU-Israeli relations as Israel builds political alliances with individual member states led by Eurosceptic governments to influence decisions within

²⁵ Gillespie, "The Union for the Mediterranean", 1221.

²⁶ Pardo, "Israel and the European Union", 1-20.

the institutions of the European Union and as a consequence, undermining the role of the EU and the norms it seeks to promote in its neighboring regions.

Israel and Eurosceptic Governments

In January 2016, the EU's Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) agreed to differentiate between Israel's internationally recognized border and the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories in their mutual agreements and label products originating in the settlements. However, the final document's criticism towards Israel has been softened noticeably²⁷. A year later Israeli journalists uncovered that Israel had directly influenced the content in that decision by forging alliances with Eurosceptic governments and Southern European member states comprising of the Visegrád group, the Baltics, and Greece and mobilizing them to weaken the EU's legal criticism. Israel had a history of encouraging friendlier member states to stop or change some of the EU's declarations, but it was not an actual governmental policy. However, it changed in 2015. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted a new policy regarding cooperating with far-right governments in Europe in order to promote its political interests in the region²⁸. A year later, Israel has cooperated with countries like Greece and the Baltics having some Eurosceptic tendencies, or criticism of the EU's economic policies, to persuade them to vote in favor of Israel²⁹.

It is not coincidental that this new policy was adopted in 2015. A trend of populism in the international community did not skip Europe nor Israel. In Europe, it was reflected by a range of Euroscepticism. It has seen changes internally as more European citizens elected Eurosceptic parties to lead their governments and in the 2014 European Parliament elections, Eurosceptic parties almost doubled their share of seats³⁰. It ranged from hard Euroscepticism resulting in Brexit to a softer form of Euroscepticism, such as in Poland and Hungary, questioning EU's norms and values like the rule of law and respect for minority rights³¹. In Israel, it resulted in the establishment of the most nationalistic government to date. Netanyahu got elected for the fourth time as Israel's prime minister

²⁷ Gordon, Neve, and Pardo, Sharon, "Euroscepticism as an Instrument of Foreign Policy", *Middle East Critique* 27, no. 4 (2018): 399, DOI: 10.1080/19436149.2018.1516338.

²⁸ Gordon and Pardo, "Euroscepticism", 402.

²⁹ Gordon and Pardo, "Euroscepticism", 405-410.

³⁰ "Results of the 2014 European elections", *European Parliament*, Accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-introduction-2014.html>.

³¹ Szczerbiak, Aleks and Taggart, Paul, "Coming in from the Cold? Euroscepticism, Government Participation and Party Positions on Europe", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 1 (2013): 17-37, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02298.x.

and was able to form a coalition government with exclusively right to far-right parties³², as well as appointing himself to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Both actors were facing a sentiment of public mistrust in international organizations and the values these organizations, the European Union included, stand for – such as respecting human rights, international law, and the rule of law. The norms and values the EU seeks to promote are being questioned both internally and externally. It can be said that these values pose a threat to Israel's legitimacy over the occupied territories. The EU also threatens populist leaders in Eurosceptic governments when it raises the issue of the Rule of Law. Therefore, the Israeli government led by Netanyahu had formed these connections with far-right European leaders, having mutual perceptions on the EU's identity, role³³, and its mutual threat. However, there is another significant aspect that is lying in the background of these trends. That is a historical aspect, the historical cultures of both Israel and Eurosceptic governments converge in their attitude towards the EU. These common values are not only reflected in Israel's policies but also in Netanyahu's speeches in his trips to Europe and the way he uses history to support his ideological narrative. A narrative that does not necessarily comply with the narrative of the EU as a normative power, leading a united front in its relations with the world and raising the importance of respecting international law, peace, and human rights.

Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter has established that the Israeli government had changed its approach towards the European Union since 2015 and that a possible explanation exists in an international context. The shifts in values and norms worldwide, namely, a wave of populism, are impacting both Israel and the EU. However, this thesis aims to explain that shift in Israeli-EU relations not only through the prism of political reasoning but also by understanding the changed narrative of the new Israeli government and where it meets the normative role of the EU, possibly challenging it. Political theory and international relations theory alone have limitations. They do not provide sufficient explanations for the ideological and cultural processes behind this change of policies and narratives. An analysis of the political speeches of Israel's prime minister and the EU officials between

³² Netanyahu's coalition government was comprised of Kulanu, Shas, United Torah Judaism, The Jewish home and later on also Yisrael Beiteinu and the New Right. All consist of right-wing and ultra-orthodox Jewish parties.

³³ Gordon and Pardo, "Euroscepticism", 403.

2015-2019 as history-cultural products might offer an explanation for Israel's approach to its relations with the EU. This theoretical approach could provide answers for the factors behind the EU's formation of its normative identity and theorizing its relations with Israel. The relationship between the EU and Israel is a topic not extensively discussed and researched. The academic articles on the topic written by Sharon Pardo, Anders Persson, Ian Manners, and others include mostly international relations theory and political science theory, and few cultural or historical aspects of the EU-Israeli relations. Although some recognize the role history plays in their relations³⁴, they do not theorize them based on historical culture theory and they do not analyze the role history plays in political speeches and joint press conferences of Israeli leaders and the EU representatives.

Historical culture is central in this thesis, because it plays a part in the construction of the EU's identity and role in the international community, and it could explain Netanyahu's decision to move closer to EU member states that question the value-system of EU's institutions. Which in turn could have pushed Israel's narratives and the EU's narratives further apart. The theoretical framework I will present in this section is at the basis of this research design and through its prism, I will attempt to offer the reasons Israel has formed alliances in Eastern and Central Europe. My hypothesis is that Israel found there a true partnership of historical cultures and thus compatible national narratives in that part of Europe. They do not always converge but they do meet when international organizations threaten their values and narratives. The fourth Netanyahu government that came into power in 2015 reflects a change in Israel's historical culture and thus influences its attitude towards the EU's normative approach as a response to the threat it poses to its internal policies.

Not too long ago, back in 2009, Netanyahu adopted the international consensus (and EU's) on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Two-State Solution in his Bar-Ilan speech³⁵. Although, shortly after Federica Mogherini's visit to Jerusalem in 2015, he has avoided using this term in his speeches and diverged further from the international consensus. Political speeches offer an empirical source for a speaker's narrative. In this case, EU officials and Israel's prime minister reflect the historical consciousness and

³⁴ Persson, *EU Diplomacy*.

³⁵ "Full Text of Netanyahu's Foreign Policy Speech at Bar Ilan", *Haaretz*, 2009, Accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5064276>.

narrative of their societies as their representatives. Political speeches as history-cultural products construct these actor's identities and narratives and reinforce them. Through analyzing speeches by both actors, it is possible to theorize the relations between their narratives and thus their relationship as a whole. If there is indeed a conflict of narratives in the period in question, through analysis of its causes we can answer whether that conflict challenges the EU's normative power in the international community. Thus, in order to facilitate an understanding of EU-Israeli relations and the recent developments in their relationship, I will use qualitative content analysis of speeches held by both actors from 2015 to 2019 and will explain the findings using theories of *Historical Culture* and *Normative Power Europe*.

Normative Power Europe

*"...the notion of a normative power Europe is located in a discussion of the 'power over opinion', idée force, or 'ideological power', and the desire to move beyond the debate over state-like features through an understanding of the EU's international identity."*³⁶

Normative Power Europe is a theory developed by Ian Manners in an attempt to explain and theorize the EU's role and its identity in the international community. Previously, researchers have analyzed the growing presence of EU institutions in foreign affairs from the perspective of nationhood. Manners, however, is looking at the way the EU is shaping norms in the world and not necessarily the way it uses its economic power or builds a possible military power to enforce its policies. Manners points out the important role history plays in shaping the EU's normative approach and that it explains the significance of values such as peace and liberty. These norms and values were officially constitutionalized in the Treaty for the European Union and led the EU in its relations with international actors, clearly committing to "...the principles of the United Nations Charter"³⁷. EU's emergence as a normative power is based on years of declarations and treaties reinforcing the centrality of peace and liberty as its core norms and it is directly connected to a post-war Europe. This historical context defined the EU's value system which has also acted as the normative motor for European integration. These norms served another function. As an example, Manners mentions that celebrating the values of democracy, rule of law, and human rights was a way for Western Europe to distance itself

³⁶ Manners, Ian, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 239.

³⁷ Manners, "Normative Power Europe", 241.

from eastern Europe during the cold war era³⁸. The EU shaped its identity in the international community by the waves of its history and the way, then Western Europe tried to make sense of the outcomes of that history.

However, this is yet to make the EU a normative power. Power must be exercised and diffused. The way the EU exerts its normative power is through the relations it builds with other international actors. Whether it is by promoting policies for regional integration in its Southern neighborhood, for example, or by using declarations as a tool to influence certain internal policies pursued by its partners. The EU is exporting its norms through trading with other actors such as using conditionality in trade deals³⁹. For example, when the EU signed its Horizon 2020 agreement with Israel, it conditioned the exclusion of the occupied territories from the benefits of the deal. This export of norms can also be seen in the EU's enlargement policies as they set certain normative conditions for countries applying for membership in the EU. When it comes to this thesis's topic, the relevant methods of the EU exporting its norms to third party countries are mainly the plane of political speeches, declarations, and decisions – which include certain statements, repeating certain values, or holding criticism of Israeli policies in joint press conferences with Israel's prime minister.

Normative Power Europe theory does not only describe what the EU does but also what it is. The same norms the EU is promoting within its external relations are also those which constructed it as it is today. In fact, Manners explains the EU's normative approach as a predisposition to how it was constructed. International treaties and charters have shaped the EU's identity and the way it is acting in the international sphere⁴⁰. This is one of the reasons for the significance of Klas-Göran Karlsson's theory of *Historical Culture*. Historical events, especially the Second World War and the Holocaust shaped the EU's identity. Its language, its treaties, its declarations, and also its communications with Israel all point back to history and the way the EU interprets and makes sense of its history.

However, there are limitations with this theory and especially in the context of this thesis. It is not uncharted territory in previous research on the topic of EU-Israeli relations. *Normative Power Europe* was used to either criticize the EU for not acting on its normative basis or arguing that Israel has adopted the EU's normative power in light of

³⁸ Manners, "Normative Power Europe", 243.

³⁹ Manners, "Normative Power Europe", 245.

⁴⁰ Manners, "Normative Power Europe", 252.

its agreements with the EU⁴¹. *Normative Power Europe* theory often provides dichotomic conclusions: either it is exercising it or not. Therefore, I choose to interpret the EU's identity as a normative power in proximity to the theory of *Historical Culture*. *Normative Power Europe* theory is needed to understand the EU's identity and its narrative in the international sphere and the historical significance of its identity. It is not, however, the aim of this thesis to prove or disprove that the EU always follows its normative approach. I argue, similarly to Manners, that the EU is constructed by a normative basis and seeks to export norms and values in its relations with other countries. Thus, the EU's normative power should not be conditioned in its success to export its values and norms – it is its identity as such that makes *Normative Power Europe* theory relevant. In other words, *Normative Power Europe* can be theorized as a product of Europe's historical culture and its declarations as a reinforcement of that culture.

Historical Culture and Uses of History

The concepts of *Historical Culture* and *Uses of History* can provide an additional layer of understanding and analyzing EU-Israeli relations and the possible reasons for why they have changed during the second half of the 2010s. These terms do not matter only because of the substantial and transformative historical events that the Jewish people and Europe share, which have defined the very base of their relations. They are also theoretical tools used to understand the way Israel and the EU are constructing their identities. The basis of their relations is not the totality of their shared historical events alone, but their aftermath as well – which shaped Israel and the EU's value systems by trying to make sense of their history as collectives. Israeli-EU communications, namely, in joint press conferences of representatives of both actors, can be conceptualized as history-cultural products that indicate each actor's historical culture and the possible changes within it. These concepts are relevant in this case because they offer an opportunity to explain the recent Israeli policy shifts towards the EU, not only by political theory but also as a result of a more profound historical and cultural perspective within the Israeli society.

Klas-Göran Karlsson in his book *Echoes of the Holocaust* is reflecting on the role of history in today's society. He describes an academic shift in the field of history in the last few decades. Previously, the dominating perspective on history was a clear and objective

⁴¹ Persson, Anders, "'EU differentiation' as a case of 'Normative Power' (NPE) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict", *Journal of European Integration* 40, no. 2 (2018): 193-208, DOI: 10.1080/07036337.2017.1418867.

chain of events. It was common to explain history by cause and effect. However, as a result of prominent scholars, such as Foucault, history as a cultural construct gained greater attention in the field. Some scholars even questioned whether it is possible to perceive history as an objective reality. However, Karlsson does not call for the rejection of the objectivity of history. He offers a mixed approach, taking into account that history is comprised of real events, but it is also represented and reimagined by individuals and collectives and given different meanings. Interpreting history as a cultural construct does not mean that we cannot explain history or that we should cease to see it as a development of events that mankind is a part of. But that approach leads to an understanding that as a society we are interwoven in our own history and we are not only shaped by it and influenced by its effects. We also use history and our representations of it in order to transform our society⁴².

The term *Historical Culture*, according to Karlsson, is both a concept and a process. As a concept, historical culture signifies and indicates the areas in which history is being represented in society. Whether it is in a political context, educational context, or other areas of representation. As a process, meaning, the way history is being used and communicated for various purposes. Thus, historical culture is both a term describing cultural products like museums, films, or political speeches and at the same time – it is describing the process of using history for the purpose of fulfilling certain goals.

“...history as cultural products give evidence of the notions and valuations of history that individuals and various collectives hold and make use of in and as part of a society, a nation and a state.”⁴³.

In other words, analyzing history-cultural products, like monuments, memorials, and political speeches can offer us an explanation of how a certain society, or a state, makes sense of history and how it reflects on itself through the prism of history. It also describes how societies use history to define themselves and their identity. Karlsson argues that these history-cultural products “...are among the salient and useful sources that tell us about a more widespread historical thinking in a society”⁴⁴. Therefore, I would argue that by analyzing political speeches made by representatives of a state, or an institution, one

⁴² Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Culture in Contemporary Europe*, (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003): 10-13.

⁴³ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 32.

⁴⁴ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 33.

can learn about the historical thinking of the society it represents. In this research's case, the representatives of such societies are Israel's longest-standing prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and EU's high-ranking officials – Federica Mogherini and Donald Tusk.

In a broader sense, as historical cultures change, they simultaneously indicate the causes of these changes, which can be ideological shifts in a certain society or a nation. Additionally, the way an actor uses history, whether it is a nation's leader or an institution, such as legitimizing a certain policy, is more clearly expressed in history-cultural products. Especially when leaders in political speeches are specifically describing certain policies they are interested to promote or by expressing their views on various policies. Thus, by analyzing and interpreting political speeches, one can draw conclusions on the changes within a nation's historical culture and offer them as an explanation for a change of policies. In other words, the concept and process of historical culture is a key theoretical tool in this research in order to explain the shifts of the foreign policy of the Israeli government regarding the EU.

Karlsson mentions yet another term, *Historical Consciousness* and he defines it as a mental procedure in which a human being makes sense of his life situation by reflecting on the experiences of his past and of expectations for the future⁴⁵. More importantly, it is the mental basis of historical culture and thus precedes it. At the same time, it can only be empirically analyzed by history-cultural products. These express the way individuals or collectives, like a nation, make sense of their situation and how they use the representation of history for a certain purpose⁴⁶. So, one could argue that shifts in historical culture, as expressed in history-cultural products are preceded by a transformation in a nation or individual's historical consciousness. For the purpose of this thesis, *Historical Culture* and *Uses of History* will be the only terms used in the analysis. Yet at the same time, it is worth keeping in mind that there is a mental process lying in the background of a transformation within a society's historical culture, expressed in historical narratives appearing in these history-cultural products, such as political speeches.

⁴⁵ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 43.

⁴⁶ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 45.

It is useful to mention that historical culture is not a fixed concept. It keeps changing, although not spontaneously. It is not only events in the past that construct it but also events in the present and a society's interpretation of history that influence that historical culture. Historical cultures can change and do change. It can be a slow process of a changing society, but also a rapid one, like when the representations of the Holocaust changed Europe's historical culture. In some cases, influential actors can impact a nation's historical culture and change it rapidly such as prominent political leaders, the media, and scholars⁴⁷.

“...A study of historical culture must therefore have a considerable extension in time, at the same time as it has to be keenly open to a broad range of external, structural influences that obviously also can affect the continuity and change of historical culture”⁴⁸.

Going back to the case of this research, Israel and Europe's historical cultures have changed over the previous decades, and that inevitably affected their relations and the way they interact with one another. Especially in the case of Israel, I argue that Benjamin Netanyahu, as the longest-serving prime minister of Israel, contributed to a change in the Israeli historical culture which in turn changed Israel's attitude towards the EU. Therefore, if we analyze Netanyahu's speeches when interacting with the EU or promoting his government's policies in Europe as history-cultural products, we could make some conclusions on the historical culture of Israel, how it influences Israel's partnerships in Europe and how it redesigned Israel's approach to the EU.

Uses of History refers to the way political leaders like Netanyahu, and the previous high representative of the EU, Federica Mogherini, represent and reinterpret history for a certain purpose, be it ideological or political. Political speeches are a great source for analyzing the means of using history for different purposes. According to Karlsson, the use of history is a communicative process in which a historical culture is activated to answer the needs of individual groups or societies⁴⁹. In this thesis, I will refer to Netanyahu's uses of history in his speeches as ideological uses. Meaning that his use of history answers ideological needs, for example, to legitimize certain ideas or policies⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 34.

⁴⁸ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 12.

⁴⁹ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 38.

⁵⁰ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 41.

My hypothesis in analyzing Netanyahu's political speeches is that he legitimizes certain policies of his government through history. For example, legitimizing the Israeli control over the occupied territories and the eastern parts of Jerusalem as the right of the Jewish people in light of their history in these geographical areas.

Netanyahu's uses of history in his speeches can be a way to understand the process in which Israel is constructing its identity through its historical thinking. The building blocks of Israel's value system are influenced by that historical thinking and signal where Israel positions itself in relation to other countries or international actors, such as the EU. The EU is not different. It is impacted by its historical culture just as much and it comprises its identity in the international community and dictates how it should react to certain Israeli policies.

As stated above, historical cultures can indeed change. They shape a national narrative as a nation's identity is influenced by its historical culture. *Historical Culture* and *Uses of History* are tools used in this thesis in an attempt to extract the historical narratives of Israel and the EU, and they can be used to interpret EU-Israeli relations and the recent developments and changes they have gone through. While in previous research on the topic, the theories behind Israel's increasing cooperation with Eurosceptic governments were dominantly in the sphere of political science, here the theory of *Historical Culture* is playing an integral part. This research hypothesizes that as a result of shifts in Israel's historical culture, the Israeli government moved further away from the consensus on the EU and towards explicitly critical actors, questioning the very normative basis of the EU as an institution and an international actor. That is not to say that the EU did not experience changes. The EU went through crises that shaped its member states' ideologies, identities, and historical cultures. However, the EU as an institution remains a normative actor in its relations with third countries⁵¹. The reasons behind it can also be ascribed to its historical culture as an institution.

Thus, to understand the EU's normative approach to international relations and the reasons for the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a component of its international identity, we must read and interpret EU officials' political speeches. They, like Israel's prime minister, reflect the EU's historical culture in their speeches and by analyzing them, one can understand the historical basis behind the EU's normative

⁵¹ Countries outside of the EU

approach. Not least, by analyzing the speeches held by Netanyahu and Mogherini, and Tusk – one can understand the role Israel plays in shaping the EU's role as a normative actor. *Historical Culture*, as a concept and a process, has the potential in answering this research question: how does Israel's historical narrative influence the EU's identity as a normative power in the international community?

The Concept of Narrative

Though not a central part of the theoretical framework, it is important to discuss narrative in order to interpret EU-Israeli relations, as it is a concept and term appearing often in this research. Paterson and Monroe argue that narrative as a concept is relevant to political science and political discourse. Although it is often associated with literature, it is also a cognitive process of sense-making of the world around us. Narratives also influence the way we perceive reality in a political context – we respond to them and base our political actions on them. They continue to argue that narrative is a form of discourse in human communication⁵². In this research's context, narrative does not only construct an identity of a political actor, but it also shapes their policies and the perceptions of actors by one another. As narrative is a form of discourse, a part of human communication, it is then reasonable to argue that political speeches, especially when made in a press conference in which both actors are present, are also a form of communication in which narrative plays a role. It can also be argued that narrative as a process of sense-making is similar in the function of *Historical Consciousness*. A society's narrative is shaped by history and through making sense of it.

Narrative is not only a way for people and citizens to understand the culture they are a part of, but also a tool by those who want to shape a certain culture. That is especially true when it comes to narratives of national identity in which “Stories about the origin and development of a nation provide a shared sense of who we are, where we came from, and how we fit together”⁵³. By looking at speeches held by EU officials and the Israeli Prime Minister, one could see these narratives and how important they are for the actor's own legitimacy. Speeches often reinforce national narratives and they become a tool in international relations to promote certain policies or object to them.

⁵² Kristen Rewinck Monroe and Molly Patterson, "Narrative in Political Science", *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, (1998): 315-316.

⁵³ Monroe and Patterson, "Narrative in Political Science", 321-322.

The theories thoroughly described in this chapter meet together in the concept of narrative and the role it plays in a nation or an institution's identity and legitimacy. Historical Culture and Normative Power are both based on an actor's narrative of its position in the international sphere. They are constructed through narratives of the past and create narratives of the present and the future. Thus, in order to understand and interpret EU-Israeli relations, one could look into political speeches as a way to construct and reinforce a narrative.

However, narrative analysis as a methodology is too limited and does not take into account the main theories of this thesis. Narrative Analysis often deals with how a speaker describes an event and the way the speaker tells a story. While narrative as a concept is important to understand how certain actors use stories, especially historical stories, to construct a national narrative or an identity – it does not offer a relevant methodological approach. The purpose of this research is not to analyze a narrative alone but to extract it based on uses of history in speeches and to justify certain values and legitimize certain policies. Therefore, qualitative content analysis as a systematic method to analyze texts is needed to take all of these theories into account.

Methodology: Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis is a research method in which the researcher analyzes text systematically by coding it and organizing it based on categories that reflect the primary ideas in the respective text. This text can be a book, but also a video or a speech. By using this method, it is possible to interpret the content of the text by recurring patterns or themes that come up within it⁵⁴. Unlike basic content analysis, qualitative content analyses may actually expand the original text because of their interpretive nature. While analyzing data and the use of categories that identify the key meanings of a text leading to a reduction of data, qualitative content analysis leads to an expansion of data⁵⁵. Simply put, the interpretive nature of qualitative content analysis leads to an expansion of data, using theory to make sense of the text and extracting implicit meanings, context, or explanations of the respective text.

In this method coding data is key. Coding generally means that the researcher organizes the content of the text into different categories and sub-categories. This can be done in

⁵⁴James Drisko and Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis*, Oxford University Press (2015): 4-5, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190215491.003.0004.

⁵⁵ Drisko and Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 6,11.

two different ways: inductive or deductive coding. In inductive coding, the researcher defines a category based on the empirical data, meaning – the text. These categories and subcategories are usually descriptive, and they present themes that come up in the text⁵⁶. However, in deductive coding, categories are based on theoretical literature and some prior knowledge of the data. In the deductive coding process, the researcher is organizing the text based on these theoretical categories which do not necessarily derive from the text. Both approaches have their set of limitations. With deductive coding, some ideas and perspectives that are collected in the data may not come up in the research literature and inductive coding could subvert the focus from the research question and its aims. Some researchers decided to use both approaches in order to cancel their limitations⁵⁷. In this analysis, I am adopting the suggestion by Schreier – creating the main categories based on research literature and theory and subcategories based on the content of the respective text⁵⁸.

The next step of this method is to analyze the data which is descriptive in nature and most of it is done already in the coding stage. Nonetheless, the analysis aims to provide answers regarding the research question. This usually means that the researcher reorganizes the categories and summarizes the relevant findings in each text or passages of a text. This process reveals aspects of the content that are relevant to the research's aims⁵⁹.

As written previously, political speeches of both EU and Israel's leaders are the main material of the thesis, and thus using qualitative content analysis as a research method is useful in order to understand the implicit and explicit concepts and themes in these speeches. To reflect on key concepts of the theoretical framework, I have chosen to create categories based on theories of *Historical Culture* and *Normative Power Europe*. That being said, while reflecting on the limitations of deductive coding, I will be creating inductive subcategories which describe core ideas and concepts in each political speech. Combining both approaches helps drawing connections between speeches based on the theoretical framework, and at the same time, reveals differences and changes between speeches and their contexts.

⁵⁶ Drisko and Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 18-20.

⁵⁷ Drisko and Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 21-22.

⁵⁸ Margrit Schreier, "Qualitative Content Analysis", *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (2013): 9.

⁵⁹ Drisko and Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 24.

The aim of qualitative content analysis in the context of the research question is to recognize recurring themes that come up in speeches made by Federica Mogherini, Donald Tusk, and Netanyahu which are relevant to the theoretical framework. Such as uses of history, repetition of certain norms and values, and also other concepts that frequently come up in these texts and are deemed to be relevant to the research. This method will be used to analyze how history is being put to use, the context in which it reappears, the possible ideological functions it serves, and the way it reinforces the EU's normative identity and Israel's national narrative.

Empirical Sources

The empirical sources are key political speeches of Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu in his different visits to Europe from 2015 to 2019. I will be also analyzing speeches from EU's High Representative, Federica Mogherini, on several occasions and the European Council's president at that time, Donald Tusk. Some of these speeches are joint press conferences where both actors are present⁶⁰. These speeches, as already mentioned previously, act as significant history-cultural products which reflect on the historical cultures of those political actors and the people they represent. They are also a way to exert and reinforce certain norms, especially when it comes to the EU. The reason for that certain selected period is based on the argument that since 2015, Israel has shifted its policy in its international affairs with the EU.

The speeches are in several formats – some of them are in video and others are in texts or press releases. Concerning videos, I will be transcribing speeches in case there is no official transcription available. The same goes for speeches that are conducted in Hebrew, which is my mother tongue. All data is collected through the official websites of the European Commission and the Israeli government. Moreover, a special emphasis will be drawn on two critical press conferences involving both Netanyahu and Mogherini in 2015 and 2017. The former is taken in the context of Mogherini's visit to Jerusalem and the latter in the context of Netanyahu's visit to Brussels.

Through analysis of these cultural texts, it will be possible to draw conclusions on the way historical culture plays a part in EU-Israeli relations and how it influences the EU's role as a normative power in the international community. Political speeches, then, are the result of an actor's historical culture, an actor's national or supranational narrative

⁶⁰ See Appendix 1 for the speeches' transcripts.

and they are also the means of creating and shaping narratives and thus historical cultures. Analyzing these texts will hopefully provide answers to some of the main research questions in this thesis.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the research method of qualitative content analysis. As a result of its interpretative nature, it is difficult to produce consistency. To tackle this issue, a pilot coding phase will be conducted to evaluate the validity and consistency of the coding frame. This means that the coding frame will be tested twice on some parts of the material to see if they provide similar results⁶¹. Another problematic factor is that the researcher is the instrument of the coding and the one making analytical decisions. This is why it is important to be self-reflective and reflexive in the process of analysis and to review certain decisions in the coding stage⁶². To tackle the consistency issue, I will be coding the main categories based on research literature which will provide a frame for interpretation. The use of both concept-driven and data-driven categories will, on the one hand, deal with the consistency limitation and on the other hand include relevant recurring themes which the data provides.

Findings & Analysis

In this chapter, I will present the main findings and the analysis of the data. As mentioned previously concerning the research method, the categorization process here is based on theory and previous research (deductive coding), and the subcategories are based on the actual data (inductive coding). I have come up with three main categories: Norms & Values, Uses of History, and Policy. The first two categories are based on *Normative Power Europe* theory and the theory of *Historical Culture*. Meaning, I am looking at where the speeches include content relating to norms and values or where the representatives of Israel and the EU bring them up. I will be also looking at where there is a use of history or references to historical events. The Policy category acts like a neutral category in which there is a conversation on foreign policy only and concrete statements on policies. However, it is not possible to perfectly separate policies out of their normative content, as norms are often used to legitimize certain policies. As previously stated, the subcategories are derived from every speech, fourteen speeches in total. They are divided

⁶¹ Drisko and Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 12-13.

⁶² Drisko and Maschi, *Content Analysis*, 30.

into the main categories in order to discuss the research questions. When coding the data, the main questions to be answered are: Where is there a use of history, and for what purpose? Which norms are repeated, by whom, and in which context? How is history used in promoting certain policies and/or values? What sorts of narratives come up in the speeches of Benjamin Netanyahu and the EU's officials – Federica Mogherini and Donald Tusk?

The subcategories emerging from the data coding reflect three main recurring themes and topics⁶³. While they are organized based on their main categories, they cannot be completely separated, and they are brought up in the speeches simultaneously and seamlessly. Some subcategories come up in all of them, like references to the Holocaust in various forms and a variety of norms and values. Another important aspect is the context in which the subcategories appear, and this will also be discussed in this chapter. Each section of the analysis, three in total, includes the relevant subcategories coded in the speeches to the main finding. Some are self-explanatory and others can be vague. Nonetheless, each section of the analysis takes into account these subcategories and offers them a meaning.

1. Friends & Partners: Common Threats, Interests, and Values

Subcategories: Friends and Partners, Common Interests, Common Threats, Common Values, Fight against Antisemitism, Shared History, Modern Jewish History, Bilateral Agreements, Migration, Technological Cooperation, Trade, Democracy, Justice, Rule of Law, Human Rights, Innovation, Liberty.

In all of the fourteen speeches of Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, and of European leaders, the theme of friendship and partnership came up. In fact, there is almost no speech that does not include these words to some extent or even the phrase itself "friends and partners". This friendship, partnership, or relationship is based on a set of common values, interests, or threats and it is usually that the phrase "friends and partners" is followed by a warning of certain threats that these actors face together or by repeating shared historical events that brought them together.

These common values and especially common threats have shifted over the years. It began with Benjamin Netanyahu committing to peace and even talking about a peace

⁶³ See Appendix 2.

process and a Two-State Solution back in May 2015 on Mogherini's visit to Israel, but then gradually over the years the danger of the Iranian nuclear power turned into the main issue Israel is facing and the emerging deal which the EU took part in⁶⁴. This section of friendship and partnership will explore these narrational shifts reflected in the respective speeches and the way certain values or interests sometimes converged and in other times differed. In addition, the topic of trade was frequently mentioned. For example, Netanyahu argued that Israel's technological advancement and its start-up hub hold the potential to stabilize African countries by supplying them with water and technologies in the agricultural sector to fight hunger and thus, more indirectly – prevent immigration into Europe.

1.1 Innovation Nation – Israel and EU's Common Threats and Values

In virtually every speech, Netanyahu mentions Israel's technological advancement, often more than not, he refers to Israel as an "innovation nation". For Netanyahu, European partnership in that regard signals the future, not only of their partnership or technological progress but also of modernity as liberal democracies. This modernity is often placed in juxtaposition with the Middle Eastern region, Israel's home, and Europe's southern neighborhood, filled with dictators and Islamist theocracies.

During Netanyahu and Tusk's joint press conference in September 2015, Netanyahu began to highlight his personal friendship when Donald Tusk when he acted as Poland's prime minister before his role as the European Council's President. Then he goes on to talk about Israel as the center of innovation in the world and the benefits the EU can, and to some extent, already do reap. Then, in contrast, Netanyahu mentions the challenges that Israel and the EU are facing, "... the opposite of modernity, which is barbaric medievalism... that comes from the two sources of militant Islam".⁶⁵ Israel's partnership is the future, it is innovative, it is liberal, and it is progressive. Israel's technological superiority is in the EU's best interests. It does not end here, however, as Netanyahu refers back to dark times in Europe, the Holocaust. He draws a straight line through Israel's modernity and EU-Israel prosperous future and the European refugee crisis which shares a similarity with the reality of the Jewish refugees in war-torn Europe after the Second World War. Only this time, Israel, the only Jewish state, can aid Europe with its refugee

⁶⁴ Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

⁶⁵ "Statements by PM Netanyahu and President of the European Council Tusk", IsraeliPM, September 8, 2015, 11:58, https://youtu.be/kV4_qIg7lp8.

problem through fighting and resisting militant Islam. In that same press conference, Donald Tusk did little to refer to these historical remarks and focused on the peace process, trade and Israel's crucial friendship as their relations with Israel are the most developed with a non-European country.

These patterns and themes reoccur and reappear in speeches and press conferences in the following years and the responses from European officials appear to be the same. Another example is when Netanyahu visits Brussels for the first time in December 2017, shortly after President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Israel's modernity and innovation are, once again, a way for Netanyahu to distance Israel from its neighborhood and highlight European interests in Israeli technology. In that specific press conference, he mentioned the Israeli security services and the way they had prevented terror attacks on European soil and saved European lives. While both actors mention common interests, trade, friendship, and partnership – Netanyahu focuses more on the threats they face and less on the values they share. Even though Mogherini did mention the importance of Israel's security to the EU, she spoke little on bilateral agreements and more about her concerns around the American recognition of Jerusalem⁶⁶.

That being said, both actors talk about their shared values and especially their commitment to peace. In fact, it is one of the most common themes in all fourteen speeches and press conferences. Both actors talk about peace and security simultaneously. Mogherini claims quite often that peace is the only thing that will ensure Israel's security in the long run. While Netanyahu talks about regional security and the importance of preserving security as the number one priority before holding any peace talks. Though, Netanyahu commits to peace often and even once mentioned Israel's historical commitment to peace, as it had reached its hand to peace even before its very existence. The value of peace is, thus, an important value the EU and Israel share.

Democracy is yet another significant value both the EU and Israel share even though they come in variable contexts. Netanyahu, as mentioned before, highlights Israel's technological superiority as a sign of modernity and thus commitment to liberal values such as democracy and peace. On the EU side, democracy is rarely used as a literal term,

⁶⁶ "Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the EC: arrival, welcome and press briefing", European Union, December 11, 2017, 12:18, <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-148464>.

but when it appears, it follows a just peace or the norm of respecting international law. The theme of Democracy by Mogherini came up only twice: when she was talking about international law, the Israel-Palestinian Peace Process, and the need for a more democratic Palestinian Authority.

When Netanyahu is the speaker, the subcategory of Democracy appears as the basis for Israel's friendship with Europe, naturally, in the league of western democracies. But it is being used as a tool among other norms and values, not only by disassociating Israel from Middle Eastern tyranny, but also by criticizing the EU's partiality in its decisions and declarations. More often than not, Netanyahu uses the claim that Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East and thus the EU should criticize other countries and not "...press, boycott and vilify..."⁶⁷ it. He also argues that it is counterproductive because Israel protects European security by fighting militant Islamic 'barbarism'. That criticism repeats itself even when Netanyahu meets European leaders in different constellations, like when he visited the Visegrád group in 2017.

Netanyahu opened his speech up by thanking the group for inviting him and that invitation is a sign that they stand together as five democracies with great opportunities and challenges. Here too, he highlights Israel's innovative economy and the interests it shares with Europe. Here too, the vision for the future is celebrated just before his warning of an imminent threat. Right before opposing EU's criticism of his government, Netanyahu said:

And I believe it is in the interest of Europe, the objective interest of Europe to cooperate with Israel on these two areas: the fight against terrorism and technology for the future. One is fighting the forces of the past and the other is securing a better more prosperous future for our peoples.⁶⁸

Israel's modernity and its advanced economy are fighting against terrorist forces of the past for a better future. Israel is respecting human rights, where Christians are safe. It is no coincidence that Christianity is mentioned in Netanyahu's speech in the Visegrád forum. Israel's narrative as the only democracy in the Middle East serves its partnership

⁶⁷ Statements by PM Netanyahu and Tusk

⁶⁸ "Prime Minister Netanyahu in a Summit with the Visegrád Heads of State", Israel's Prime Minister Official Facebook Page, July 19, 2017, 5:13, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1490200407708429>.

with the more conservative countries and in line with their narratives as protectors of European Christianity against Islamic expansionism.

Netanyahu tweaks his narrative of Israel's strong democracy and liberal values in correspondence to the stage where he delivers his speeches. On the one hand, when he visited the Visegrád group, the Baltic states,⁶⁹ or the Craiova forum⁷⁰ he did not mention freedom of press or LGBT rights. On the other hand, when he visited Emmanuel Macron in Paris, he spoke about women jet fighters, homosexual parliament members, and Muslim police officers as a sign of equality, one of Israel's core values. Not least, he claimed that it is one of the core values of Judaism⁷¹. The same thing happened when it came to his criticism of the EU – it was subtle when Netanyahu met Donald Tusk and Federica Mogherini, but it became explicit when he spoke in a more Eurosceptic stage.

Regardless of with whom and where Netanyahu holds his speeches, the values of democracy, human rights, innovation, and peace are repeated as the basis for the European-Israeli partnership. The context is important to explain why certain values are highlighted more than others, but they all create the narrative of Israel as a western democracy that is just as equal to Europe. Together with Israel's innovativeness, technological superiority, economy, and democratic values in the heart of the Middle East, Netanyahu also shapes the narrative of Israel as the protector of Europe against militant Islam and in some cases, against the threat of migration. European support of Israel is a European security interest. Israeli-EU trade, especially in the field of technology and academic cooperation, is also in the EU's security interest.

1.2 History as the core of EU-Israeli Friendship and their Common Threats

It is through listening, reading, and analyzing Israel and the EU's standpoints that unveils how these two differ on the role of history in the present and the way it shapes their friendship. The uses and references to history, by both EU officials and the Israeli prime minister, are subtle and few. This is all more why when references to history appear, they do so for a certain purpose. History is used in some cases to celebrate EU-Israeli

⁶⁹ "Statements by PM Netanyahu and Baltic Leaders", IsraeliPM, August 24, 2018, 21:59, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2QYRZwOTXI>.

⁷⁰ "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Statement at the Craiova Forum Meeting", The Prime Minister of Israel, November 2, 2018, 10:56, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=351390258942848>.

⁷¹ "PM Netanyahu and French President Macron at Gala Event in Honor of 70 years of the State of Israel 5th June 2018", *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, June 5, 2018, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2018/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-and-French-President-Macron-attend-gala-event-in-honor-of-Israel-5-June-2018.aspx>.

friendship and in other cases to criticize either European policies or Israeli policies and warn of history repeating itself in the threats of the present. Sometimes history is not used in its presence, but its absence, and it also serves functions of certain Israeli and European narratives.

The Iranian nuclear threat and the Nuclear Deal come up in virtually every speech and press conference in which Netanyahu takes part in. If we look back to the joint press conference of Netanyahu and Mogherini in Jerusalem, a reference to Europe's past was made by Netanyahu shortly after talking about the threat of a nuclear Iran. Because Iran is a threat to peace, to world peace, a threat to Israel and Europe alike. Sanctions cannot be lifted – they must not be lifted. After comparing the situation to that of North Korea, Netanyahu shifted his focus on Europe's past challenges:

These are formidable challenges. They have never deterred us. We know that Europe has undergone great challenges and great transformations in this, in the previous century and has shown great resourcefulness and great abilities to overcome travail and create a better future for all its people.⁷²

It is not completely clear what past Netanyahu refers to, but he mentions challenges in the previous century and how Europe overcame them and created a better future. It is almost impossible to suggest another challenge other than the Second World War and its aftermath leading to the creation of the EU. Netanyahu, in that way, compares the Iranian threat to the tragedies of the Holocaust but unlike in the past, this time there is a Jewish state that can help Europe in preventing making mistakes. Instead, it can secure a peaceful future, together with the European leadership. It was not the only time Netanyahu drew parallel lines between Iran's nuclear threat and the Second World War, it had also happened in his press conference with Donald Tusk as mentioned previously.

In contrast to Netanyahu's rhetoric, the EU and its representatives did not talk about history when they discussed the Iranian Nuclear Deal. Instead, they have reiterated their commitment to Israel's security and peace in the region. In all common press conferences that I have coded, Mogherini and Tusk brought up the Iranian Nuclear Deal only in response to Netanyahu's remarks. Going back to Netanyahu's joint press conference with Mogherini, there, she emphasized her commitment that Iran will not develop a nuclear

⁷² "PM Netanyahu's meeting with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy", IsraeliPM, May 21, 2015, 7:44, <https://youtu.be/15AvoDwbONs>.

weapon and that it is also in the EU's best interests. The recurring themes when she talks about Israel's security are the ideas of a shared neighborhood, shared region, and that both actors' fates are intertwined.

This idea of a shared neighborhood, friendship, and a sense of responsibility for Israel's security stems from their shared past. However, Israel and the EU's past is a painful one and it does not only tell a story of partnership, quite the contrary. This is why references to history are few when it comes to EU officials' speeches. If there are some, they often describe modern events, following Israel's establishment as a state. In the example of Mogherini's visit to Jerusalem in May 2015, she thanked Netanyahu for this sign of a long friendship to be there in Jerusalem, in the Prime Minister's office "...as Europe and Israel have a long history, shared a long history, long friendship, partnership and it's not only the past that unites us but also a vision, a future..."⁷³. The reference to Israel and Europe's long history is not specific and there is a sort of a rush to look into the future again, almost as an act of looking away from the past. When talking about this future, Mogherini mentioned peace and the Peace Process.

In the case of Netanyahu's speeches, there is greater use of historical references, but they differ depends on the context in which the speech is held. For example, when Netanyahu spoke in the Craiova forum in Bulgaria, he mentioned how the member states⁷⁴ had saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust. He mentioned it in the context of their long and deep friendship, real friendship, not just a political performance, as well as in the context of their fight against antisemitism and Israel's security services' actions in European countries.

A similar historical mention is present in Netanyahu's statement in his visit to Paris. Even when he spoke about Émile Zola that wrote *J'Accuse* on the antisemitic reality in France a hundred years ago, it was described in a positive light. In Netanyahu's perspective, that moment in history made Israel possible as it inspired Theodor Herzl to write his book *Der Judenstaat* which marked the beginning of Zionism and the building blocks of the establishment of the Jewish State. According to Netanyahu, this piece of history marks the deep Israeli-French friendship. Although later on, he shifted from talking about the

⁷³ "PM Netanyahu's meeting with EU High Representative" (2015).

⁷⁴ Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Greece.

past to the present of cooperation, France's fight against antisemitism, and terrorism that threatens their common values and future⁷⁵.

Although, when it comes to Netanyahu's speeches in the Visegrád group and the Baltic states, history might be of detriment to these countries' friendship. That can serve as a possible explanation to the few references to history or the complete non-use of history in Netanyahu's visit to Hungary, for example. Because of Netanyahu's family's background in Lithuania, he was compelled to mention some historical events that happened there and in the Baltic region. Even though he used strong words on the Jewish history in the Baltics, regarding "...the experience of the Jewish people, the community that had been here, was destroyed...", he went on to say that both the Jewish community and the Baltic states have reconstructed themselves and now stand together as small yet strong democracies. In addition, he thanked the Baltic states for standing against antisemitism as a sign of their friendship with Israel and the future of their cooperation⁷⁶.

2. The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: A Realistic Solution

Subcategories: Peace, Peace and Security, Security, Realistic Peace, The Peace Process, Right to Exist, Right to Self-Determination, Leadership, Good Governance, History of the Conflict, Ancient Jewish History

One of the most dominant themes of all fourteen speeches is peace and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In the case of European officials' speeches and press conferences held by Donald Tusk and Federica Mogherini, the peace process was the main topic and stood for the majority of the speeches' content. The Peace Process is also an issue of conflicting narratives which Israel and the EU hold. Alongside the discussion on peace, other themes appeared, like security, realistic peace, matters of leadership, and modern and ancient history. This shows that the topic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is charged with historical narratives and perceptions of the current situation on the ground. One could argue that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the peace process are critical to the EU and Israel equally. The research questions this section aims to answer are: What kind of narrative the EU and Israel have created about the peace process? And how does it influence their identity in the international community?

⁷⁵ "PM Netanyahu and French President Macron at Gala Event".

⁷⁶ "Statements by PM Netanyahu and the Baltic Leaders".

2.1 Historical Truth and Realistic Peace

A concept that recurred often when the EU or Israel's representatives spoke about the peace process was the notion of realism. Both actors discussed the realistic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, the perception of that reality is different. Netanyahu's take on what a realistic solution looks like has changed since Mogherini's visit to Jerusalem in 2015, in which there he clearly stated that the One-State Solution is not something he believes in and he even mentioned the probability of having a Palestinian state alongside Israel, even if he thinks it should be demilitarized⁷⁷. Though he spoke in the beginning about his commitment to peace, a secure peace, he has also mentioned one of his conditions – a recognition by the Palestinians of Israel as a Jewish state. He, later on, continued warning of a more imminent, urgent threat – Iran.

Unlike Netanyahu, Mogherini dedicated most of her speech to a possible solution for the 70 years-long conflict and not so much on the Iranian Nuclear Deal. In her speech about the need for peace, Mogherini used the word 'security' quite often, as well as the effects of peace on the region. She emphasized her support of the Two-State Solution and expressed the EU's commitment to the efforts for making it a reality. Though, it should be said that some EU officials, like Tusk, were slightly more pragmatical regarding the solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict acknowledging the challenges of negotiating a peace agreement. Nonetheless, Tusk clearly stated that the peace negotiations and the Two-State Solution are the EU's top priorities⁷⁸.

The Peace Process came up in all joint Israeli-EU press conferences, reflecting the narrative of the EU concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, some of Mogherini's statements to the European Parliament or the European press were more critical. There, perceptions of a realistic peace dominated, and were often used by Mogherini. When she addressed the EU's position on the US administration's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017, she highlighted the Two-State Solution as "...the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine ... and with Jerusalem as the capital of both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine"⁷⁹. Additionally,

⁷⁷ "PM Netanyahu's meeting with EU High Representative" (2015).

⁷⁸ "Statements by PM Netanyahu and Tusk".

⁷⁹ "Statement of Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the EC, on the announcement by U.S. President Donald Trump on Jerusalem", European Union, December 7, 2017, 9:38, <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-148174>.

Mogherini warned of going back to darker times with this recognition as it may incite violence in the Middle East. Despite lacking an obvious connection to specific historical events, her intention in warning of “darker times” could be related to the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the religious aspect of it. Shortly after, in the Mogherini-Netanyahu press conference in Brussels, Mogherini reaffirmed the EU’s position on the only realistic solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is the Two-State Solution⁸⁰. She has continued to argue that the only realistic solution is the Two-State Solution in front of the European Parliament⁸¹, and at a press conference thereafter⁸².

The perception of a ‘realistic solution’ is understandably subjective. It is no wonder then that Israel’s prime minister shares a different perception of what a ‘realistic solution’ looks like and the means to achieve it. While Netanyahu declares Israel’s commitment to peace, its historical commitment to peace, he does so conditionally and refers to what he calls ‘historical truth’. When Netanyahu visited Brussels and held a mutual press conference with Mogherini, he spoke mostly on Israel’s economic and technological power and then about the threat of Iran. But at the end of his statement to the press, he shared his position on the peace process and the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. In the majority of his statement on peace, Netanyahu referred to the history of the Jewish people, their connection to the land of Israel, and the importance of recognizing reality, yet another term that comes up often in the topic of peace. This specific speech shows the way Netanyahu uses several historical references in connection with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel has extended its hand to peace to our Palestinian neighbors for hundred years. Well before there was a state of Israel and after it was established... We were attacked not because of this or that piece of territory but of the idea of any territory that there will be a Jewish state, a nation state for the Jewish people... You see that in the continuous denial, unfortunately by the Palestinians, of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state and the denial of our history.⁸³

⁸⁰ “Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini” (2017).

⁸¹ “New initiatives related to the Middle East Peace Process (debate)”, European *Parliament*, July 6, 2016, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2016-07-06-INT-3-765-0000_EN.html?redirect.

⁸² “Foreign Affairs Council, 3587th meeting: press conference by Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and President of the Council”, European Union, December 11, 2017, 23:48, <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-148212>.

⁸³ “Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini” (2017).

This how Netanyahu opens his paragraph on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He carefully ties the conflict with the history of the Jewish people. These are the building blocks of his narrative: the conflict is not territorial, but religious, and thus the history of the Jewish people is relevant. It goes back a thousand of years in a continuous line, through the Holocaust:

For 3000 years Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people. From the time established by the King David, well documented by the history of the bible and the aftermath. When Jews in the ghettos of Europe whispered: ‘next year in Jerusalem, next year in Jerusalem’. We never lost our connection. Yet that connection is denied in UN forms, in UNESCO, in laughable decisions that seek to deny history and seek to deny historical truth.⁸⁴

In his words, Netanyahu legitimizes his government’s policies, especially those related to the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem. A thousand years of Jewish history, nonetheless, and the trauma of the Holocaust, are the ‘historical truth’ that international organizations and the Palestinians seek to deny. According to Netanyahu, it is impossible to make peace without recognizing it:

... Peace is based on reality. Peace is based on recognizing reality. And I think the fact that... Jerusalem is Israel’s capital is clearly evident to all of you who visit Israel... It doesn’t obviate peace - it makes peace possible. Because recognizing reality is the substance of peace, is the foundation of peace...⁸⁵

The context of his speech cannot be separated from its content, it all relates to the latest development in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the US’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. History here is being used to legitimize the American move and Israel’s government's celebration of that move. This speech shows uncannily the conflicting narratives of Israel and the EU, even if both actors agree on the need to recognize reality to solve the conflict. Both speak about a realistic solution, but to Netanyahu-led Israel, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital is a step further into actualizing the solution to the conflict. To the EU, it is a dangerous, one-sided move that obviates the possibility of two states – the only realistic solution. When answering a question from a reporter about Netanyahu’s statement on a realistic solution, Mogherini said that “...reality is about

⁸⁴ “Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini” (2017).

⁸⁵ “Foreign Affairs Council, 3587th meeting: press conference by Federica Mogherini”.

perception... the two states solution is the only realistic one. It's not out of idealism..."⁸⁶, because there is no other solution that respects Israel's Jewish identity and the Palestinian's right to self-determination⁸⁷.

This speech, I would argue, unveils the essence of the disagreement or miscommunication between Israel and the EU. Israel's perspective, especially after years of Netanyahu's governments throughout the years, is that the conflict in essence is religious. It stems from Palestinian antisemitism because they are not capable of recognizing a Jewish state in their vicinity. It is also about historical justice, answering the Jewish yearning to come back home to Jerusalem. However, according to the EU, it was never about a historical and religious conflict, but a modern one. It is territorial and political. Only wisdom, leadership, and political will are needed to solve this conflict once and for all.

2.2 Leadership and Political Will

There is yet another element of the EU's narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is mentioned above – leadership and political will. Multiple times Mogherini raised the notion of courageous leadership and political will by both sides – Israel and Palestine, as the way to move forward. This notion is connected to the EU's role in the international community as an actor trying to influence the leadership on both sides, as the voice of reason, a normative power, to assure Israeli and Palestinian commitment to the peace process. If only the political leadership in Israel and Palestine would follow the EU's advice and agree to its conditions – a solution to the conflict will be secured. In her last speech to the European Parliament as a High Representative of the EU on the conflict in 2019, Mogherini said that "...out of all the crises and conflicts of the region, of the Middle East, this is possibly the easiest to settle in concrete terms, provided ... that there's a political will among the parties"⁸⁸.

Even though her entire speech is focused on the stagnation of the peace process and the refusal of both parties to negotiate a deal, Mogherini remains convinced that it is the easiest conflict to settle in the Middle East. EU's role is, thus, facilitating the conditions for talks and supporting the leadership of both parties. What are leadership and political

⁸⁶ "Foreign Affairs Council, 3587th meeting: press conference by Federica Mogherini".

⁸⁷ "Foreign Affairs Council, 3587th meeting: press conference by Federica Mogherini".

⁸⁸ "#EPPlenary session Situation in Israel and Palestine, including the settlements", European Commission, November 27, 2019, 6:59, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9KLCHCj698>.

will? EU's High Representative addressed that, symbolically, at the beginning of her role in the EU back in 2015 and the end of it in 2019.

Mogherini sees leadership in taking courageous actions to prevent the escalation of the conflict and not letting violence spill out to other areas in the Middle East. It is about doing the responsible thing for the sake of your own people. Being a courageous leader is working together, both Netanyahu and President Abbas must restart the peace process, which means that they need "...to demonstrate with acts that their commitment to the two-state solution is real, not just fake, not just a slogan"⁸⁹. Thus, the EU expects both parties to show seriousness and act according to previous agreements, rationally, democratically. In a way, doing so reflects the EU's norms and values.

Mogherini echoed the European perspective that a functioning democracy and rational society are in essence the conditions for leadership. Political and democratic instability as multiple elections in Israel and the fragmentation of the Palestinian political system showed, delayed the negotiations for a solution to the conflict⁹⁰. Thus, if only Israel and Palestine solve their internal issues that will be a sign of courageous leadership. This is yet another attempt of the EU to project its values on Israel and Palestine, on its southern neighbors. Being an actor that is promoting Good Governance in the Middle East. The idea of leadership, democracy, and peace is at the core of the EU's identity as a normative power in the international community. A rational, reliable, and unbiased actor, willing to cooperate with both sides of the conflict and in an international and regional context.

3. EU's Role in the International Community: A Reliable Actor?

Humanitarian Aid, Reliable Partner, Unbiased International Actor, United EU, International Law, Regional Cooperation, UN/EU Skepticism, Sovereignty, Iran Nuclear Deal, The Peace Process.

EU's role in the international community appears frequently in most speeches, sometimes as a sign of its reliability, unity, impartiality, and especially as a key actor in the international community. EU's normative values and their role are reflected by officials' speeches, like the importance of respecting international law and agreements made by international organizations and partners. In stark contrast is Netanyahu's unfavorable and

⁸⁹ "LIVE EP Plenary session Situation in Israel and Palestine - Statement by ECVP/EUHR", European Union, October 27, 2015, 13:54, <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-110866>.

skeptical perspective on international organizations and sometimes even the EU itself. If so, what are the EU's and Israel's narratives of their role in the international community and how do they interact with each other?

3.1 A Reliable, United, and Impartial International Player

Federica Mogherini, in most speeches, talks about the role of the international community, especially in connection with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In her speech to the European Parliament in 2015, she emphasized the role the EU plays in the UN and the fact it chose to invest in the Quartet⁹¹. It is also quite common for Mogherini to stress the EU's lack of bias and impartiality when discussing the conflict and while equally expressing the importance of the international community and international law:

Deescalating the security aspect, violence, implementing concrete steps on the ground in line with prior agreements and creating conditions for the political horizon – these are three elements we need to work in parallel on with the support of the international community. We talk about measures that help the Palestinians stay in control over their lives and upholding Israel's security⁹².

As the quote shows, Mogherini commits to Israel's security and the Palestinians' right to exist in the same sentence, right after mentioning the international community. In that speech, Mogherini highlights yet another European perspective of a possible framework for solving the conflict and it is regional cooperation and the regional context. This pattern continues in additional speeches and declarations made by Mogherini. The initiative the EU takes in the international sphere, like reviving the Quartet, returns almost in every speech. Mogherini speaks often about Arab countries like Egypt and Jordan as important actors in supporting possible talks and solutions for the conflict. Moreover, there are quite a few statements made by Mogherini to show European impartiality, like the one on the report from the Quartet about the possible reaction from Israel and Palestine: "We fully expected some criticism from the parties and, in fact, that is only natural because the report challenges the prevailing narratives on both sides"⁹³.

However, as years went by and the situation in Israel and Palestine has escalated, the language of Mogherini changed. The role of the EU is still highlighted but she reiterates

⁹¹ The Middle East Quartet– EU, Russia, USA and the UN.

⁹² "Situation in Israel and Palestine" (2015).

⁹³ "New initiatives related to the Middle East Peace Process".

the EU's unity, impartiality, and reliability more after the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital by the US administration. When Mogherini held a press conference after the recognition of Jerusalem, she opened it by saying that "[t]he European Union has a clear and united position..." on the issue⁹⁴. She repeats this theme by saying that all 28 member states share their disagreement concerning the administration's move on Jerusalem. It is not arbitrary. The unilateral move that the US administration has taken affected EU member states as well, as Netanyahu implies on his visit to Brussels shortly thereafter.

On the joint press conference with Mogherini, Netanyahu talked about his partnership with several member states, in indirect and direct means. He opened his speech by thanking the government of Lithuania for inviting him to Europe. Later on, he mentioned the cooperation with Cyprus, Greece, and Italy on the gas pipelines after the Israeli discovery of natural gas in its territorial waters. But most importantly, Netanyahu answered Mogherini's statement on EU unity on Jerusalem by saying that he believes other European countries will move their embassies to Jerusalem⁹⁵. That can be the reason why Mogherini stressed that the EU member states are united in their position and are consistent.

A day after their joint press conference, Mogherini strongly repeated there is an EU unity against the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and their support for international law and the work of the international community. She opened her statement by saying that "...the voice of the European Union has been heard loud and clear..." and that the only acceptable solution is the Two-State Solution based on the 1967 borders. A position shared by all 28 Foreign Ministers, "...one by one, in full unity"⁹⁶. She emphasized the international context as well, referring to the Oslo Accords and the international consensus of the UN Security Council resolutions. At the end of that speech, she positioned the role of the EU as central in solving the conflict by saying that the world counts on the European Union to "stay engaged with a clear, united message...". Even

⁹⁴ "Statement of Federica Mogherini on the announcement by U.S. President Donald Trump".

⁹⁵ "Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini" (2017).

⁹⁶ "Speech by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the European Parliament plenary session on US President Trump's announcement to recognise Jerusalem as capital of Israel", *European External Action Service*, December 12, 2017, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/37336/speech-hrvp-federica-mogherini-european-parliament-plenary-session-us-president-trumps_en.

when EU's narrative was challenged by a reporter after the Council met with Benjamin Netanyahu, Mogherini reaffirmed the European unity:

...I didn't say it so far, but I would do it now, especially after the round of talks we had with the ministers and the prime minister. I know that Prime Minister Netanyahu mentioned a couple of times that he expects others to follow President Trump's decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem. He can keep his expectation from others because from the EU side this will not come⁹⁷.

3.2 UN and EU Skepticism

The EU's commitment to negotiations in an international and regional context, with respect for international law and prior agreements, is not shared by Netanyahu-led Israel. Throughout his speeches and statements in various forums, Netanyahu questions the legitimacy of the UN and EU institutions on the topic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At times he claims that they are biased and anti-Israel and thus their decisions become irrelevant. Netanyahu's language differs depends on where he speaks, although for the most part he strongly criticizes decisions taken by the EU or the UN.

In Donald Tusk's visit to Jerusalem, Netanyahu did not soften his criticism of European decisions and declarations and claimed that some in Europe are having an "anti-Israeli obsession". Although not directly naming the European Union, the criticism was explicit, at least towards some member states that "...vilify the only democracy in the Middle East" or "...press Israel into agreements that will endanger our very existence...". Tusk denied these allegations by reassuring that no country in Europe wants to boycott Israel⁹⁸. But Netanyahu kept on making similar arguments in later speeches and statements on European and International bias with an anti-Israel sentiment. Similar criticism was brought up also towards the UN and its institutions making "...laughable decisions that seek to deny... historical truth", namely, the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital which belong to the Jewish people for 3000 years⁹⁹.

Additionally, Netanyahu's criticism that came up in his speeches, later on, was more specific and directed either at the EU as an institution or a specific group of European countries. This kind of criticism appears when he speaks at different forums by several

⁹⁷ "Foreign Affairs Council, 3587th meeting: press conference by Federica Mogherini".

⁹⁸ "Statements by PM Netanyahu and Tusk".

⁹⁹ "Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini" (2017).

EU member states which are considered conservative or Eurosceptic. When he delivered a statement in the Visegrád forum in 2017, he thanked the hosting countries for representing Israel's positions to other countries in Europe and at the same time recognizing their support as an anomaly compared to a majority of criticism by Western Europe "...often more than any place in the world"¹⁰⁰. Although he did not mention the EU in this instance, Netanyahu recognized that the Visegrád countries in the EU share Israel's narrative and perspective in contrast with other Western European member states.

The only instance in which Netanyahu specifically criticized the EU as an institution is in his visit to the Baltic States. He admitted to asking the Baltics for help in correcting "...a distorted view on Israel in the EU". Interestingly enough, Netanyahu there challenged the EU's position as a united body, both between member states themselves and between member states and the supranational institutions of the EU. When he mentioned their shared efforts against the EU's distorted view on Israel he said: "I don't mean the EU countries. We are doing that on our own with all the countries of Europe, large and small. I am talking about the organization as such"¹⁰¹. Thus, the only case in which Netanyahu directly targets the organization of the EU, he does so in a friendlier forum and in an attempt to weaken the EU's narrative as a supranational institution leading a united and common foreign policy. To a lesser extent, Netanyahu voiced his position on EU institutions in the Craiova Forum in Bulgaria congratulating the regional forums, like Craiova and the Visegrád in promoting their interests in Europe¹⁰².

The EU's role in the international community is central in most speeches and statements made by European officials in promoting their foreign policies. However, it seems that Benjamin Netanyahu questions their legitimacy or even their power by collaborating with Eurosceptic member states or those who are simply friendlier towards Israel. Nonetheless, the EU's international role is important to both actors to further their policies, even if more often than not, they oppose one another and, in a way, undermine their respective narratives.

¹⁰⁰ "Prime Minister Netanyahu in a Summit with the Visegrád".

¹⁰¹ "Statements by PM Netanyahu and the Baltic Leaders".

¹⁰² "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Statement at the Craiova Forum Meeting".

Discussion

At the introduction of this thesis, I have formulated several research questions to try and understand the development in the relationship of the EU and Israel since 2015. I have established that the theories of *Historical Culture* as well as *Normative Power Europe* are playing a key role in the research and are being used to analyze these developments, as well as the EU's role in the international community and the possible effect of the Israeli historical narrative on the EU's identity. In this chapter, I will discuss some of the weaknesses and strengths of these theories and if they contributed to a better understanding of the research questions. I will also discuss some points made in previous research in the field of Israeli-EU relations and the way they differ from this thesis. The aim here is to reflect on the findings of the research and explore their implication on the hypothesis and conclusions.

As I mentioned above, the theory of *Historical Culture* is playing a key role in this research and is applied in the thesis to explain the recent developments of Israeli policy regarding the EU. By looking at the uses of history in Benjamin Netanyahu's speeches throughout the years since 2015, I hoped to find explanations for the changes in his policy in the EU region, namely, getting closer with Eurosceptic governments. While there were not as many uses of history as I previously hypothesized, the ones that do appear in several of Netanyahu's speeches provide some reasons for the policies Netanyahu has decided to pursue. One of the major findings in this regard is that the historical culture of Israel under Netanyahu's leadership shares more similarities with Central and Eastern EU member states than with the EU as an institution. Unlike other papers written on this alliance, I would argue that the concept of historical culture can better explain the reasoning behind it. Although it is commonly perceived as a utilitarian, cynical political cooperation¹⁰³, these countries share some elements of their historical culture which in turn impacts their perception of what and who is threatening them. The research's findings provide us the expressions of that aligned historical culture through several statements that Netanyahu has made which reflect his historical narrative.

As the findings show, Netanyahu perceives the history of Israel as an uninterrupted continuation of the ancient history of the Jewish people. More often than not, he describes Israeli and Jewish history as the same thing, with several historically unrelated events

¹⁰³ Gordon and Pardo, "Euroscepticism".

signifying the future of the establishment of the State of Israel. For example, Netanyahu said that Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish people for more than 3000 years, even when in reality, it was ruled by several empires, cultures, and religions within that time frame. Even when during several centuries, Jews were living in diasporas in the Middle East and Europe. That reality does not contradict Netanyahu's narrative. On the contrary, Netanyahu referred to the Holocaust on several occasions as the key event leading to the establishment of Israel. He used the Holocaust to legitimize the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the necessity for a Jewish state. He did so by claiming that it is the historic truth that the Jews in the ghettos of Europe knew, by longing for the return to Jerusalem and chanting, 'next year in Jerusalem'.

The diasporic period of Jewish history strengthens the connection of the Jewish people to Jerusalem and the land of Israel. Netanyahu grounds his ideological reasoning in his interpretation of history, meaning he is using history ideologically. As Karlsson writes in *The Echoes of the Holocaust*, it is not uncommon to use history as an ideological tool, especially given the fact that history in itself is ideologically loaded. Relevant to Netanyahu's case, he gave an example of nationalistic narratives that are using history and constructing it in a way for a nation to claim a territory¹⁰⁴, or in this case, a capital.

Netanyahu used the Holocaust as a tool of criticism, often to implicitly argue that Europe has never stopped being antisemitic and thus the EU's declarations and criticisms are biased. More commonly though, he compares the antisemitism that had led to the Holocaust to Iranian and Palestinian aggression. In his perspective, it stems from the same source – the same antisemitism. Namely, Iran wants to develop a nuclear weapon to destroy Israel, much like how Nazi Germany committed genocide against the Jewish people in Europe. According to Netanyahu's narrative, the Palestinians are no different when they do not recognize the Jewish history in Israel and Jerusalem. They commit terror because of their antisemitism and not to fight against oppression and for their own state. The trauma of the Holocaust, the experience of victimhood, is embedded in Netanyahu's rhetoric and it shaped Israel's historical culture that way. It is not unique to Netanyahu, but it was intensified during his fourth term, as he was frequently drawing comparisons between European antisemitism, the Holocaust, Israel's establishment, and the threat of Muslim governments like Iran and Palestine. As a prophet, Netanyahu kept repeating the

¹⁰⁴ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 41.

horrors he sees in his visions of history and that Israelis must prevent them from happening again. This is where Israel and the Visegrád countries meet. This is the meeting point of their historical cultures.

Although having different narratives regarding their role in the Holocaust, Israel and the Visegrád countries, such as Poland, share the experiences of victimhood during the Second World War and especially when the Visegrád countries were under the oppression of the Soviet Union¹⁰⁵. Both societies were repressed and controlled by a foreign expansionist power. In their point of view, the Nazi occupation is no different than the repressiveness of the Soviet Union regime. In some cases, they go further in history, when Orbán's Hungary sees the threat of Muslim refugees as if the history of the Ottoman empire's occupation repeats itself when it reached most of Southern and Eastern Europe. Both Netanyahu and Orbán position themselves as protectors of Europe against militant Islam. Orbán warns of Islamic occupation as the Western European countries failing to realize it and encouraging the growth of Muslim populations, but Hungary and other Central and Southern European countries defend it, by upholding Christianity¹⁰⁶. Similarly, Poland sees itself as a protector against Islamic occupation looking back to the Battle of Vienna when the Polish-Austrian army defeated the Turks¹⁰⁷. It is no surprise then that Netanyahu feels comfortable openly criticizing the EU in the Visegrád forum. Their historical cultures align, as they seek to preserve their national identity against the oppression of foreign powers being either antisemitic or Islamist.

This is not to say that the component of political opportunism is absent in Netanyahu's newly founded friendship with Eurosceptic governments, but it would also be an oversimplified explanation for this change of foreign policy. Even if one argues that Netanyahu's friendship with these governments is not genuine, he still activates elements of historical culture to speak to the very narrative of these countries and to influence their decisions in EU institutions. If he is not genuine, he is at least aware of it. He is also aware of the EU's unease when the Holocaust and the persistence of antisemitism in Europe are brought up. Arguing against the EU by using these historical references has the potential to undermine the EU's normative identity. That is because the very same historical event,

¹⁰⁵ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 144-147.

¹⁰⁶ "State of a Nation Address", *About Hungary*, 18 February 2018, <http://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/viktor-orbans-state-of-the-nation-address/>, Accessed by 7 April 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Dudzińska, Agnieszka and Michał Kotnarowski, "Imaginary Muslims: How the Polish right frames Islam", *Brookings*, 24 July 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/imaginary-muslims-how-polands-populists-frame-islam/>, Accessed by 7 April 2021.

the Holocaust, has led to the creation of the EU and its values. This is where the theories of *Normative Power Europe* and *Historical Culture* intersect.

Considering all the above, it can be argued that Netanyahu is aware of the basis of values that the EU holds, as well as their historical origin. Netanyahu knowingly uses the EU's normative identity, meaning – its values, to criticize it and its policies towards Israel. Not least, he is fluent in the language of the EU's normative narrative and he speaks it when interacting with other EU member states. In his speeches in various European countries, Netanyahu cherishes the norms that the EU seeks to promote like democracy, liberty, human rights, and peace. Interestingly enough, he does so in a similar manner to Mogherini when he highlights these values and the common interests for the future while avoiding the use of history. The non-use of history serves a purpose. It happens when one perceives that a certain "...legitimacy should not be built on history, but more on "...expectations of a rewarding future"¹⁰⁸. It shows in Netanyahu's calls for collaboration with Europe towards a prosperous future. An additional reason for avoiding the use of history is that it might be counterproductive, unnecessarily reminding the parties of their shared historical events where they had faced adversity and animosity.

Netanyahu fulfills two goals at the same time when he brings up liberal European values. On the one hand, it is a way for him to position Israel among Western democracies and to encourage European countries to cooperate with Israel, especially in the areas of trade and technological cooperation. On the other hand, Netanyahu uses these values to attack the EU, arguing that it disproportionately criticizes the only democracy in the Middle East. Simultaneously, he refers to the tragic history of the Holocaust in Europe to further criticize the EU's policies that are unfavorable to the Israeli government. There he uses history, but also values, such as respect for human rights, to challenge the EU's policies and unveil their so-called hypocrisy.

Conclusion

The main research question remains to be unanswered – is that change of Israel's historical culture and its policies truly affects the EU's narrative as a normative power in the international community? There is a complexity in giving a conclusive answer. Throughout the time frame 2015-2019, the language of EU officials did not change dramatically. Federica Mogherini was consistent in reiterating the EU's commitment to

¹⁰⁸ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 41.

peace, democracy, and international law. Even in her speech in 2019, despite the stagnation of the Middle East Peace Process, she claimed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the easiest to solve as long as these parties will adopt the EU's perspective and norms – 'political will', to name one. The EU cannot simply let go of its core values as a result of Netanyahu's criticism. That is in light of the EU's historical culture and the narrative of its creation. The EU cannot ignore the international consensus and international law. The history of its creation is based on institutions like the UN and the charters its member states had signed on.

The concept of historical culture plays a crucial role, and the Holocaust is the event that shaped and continues to shape it. The Holocaust as a historical event was used to integrate war-torn Europe and it provided the lessons from the Second World War that shaped the EU's historical consciousness. Members of the EU gathered around it, especially when they sought to join the EU¹⁰⁹ and agreed on certain values like fighting against antisemitism and racism, respecting the rule of law, and committing to the preservation of peace¹¹⁰. This even shaped EU's normative identity. That is also the reason why it is difficult for the EU to criticize Israel's policies harshly. Its commitment to Israel's existence and security is just as strong and it has been reiterated by Mogherini and Tusk time and time again. However, Netanyahu's policies place the EU in a conundrum. It cannot support the expansion of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and it cannot recognize the whole of Jerusalem as Israel's capital due to international law, even while it recognizes the importance of the Jewish identity of Israel.

As mentioned previously, historical culture and historical consciousness are not fixed concepts – they can change. Events in the present, like interpretations of historic events, can transform a community, society, and a country's historical culture. There has been a gradual change in the Israeli historical culture and the fourth term of Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister signifies it. From respecting the consensus of the international community, depending on the UN's decisions for its existence, and signing on charters for human rights and international law – Israel has turned to a more religious and nationalist interpretation of its history. European countries as allies have turned into an adversary at

¹⁰⁹ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 19.

¹¹⁰ Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 16-17.

best or even a foe¹¹¹. The commonplace perception of the EU among Israelis is that it is inherently antisemitic and the Holocaust is proof of that. Ironically, governments with antisemitic and antidemocratic tendencies have become an ally, precisely because of their criticism against the EU and their shared narrative of nationalism.

These governments are also a sign of change within the historical culture of Europe, and they challenge the EU's normative identity as much as Netanyahu does. More than anything else, they challenge its institutional design based on a notion that European countries can have, in fact, a common foreign policy. That is perhaps an aspect of the EU's normative identity that is being challenged and weakened by Netanyahu's approach. But like other researchers highlighted before, it creates a contradicting by-product, and it is the recognition of EU's institutions and their power¹¹². Their normative power. Otherwise, why would Netanyahu adopt the EU's values and use them in his joint speeches with EU officials and other European leaders?

The transformation of Israel's historical culture affects the language of Netanyahu in his speeches, it becomes more Eurosceptic, more religious, more nationalistic. It persuades Netanyahu to cooperate with European leaders like Orbán, because of the increasingly shared traits of their historical cultures. It challenges the EU's foreign policy and its ability to reach a consensus on decisions against Israeli policies. But it does not change the normative power of the EU. After all, Israel signed the Horizon 2020 agreement and the aviation agreement despite clauses excluding the occupied territories. Netanyahu continues to speak about peace and human rights when he visits Europe. He has even visited Brussels in 2017, years after the last visit of any Israeli prime minister there, because of the EU's clear objection to the USA's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The EU's normative identity matters to Israel and it seeks its support.

The EU is challenged, though, in promoting its vision of peace between Israel and Palestine. It does not manage to stay united on the issue and struggles to convince the Israelis and the Palestinians to return to the negotiation table and hold peace talks. Its reliability, impartiality, and power in this issue are compromised and questioned, even by other Middle Eastern countries. Its role in peace talks and other conflicts in the world is

¹¹¹ "The 2020 Israeli Foreign Policy Index of the Mitvim Institute", *Mitvim*, October 2020, Accessed by April 29, 2021, <https://mitvim.org.il/wp-content/uploads/English-Report-2020-Israeli-Foreign-Policy-Index-of-the-Mitvim-Institute.pdf>.

¹¹² Anders Persson, "EU differentiation as a case of Normative Power".

largely based on the role it plays in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict¹¹³. That is why Israel matters and their relations with Israeli governments matter to the EU's normative identity. When other Arab countries in the Gulf move forward and normalize relations with Israel, without waiting for the EU or the Palestinians, it can affect the EU's reputation in facilitating peace in the Middle East. It is not necessarily a result of Netanyahu's policies towards the EU, but a possible explanation is that the historical culture in both Israel and the EU damaged its ability to keep on pushing for peace in the region. Its perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as territorial rather than religious, is different from that which Netanyahu holds. The consensus within the EU on the matter is weakened by a disagreement from within. That is the result of the recent changes within Europe and the growing divisiveness between member states around the EU's normative basis. Israel is simply taking advantage of it. Nonetheless, the EU succeeds in exerting its norms to Israel and using its power to set up conditions for Israel to keep their economic and academic agreements alive. While it may have suffered losses in advancing the Middle East Peace Process, it still manages to hold Israel accountable. Israel's image as a western, modern democracy is dependent on its good relations with the EU. Both depend on each other and so far, they equally challenge one another. That interdependency is perhaps the thing that keeps their identities and conflicting narratives intact while still maintaining their strong bilateral relationship and partnership.

¹¹³ Persson, *EU Diplomacy*.

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Appendix 1 – Speeches Transcriptions

“PM Netanyahu's meeting with EU High Representative” (2015)

Netanyahu: Federica it's a pleasure to welcome you again to Jerusalem. This is the first meeting we've had since I formed the new government. And I take this opportunity to reiterate Israel's commitment to peace, my commitment to peace. Over the last few weeks, we've taken some concrete tangible steps to benefit the Palestinian population, we've taken economic steps, added measures for reconstruction and development and ensured the ongoing humanitarian support. We'll continue with those practical steps but at the same time we will continue to work towards peace. Israel wants peace, I want peace, we want a peace that would end the conflict once and for all. My position has not changed – I don't support a one-state solution, I don't believe that's a solution at all. I support the vision of two states for two people. A de-militarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state and I look forward to discussing with you how we can advance that vision forward in a practical, secure and responsible way. I know that you share our goal and we see you as a friend who can help advance it. But if I look around at our region and the world, the most dangerous enemy of peace is Iran. Iran is arming and training Hezbollah terrorists in Gaza, sorry, in Lebanon and Hamas terrorists in Gaza. Iran is opening a third terror front against Israel in the Golan and it's pursuing its nuclear program which I believe poses the greatest threat to the region and the world. I am afraid the Lausanne Program will not block Iran's path to the bomb. Iran's emerging deal with the world powers facilitates and legitimizes Iran's continued development of the capabilities of forming nuclear weapons. And by prematurely easing sanctions, the deal will give Iran many billions of dollars with which to fund its aggression and its worldwide terror campaign. Because of Lausanne – sanctions are already eroding. In recent weeks, Airbus aircraft have been sold to Iran in direct violation of the sanctions. So, if pressure is being lifted today, what leverage will remain to ensure Iran complies tomorrow? Well, there's no pressure when the sanctions are removed. And the answer, the honest answer is nothing. Nothing will be left to ensure that Iran complies with the deal or that Iran ceases its aggression and its terror. If we want to know what will happen with Iran as result of this deal, just look at what happened with North Korea as the result of that deal. Despite the inspections and despite the commitments North Korea became a nuclear power. Just this week North Korea announced that it succeeded in miniaturizing a nuclear weapon. I think the international community is about to make the same mistake with Iran as it did

with North Korea and I'm afraid Lausanne does exactly that. The peace and security of the region and the world demand that we insist on a better deal and it's not too late to do so. These are formidable challenges. They have never deterred us. We know that Europe has undergone great challenges and great transformations in this, in the previous century and has shown great resourcefulness and great abilities to overcome travail and create a better future for all its people. A future and a present of peace and security and prosperity and that's what I hope that we can discuss and work together to achieve – peace, security and prosperity for all our peoples, for all our neighbors. So, with that spirit I welcome you again to Jerusalem.

Mogherini: Thank you very much prime minister, Bibi, thank you for inviting me to visit you so early in the beginning of your new mandate and congratulations for that. It is really an honor for me to be here in Jerusalem again. To be here for the first time in this place (pointing at the residency of the prime minister). I take it as a sign of friendship, as it should be, as Europe and Israel have a long history, shared long history, long friendship, partnership and it's not only the past that unites us but also a vision, a future, as you said. I believe your commitments tonight to work on peace and security, first of all for Israel, but also for the rest of the region, is what also unites us. The European Union is interested in peace and security for Israel, for the region, because this is also our European peace and security. So, we have a common interest there to see if we have a space for relaunching the vision you just mentioned of two states for two people being able to live in full respect one side... one at the side of the other. A full respect and with a perspective of peace and security for all. You mentioned one of the threats you have in this region, we have in this region, because it is also our region, the Mediterranean, the Middle East is also somehow European. We share neighborhoods which is the most dangerous one in the world and we have many threats we have to face together. And most of them are all around us, all around Israel but also Europe. You mentioned one of them, the prospective of an Iranian nuclear program. Let me assure you that my personal commitment as a facilitator of the negotiations and European interest and willingness to reach an agreement, that is not done yet, is not finalized yet. In Lausanne, in Switzerland, we outlined some elements of the framework. We are working now, these days in these weeks very hard and in a very tough way to finalize text that, let me assure you, would be a way of assuring that Iran could not develop a nuclear weapon in the future, with mechanisms of controlling that. The efforts of the international community, my personal efforts in this

respect are aimed at more security, not less. And I hope we can be successful in this regard. I know we will discuss this as we will discuss the opportunities to relaunch the peace process, but also some bilateral issues that we have so much to discuss.

Netanyahu: Well, I would like to talk with you about the Italian political system.

Mogherini: (laughs) that is not officially... that is not in my capacity anymore, but I will be happy to do that.

Netanyahu: As an observer.

Mogherini: Definitely though, as a member state. Thank you very much.

“Statements by Netanyahu and Tusk” (2015)

Netanyahu: We welcome Europe as Europe welcomes Israel. We welcome you Donald, it's a pleasure to welcome you back to Jerusalem. I have known you for many years, you have been a great friend of Israel, of the Jewish people and I will say, of me personally. It is always a pleasure to see you. I have a belief that your visit here as president of the European Council can do a lot of good for our relationships. We have great opportunities. We live in a world that is being revolutionized by innovation. Israel is one of the great centers of innovation in the world. Everything from information, to energy, to cybersecurity, to medical devices, to biotechnology and everything else. Big data, 3D printing, everything. Israel is a tremendous hub of intellectual energy which is turned into intellectual products. Which means, products of the mind that become vastly valuable in the modern marketplace. I think that the future belongs to those who innovate. Europe can be, and in some cases is our partners for innovation and this is something that seizes the future and I believe should from a great partnership.

Equally, we are challenged. We are challenged by the opposite of modernity, which is barbaric medievalism, early medievalism, primitive, savage, murderous that comes from the two sources of the militant Islam. The militant Sunnis led by Daesh and the militant Shiites led by Iran. Daesh uses swords to decapitate people. Iran wishes to develop atomic bombs to threaten millions. And we believe that both of them are moving into the ruins of shattered states in the Middle East and from here they want to establish each their own Islamic empire. They fight each other who will be the king of this empire but make no mistake about it – whom they target is first us, other Muslims too of course, Christians and so on, but then you. Iran is building ICBMs for Europe, not for us. We are in the same

continent; they can reach us already. They are building intercontinental missiles for Europe and the United States. And we believe that this is a common problem.

Equally, because of the onslaught of militant Islam in the Middle East and Africa, Europe is facing the waves of tsunami of people tragically fleeing from the worst crimes that humanity has seen since the holocaust. And we believe that there is much we can do together. I have discussed with PM Renzi of Italy, the possibility of cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa with Italy but with other European countries to deal with the problem at the source: to strengthen African governments in agriculture, in the economy, in communications, in security, in energy to prevent the collapse of those societies and the suffering that accompanies the people who are seeking to flee for the lives to Europe. So, I think that there is much, that we.... Common challenges that we face.

And in this regard, I find it perplexing that some in Europe are still possessed by the anti-Israeli obsession. Nothing is happening. Hundreds of thousands are being slaughtered in the Middle East, millions are being displaced, but some in Europe believe the only thing they have to do is to press, boycott and vilify the Middle East's only true democracy. Israel. The only vanguard of liberty, the only country where human rights are respected, where there is a free press and where the values that we share with Europe serves as our map and our compass and our way of life. I find this inexplicable, but I find it also to the detriment of Europe. We are the guardians of civilization here in the heart of the Middle East against this new barbarism. And I want to discuss with you, as I have discussed with other European leaders how Europe and Israel can cooperate to assure the progress of modernity for the peoples of Middle east, for peace with all our neighbors. But also, for the sake of our common future. And to see if we can steer Europe to a more productive course rather than the one who seeks to, unilaterally, press Israel into agreements that will endanger our very existence and therefore your very defense.

This is a small order for our conversation which I look forward to. I want to welcome you again in the spirit great friendship that has always characterized our relationship when you were leading Poland and now you are in the important position of being one of the leaders of Europe and I believe we can extend this friendship even further. So, welcome to Jerusalem, my friend.

Tusk: Thank you very much, mister prime minister, dear friend. Let me first say how glad I am to be here on my first visit to Israel as the president of the European Council

and of course that the most important thing for me is our discussion. Thank you, thank you very much for welcoming me. As you know, our meeting takes place at the very challenging time for the Middle East and for Europe. Devastating conflicts continue in many countries with serious consequences across the borders. Failed or failing states, extremist movements and terrorists like Daesh. So much human suffering, so many fleeing conflict and terror and so little peace, democracy, prosperity and rule of law. Israel has vital national interests in stake, interests that Europe is helping to safeguard with concrete actions. And I think we have to avoid words like boycott, because for sure, this is not the intention of Europe. I am absolutely sure that there's no country in Europe which want to boycott Israel, or... You know, for me it's absolutely clear that in fact the essence of our relationship, this is quite opposite.

Netanyahu: I am glad to hear that.

Tusk: And of course, I came here to discuss how we can further work together to address these challenges, in Europe and in your region, which affect us all. One way to do so is to revive the Middle East Peace Process. I know that this is very demanding and very difficult process and nothing here is black or white. And I am fully aware that it needs patience and time, I have no doubt. The European Union sees no alternative to a negotiated two-state solution. We are trying to understand the arguments of both sides and are ready to support the positive actions in that regard. This is why we are worried that the peace process has stalled and has not moving forward as we would like. This evening I will be talking with PM Netanyahu how to bring life back to this process and I have that this is possible.

I also hope to discuss the agreement reached with Iran in July. The common view in Europe is that it may lead to a breakthrough in the relations between Iran and the international community. But the real breakthrough in the long-term perspective will not be sustainable if Iran does not change its attitude towards Israel. The security of Israel must remain one of our European priorities. It is also my wish that the voice of Israel in the debate on the implementation of the nuclear agreement with Iran is both heard and respected in Europe.

Our meeting will also be an opportunity to talk about bilateral cooperation between Israel and the EU. As you know, our relations are among the most developed with a non-European country. The EU is Israel's biggest trading partner, and we enjoy close relations

in many fields. Only recently we signed agreements on research cooperation the Horizon 2020 program and liberalized our aviation markets – The Open Skies Agreement. These agreements create huge benefits for both of us – Europe and Israel.

And let me conclude that Israel matters greatly to the European Union. The EU is Israel's friend and partner in good times and in bad times. And you know, Bibi, that when I say it – I really mean it. Perhaps what I say is different from the picture that some try to paint. But when you look at the facts, I am sure you will agree with me. Thank you again, and again I am very happy that I am with you here tonight.

“Situation in Israel and Palestine” (2015)

Last time we have met here in this semi-cycle to discuss our common work on the Middle East peace process and on Israel and Palestine it was only 6 weeks ago. We all agreed back then on something, that stalemate in the peace process, the lack of peace process indeed could only lead to more violence and this is what we're seeing today. It has happened time and again and it is happening in dramatic ways in these last weeks. The new ways of violence and terror is affection innocent Israelis and Palestinians. There is not and cannot be any excuse for terror. Incitement and violence must end. The response of the security forces needs to be proportionate and consistent, regardless of who is the perpetrator. It is now mostly up to the political leaders on the two sides to get out of the current impasse and to show leadership. Most of all to show leadership. Showing leadership is much more difficult when the situation gets more difficult, but it is also when it's most needed. Both leaderships have a responsibility to promote calm, to contain the situation of violence and to promote calm. They have an interest in doing this for their own people, and they have a general responsibility towards the region and towards the rest of the world. To make sure the situation doesn't inflame on the religious level and get spread more across the globe. Last week, I met with prime minister Netanyahu and just yesterday evening in Brussels I met President Abbas to pass exactly the same message: you need to take leadership, strong positions and try to calm down the situation on the ground first and foremost. And the international community is and will be with you in this respect. They have knowledge that they need to work together in partnership, to end the current arrest. And this is something relevant but also something that needs to be tested for real. Obviously, our thoughts today and in these days are will all the victims, all the families, all the people that are suffering on the ground. But as we try to deescalate the crisis, we must not lose sight of the underlining causes of tensions, the frustrations,

the sense of insecurity, the lack of hope, the lack of political horizon. Without that political horizon, any de-escalation that we might even get as difficult as it can be, will only last for a limited time and we will go back again and again and again to the cycle of violence.

We said this last year at the end of the conflict in Gaza, we are here one year later saying the same. Our first priority must be to build the conditions for final status talks based on mutual steps. For this to happen, we need significant policy shift on the ground, and we need this policy shift to happen in line with past agreements that are there and need to start being implemented. We have to find an entry point to the process, to have the process restating again. When we say this, it's not just a reference to restarting the political process, restarting the talks, restarting negotiations. We all know very well, and the Israelis and Palestinian people know that very well, that talks for talks, negotiations for negotiations would not be anything real to the ground. Unless we are in parallel create the conditions, the real conditions for the people to live, first of all to live, and secondly to live better their irrespective lives. When we talk about this, so, we talk about concrete steps in context of a political process. Deescalating the security aspect, violence, implementing concrete steps on the ground in line with prior agreements and creating conditions for the political horizon. These are three elements we need to work in parallel on with the support of the international community. We talk about measures that help the Palestinians stay in control over their lives and upholding Israel's security. Not just for negotiating, not just for the sake of doing something, but to reach concrete results. These goals must be pursuit in parallel, de-escalation on the ground, concrete steps to implement agreements that have already been signed, that are there already, and keeping the perspective of the political horizon on the final settlements. These three elements must go together, and I think this is more urgent than ever.

In New York last month and in Vienna last Friday, all the quartet's principles passed this message loud and clear. And let me say that it was the EU choice to invest in the quartet as format for international backing of these efforts. From this recent round of meetings, including with secretary of state Kerry in Berlin, I retain the commitment of prime minister Netanyahu to guarantee the status quo of the holy sites and the desire of all parties to deescalate the situation on the ground. I also welcome and support, Secretary Kerry initiative to address the situation in the holy sites, highlighting the role of Jordan in this, which is key. In the next few weeks, the quartet invoice will engage directly with

the parties. It is now up to the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership to demonstrate with acts that their commitment to the two-state solution is real, not just fake, not just a slogan. If prime minister Netanyahu and President Abbas fail now to work together, if they don't cooperate to stop the violence, if they don't rebuild a credible political process – the situation for their own people will get only worse and worse.

Regional context is as tense as it could be, even if this is a sentence we should never say because it could also always turn worse. But we don't want to see an old conflict as this one mixes with the newer crisis in the neighboring countries. The conditions around Israel and Palestine are today much much more dangerous than they used to be decades ago. This is a risky time, also and mainly for the people in Israel and Palestine alike. If the leaderships don't understand that now, that is not business as usual, even in the management of the old conflict we are all used to (gesturing quotation marks), like we use this “”, because we could never get used to a conflict bringing so many deaths and sufferings. If they don't realize it's more urgent today to solve this, more important today to solve this, then there will be little things the international community can really do to support the process. At the mix old and new, of history and religious elements, in this moment in the region will be explosive. Not only for the people in the region but for all. Peace between the Israelis and the Palestinian is an interest will all share, in the region and beyond, and that is for this reason that we invited, on again European initiative, key Arab states to join our quartet meetings. Think of how relevant can Egypt be for Gaza and Jordan for the holy places, which is something we are seeing everyday and Saudi Arabia for relaunching the Arab Peace Initiative and adapting it to these times. Only in a renewed regional framework peace is possible. Arab partners have stressed to me the readiness to work with the quartet in the upcoming months, we actually have started working with them, but like us, they need to see determined leadership by the parties. We can build all the international and regional support, but they have to take responsibility for showing leadership inside. First of all, inside of their own societies and inside own communities.

Recent events should serve as a warning - if anyone still believes we can just manage the current crisis, contain it for a little bit and wait for the next one to come – they are wrong. This is not going to continue like this. Every cycle of violence is going to be worse than the previous one and this is going to destroy the Middle east. So now it's decision time. Israeli and Palestinian leaders will have to take courageous choices, difficult ones, but

this is the only path they have towards peace. They can either move forward or watch chaos prevail in their own societies. This is the message we have been passing, I have been passing personally, to the two leaders, together with my quartet colleagues and with my Arab friends. This is the line on which we are all committed to work. And I asked both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas the quartet invoice in the coming days, not weeks, days, to start working together on concrete steps that can be immediately taken on the ground, to deescalate on one side and to improve the living conditions of the people. We have to find this entry point, because talks for talks, the big horizon today, I don't see the conditions. Internally, the two societies to allow the leaderships to invest credibly in this while the security situation as it is and while the confidence needs to be built. So, we need to find first and foremost this entry point, making sure that at the end of the process, the two-state solution is persevered and not prejudged, but we have to start, we have to help them start implementing issues on the ground that can deliver for the people, for the ordinary people, that today are seeing their children dying, on both sides. With different numbers, different numbers, but on both sides, to start having a future in their lands. Thank you.

“Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at a press point with the President of the European Commissioner Jean-Claude Juncker and the President of Israel Reuven Rivlin”, 23rd June 2016

Let me thank President Rivlin and share with him the fact that the regional situation and the security situation that Israel is facing is indeed a new one. Threats are increasing, some of these threats are the same that Europe is facing. But this new situation is posing also some new opportunities that were not there before, decades ago.

For the first time cooperation with some key Arab countries in the field of security is there and it is in the interest of Israel and the Israeli people, first of all their security, to use this window of opportunity before it is too late for the security of Israeli people; and let me say also for the region and Europe as well as part of the region – we share the Mediterranean.

It is because we know that Israeli people deserve and want to live in peace and security and that peace is the best opportunity for security and as we learnt from wise Israelis and as we heard from your words, Mr President, yesterday in the European Parliament.

The European Union is working day and night, first of all within the Quartet with our international partners - United States of America, the UN, Russia. The Quartet report that will be published soon will indicate, we hope, common grounds, the way forward to overcome some of the obstacles that the international community identifies on peace and security.

Second, we are working day and night with the regional players, Egypt, Jordan, our Arab friends to operationalise the Arab Peace Initiative to the benefit of security, because we know very well that the issue is not only between Israel and Palestine, it is also with the rest of the Arab World and this is the opportunity that Israel has in front of itself.

Thirdly, we are working day and night with the parties. I will not comment on what President Rivlin mentioned about the presence at the same time here in Brussels of himself and President Abbas, but the European Union is constantly, daily working with both parties with a sense of friendship.

We are convinced that we can be friends of Israel and friends of Palestine and this allows us to be bridge builders. We will continue to do so because nobody can replace the willingness of the parties to engage in direct negotiations to restart the perspective of achieving two-state solution.

As the President Rivlin wisely pointed out yesterday, there is the need to rebuild some degree of confidence. There are things that can be done immediately: steps on the ground that would improve the lives of the people of both Israelis and Palestinians. And the European Union would be ready to facilitate and support.

I am looking forward to continue our conversation. President Rivlin and I will continue with a meeting between ourselves and then also a working lunch with a certain number of Commissioners who will join us to discuss our bilateral cooperation, but also perspectives in the region. Thank you. [Official transcript]

“New initiatives related to the Middle East Peace Process” (2016)

Mr President, this is not the first time – and it will definitely not be the last – that we will have a debate in this Chamber on our initiatives in the Middle East Peace process.

I know very well that there is a widespread feeling that things will never change in Israel and Palestine and some say there are more urgent crises to deal with. Others think the current leaderships are not up to the task. Personally, I have always believed that we have

a duty to keep working for positive change with patience and courage, and a precise interest in doing so. I know that Parliament shares this view. You have shown it by hosting, just a couple of weeks ago, President Rivlin and President Abbas in the Chamber in Brussels.

One reason why we have a duty to keep working for positive change, and an interest in doing so, is that the status quo cannot hold, and actually there is no status quo. If things do not change for the better, they can only get worse. Another reason is the regional context. The other crisis in the region – the spread of terrorism – makes it even more urgent to restart some kind of political process. A new war in the Holy Land could have horrific consequences in the entire region and we do not want to see Daesh take root in Israel or in Palestine. Peace now – or at least a process for peace now – is more urgent than it has ever been.

I know this Parliament shares the same sense of urgency. The French initiative was spurred in part by your willingness to restart a credible peace process. For exactly the same reason we decided to revive the Middle East Quartet about a year ago and to work on the report that we presented on 1 July. It is a report on the main threats to the two—state solution, with clear recommendations on the steps needed to rebuild the conditions for meaningful direct negotiations.

We all know that the situation on the ground in Israel and Palestine is deteriorating. The viability of a two-state solution is challenged on a daily basis. People are dying on both sides – almost on a daily basis – and with them hope is also dying. Children are dying and children are being killed. Unless we do something to reverse the negative trends, this conflict could get out of control and the very chance of peace would slip away. We simply cannot afford further escalation. We cannot afford further escalation, the Israelis cannot afford further escalation, and the Palestinians, and the entire region, cannot afford further escalation.

This is why we issued the report. It was a lengthy process but, as you might have seen, the report is a long, dense text that brings the international community together on substance and in some detail. The report is about our common goal in the international community, which is to start a process and to stop and reverse the negative trends we have seen, to rebuild trust and to advance the two-state solution on the ground in order to

create the conditions for peace. We are seeing those conditions slipping away at the moment.

The report is a result of complex, collective work and is an integral part of a broader international effort. The report stresses the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and the opportunity for building a regional security framework. Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as the League of Arab States, are essential for peace and, for the first time ever, the Arab countries can actually represent an opportunity for, rather than a threat to, Israel's security. We must not waste this historic opportunity. Above of all, Israel must not waste this opportunity.

We are also working closely with France in the same direction and towards the same goal. Let me thank President François Hollande and Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault for their great commitment and for our close coordination in these weeks. Our Union and the Quartet have welcomed the communiqué issued in Paris and its support for a negotiated two-state solution. I was myself at a conference in Paris at the beginning of June. All our initiatives can – and must – proceed hand in hand, coherently and in full coordination. Together we can pave the way for a return to meaningful direct talks because this is the ultimate goal of the report.

Let me be very clear on what the report is. I will start with what the report is not. It is not a document on what the final status should look like or on parameters for final status negotiations and it is not a legal assessment of the situation under international law. Let me state clearly that the European position on this is very clear and has not changed.

What is the report? The report seeks to indicate a way forward, with concrete actions to be taken. It is an attempt, first of all, to save the two—state solution. We had a debate here, in this Chamber – a couple of months ago, I believe – on the fact that the two—state solution is fading away. So, first and foremost, we have to make the option of a two—state solution still possible – something about which all of us have serious doubts if the trends continue this way. How? By setting out affirmative measures on the ground to reverse negative trends, to rebuild trust between the sides and to recreate a political horizon. I remember very well that this was exactly the goal we defined for ourselves, as the European Union, the first time we debated the issue in this Chamber at the start of the new term of this Parliament.

The report identifies three main trends that are putting at risk the two—state solution and that need to be reversed.

The first is the trend towards violence and incitement. The report clearly identifies Hamas as responsible for the most explicit and widespread forms of incitement, but it is also a fact that some Fatah members have failed to condemn specific attacks. The report also refers to the actions of the Israeli authorities: an expansive use of administrative detention, punitive home demolitions, closures of whole districts and the use of excessive force when there was no imminent threat.

Second, the settlements: for the first time ever, all Quartet members have agreed to look at the settlement issue in a much broader and deeper context. We focus not just on the construction and expansion of settlements but also on the designation of land for exclusive Israeli use, the high rate of demolitions and the denial of Palestinian development in Area C. This is the first time this has been done by the Quartet as such.

This set of negative trends on the ground in Area C is steadily eroding the viability of the two—state solution and we clearly say this. The legitimate questions in the international community and in the region about Israel's long—term intentions are also raised.

Thirdly, there is the situation in Gaza. The report not only addresses the dire humanitarian situation – and let me remind all of us that the European Union has delivered on all the pledges we made at the conference in Cairo two years ago on reconstruction in Gaza – but we also focus on something that goes beyond the humanitarian situation. Both the continuing military build—up by Hamas and the lack of Palestinian unity damage prospects for economic development and efforts towards a negotiated solution.

So, analysing the situation on the ground was the first step, and you will find in the report things you have not seen said by the Quartet as such ever before. But the analysis of the situation on the ground is only a first step because we have also issued clear common recommendations on actions to be taken on the ground. These are steps on which the whole international community agrees – the European Union, the United States, Russia and the United Nations.

First, decisive action is urgently needed to reverse the negative trends we have described. The parties must work to de—escalate tensions and maintain security cooperation.

Palestinians must strengthen efforts to combat terrorism and incitement to violence. The Israeli policy of settlement construction and expansion has to come to an end.

Second, the two—state solution needs to be created on the ground. The Palestinians must be able to take control of their lives and to build a future, including in Area C. In Gaza all militant activity must end. Israel should accelerate the lifting of the restrictions of movement to and from Gaza with due consideration for its security. The Palestinians should unify, based on the PLO platform and on democracy, for the benefit of their own people.

The third element of the recommendations – you will find 10 recommendations in the report but I will not go through them all – is key. It is that the primary responsibility for peace obviously lies in the hands of the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders. Peace cannot be imposed upon them and only direct negotiations can lead to a solid solution, but the region also has a central role to play. So we strongly encourage further dialogue in the context of the Arab Peace Initiative and its vision for a comprehensive peace because it is very clear that are two overlapping conflicts there that need to be resolved, possibly together: the one between Israel and Palestine and the one that is still creating tensions between Israel and the Arab world.

The report was presented a few days ago. We have seen the first reactions. We fully expected some criticism from the parties and, in fact, that is only natural because the report challenges the prevailing narratives on both sides. We are telling the Israelis and we are telling the Palestinians – and we are doing this together for the first time ever – that there are many things each side can do, and should do, independently to demonstrate genuine commitment to the two-state solution. And this is essential to lay the ground for successful direct negotiations.

Perhaps the most important thing right now is, as we discussed in relation to the global strategy, the follow-up: that both sides engage with the Quartet and use this opportunity to advance and to stop trends that might destroy both peoples. All international initiatives can play a role, and it is vital to keep a united international front and a united region connected with the international front we have built. That is why the Quartet envoys have worked throughout recent months in close cooperation and close connection especially with the initiators and the key players of the Arab Peace Initiative, because we need to

revive that and operationalise it, together with them, and with the united European Union at its core. [Official transcript]

“Statement of Federica Mogherini on the announcement by U.S. President Donald Trump”

President Trump's announcement on Jerusalem has a very worrying potential impact. It is a very fragile context, and the announcement has the potential to send us backwards to even darker times than the ones we are already living in.

The European Union has a clear and united position: we believe that the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine is based on two States, and with Jerusalem as the capital of both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine.

I discussed this with Secretary of States, Rex Tillerson during his visit to Brussels on Tuesday. I have made clear our disagreement with this decision, as did all the Foreign Ministers of the 28 Member States of the European Union that met him with me the same day.

The European Union and its Member States will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem, until the final status of the Holy City is resolved through direct negotiations between the parties.

We believe this difficult moment calls for an even stronger engagement for peace. The most urgent priority now is that all relevant actors avoid to further escalate tensions on the ground.

And it is very important that President Trump has acknowledged in his speech that the status quo of the Holy Places must be preserved. The worst thing that could happen now is an escalation of tensions around the Holy Places and in the region. Because what happens in Jerusalem matters to the whole region and the entire world.

I will host tomorrow the Foreign Minister of Jordan, my good friend Mr [Ayman Al] Safadi. Jordan has a very special role when it comes to the Holy Places. His Majesty the King of Jordan is the custodian of the Holy Places – and he is a very wise man. He deserves and needs all our support in this difficult time and I believe we should all listen to him very carefully. Because what we truly need in these difficult times is wisdom, and to listen to the wise voices calling for peace and for peaceful reactions.

This was one of my messages to President Abbas yesterday during our telephone call, when I reiterated also to him the unchanged European Union position on Jerusalem and on the two-state solution.

On our side, the European Union will engage even more with the parties and with our regional and international partners. We will keep working with the Middle East Quartet – possibly in an enlarged format –, with key regional players such as Jordan, Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but also with other important partners such as Norway.

Let me add that the Arab Peace Initiative remains for us a point of reference for any relaunch of negotiations. We will continue to support the relaunch of direct negotiations between the parties. Our goal as the European Union is and remains to achieve a resolution of the conflict based on two States, and a definition of the future status of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and the State of Palestine through direct negotiations between the two sides. [Official transcript]

"Meeting between Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister and Federica Mogherini" (2017)

Mogherini: Mr. Prime Minister it is a pleasure to welcome you here. I am very pleased with this quite historic opportunity: it has been 22 years since a Prime Minister of Israel visited the European Union. It is far too long for friends and partners as we are. We meet often as friends and partners. I believe President Rivlin visited the European Union. But you knew you had an open invitation and I am very glad you accepted it, to join us today.

We will have a conversation with the 28 Foreign Ministers before we start the Foreign Affairs Council. We decided to have three main points on our agenda: first of all the Middle East Peace Process, but also our bilateral relations that are strong and deep, and the regional situation that worries us, together, in a particular manner.

Obviously the visit comes in a particular time. As partners and friends, we want to discuss each other's interest. And we believe it is in Israel's interest, especially in the security interest of Israel, to find a sustainable and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is why the European Union will increase its work together with our international friends and partners but also with friends and partners in the region, starting from Egypt and Jordan, and obviously with the parties – Israel and Palestine – to

start to relaunch the peace process, even if it seems difficult. We will have a similar conversation with President Abbas in January

You know where the European Union stands. We believe that the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine is based on two States with Jerusalem as the capital of both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine along the 1967 line. This is our consolidated position and we will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem until the final status of the Holy City is resolved through direct negotiations between the parties. And we hope that the parties can engage in meaningful direct negotiations with the support of the international community.

Let me also say that the worst thing that can happen now is an escalation of tensions, of violence. First of all around the Holy Places, but also in the region and beyond. Let me condemn in the strongest possible way all attacks on Jews everywhere in the world, including in Europe and on Israel and on Israeli citizens. Increased tension and violence would only inflame the region and would be a gift to the extremes and to those that are not interested and actually against peace and security and living together.

We express in the strongest possible manner our full support to the work that Jordan and in particular his majesty, the King of Jordan is playing as the custodian of the Holy Places. I met the Foreign Minister of Jordan here last Friday and I know that we share a common interest in the Holy Places keeping their strongest possible value and being a point of reference for the three monotheistic religions. This is not only important for Jerusalem but also for the entire world.

Let me finish on a very positive note: Happy Hanukkah! And welcome, let's make sure it does not take 22 years until a next visit. [Official transcript]

Netanyahu: Oh, thank you, thank you very much. I thank you for this invitation, Federica, and also to the govern of Lithuania. It's a pleasure to be here. Europe and Israel are important partners in three main areas: In the area of security, in the area of prosperity and in the area of peace.

In security, Israeli intelligence has prevented dozen of terrorist attacks, many of them on European soil. And I think countless lives has been saved as a result of this cooperation that is well known to the security services of many European governments. We will

continue to do so as part of our common battle against terrorism. Equally, I think that the greatest problem facing Europe is the flow of people who are escaping the battle-torn areas in the Middle East. And the Middle East is under threat both of Isis- militant Islam of the Sunni variety and militant Islam of the Shia variety led by Iran. Israel is the strongest power in the Middle East that is preventing the spread of militant Islam. Not only preventing Isis attacks in Europe but also preventing the collapse of many parts of the Middle East adjacent to Israel that would otherwise be taken over by these militant Islamists driving many, many, many millions into Europe. So, obviously we do so to protect ourselves, but in so doing, I believe that Israel serves a very important security function for the people of Europe in ways that are not always understood but increasingly are appreciated by the relevant governments.

The second point is prosperity. We are in a revolution. A great revolution in the world. The future belongs to those who innovate. Ten years ago, the ten leading companies in the world were five energy companies, one IT. In a brief span of a decade, that has been completely reversed. The five IT companies are now in the top ten, one energy company is left, which went from number one to number five. The revolution is big data, AI, connectivity, the net. New industries are created out of thin air. Israel has now a car industry, we never had it. Europe has many car industries. Our car industry receives tens of billions of dollars of investment, including fifteen billion a few months ago when Intel bought an Israeli based autonomous vehicle company. We didn't have this. We have 500 start-ups, just in autonomous vehicles and in Waze and crowdsourcing that are important, that are changing the pace of transportation. I give this as one example. Digital health another example, being developed in Israel. Precision agriculture, IT, cyber. Israel now has received 20% of the global private investment in cybersecurity. Can we live without cybersecurity? Can you protect your bank accounts? Your electricity grids? Your civil aviation? Your cars in the future? You need cybersecurity. Israel is a world partner.

Therefore, the partnership between Israel and Europe is vital. In my opinion, it is important not only for us. Clearly it is, I wouldn't be here otherwise. But I think it's important for Europe. And many, many countries around the world understand that. That Israel is the partner for innovation and innovation is the future. So this is the second point. We have also found gas, by the way. We have just concluded an MoU (memorandum of understanding) with some of the European countries: Cyprus, Greece and Italy, (turning

to Mogherini) a country familiar to you. We are actually exploring the laying of a gas pipeline from our offshore gas fields up to Italy. This would be, I think, very important for Europe's economy in this way as well. Innovation, energy and every other way we believe we are natural partners.

Third, is peace. Israel has extended its hand to peace to our Palestinian neighbors for hundred years. Well before there was a state of Israel and after it was established. And for fifty years before there was a single settlement or a single issue of territory. We were being attacked constantly. We were attacked not because of this or that piece of territory but of the idea of any territory that there will be a Jewish state, a nation state for the Jewish people. And any boundary was rejected by our neighbors. And this is what led to the conflict and this is what continues the conflict. You see that in the continuous denial, unfortunately by the Palestinians of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and the denial of our history. For 3000 years Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people. From the time established by the King David, well documented by the history of the bible and the aftermath. When Jews in the ghettos of Europe whispered: 'next year in Jerusalem, next year in Jerusalem'. We never lost our connection. Yet that connection is denied in UN forms, in UNESCO, in laughable decisions that seek to deny history and seek to deny historical truth. Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel for the last 70 years. I think what President Trump has done was put facts squarely on the table. Peace is based on reality. Peace is based on recognizing reality. And I think the fact that Jerusalem's capital... Jerusalem is Israel's capital is clearly evident to all of you who visit Israel. See where the seat of our parliament, our Knesset is, the seat of our government, my office, the president's office, the supreme court. Jerusalem is Israel's capital, no one can deny it. It doesn't obviate peace - it makes peace possible. Because recognizing reality is the substance of peace, is the foundation of peace. There is now an effort underway to bring forward a new peace proposal by the American administration. I think we should give peace a chance. I think we should see what is presented and see if we can advance this peace. But if we have to begin it, I would say, it's one place, recognize the Jewish state, it has always been about the Jewish state. And it's time that the Palestinians recognize the Jewish state and recognize that it has a capital, and it is called Jerusalem.

I believe that even though we don't have an agreement yet, this is what will happen in the future. I believe that all, or most of the European countries will move their embassies to

Jerusalem, recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and engage robustly with us for security, prosperity and peace. So, I thank you for this opportunity to present these views which I am sure we will engage in a hearty discussion with the foreign ministers. It's a valuable opportunity and an important one. Europe is important - that's why I am here.

“Speech by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the European Parliament plenary session on US President Trump's announcement to recognise Jerusalem as capital of Israel”

Mr President, the voice of the European Union has been heard loud and clear in all corners of the world after President Trump's announcement on Jerusalem. We believe that Jerusalem shall be the capital of two states: West Jerusalem for the state of Israel and East Jerusalem for the state of Palestine. We believe that the only way to achieve this goal is through direct negotiations between the parties based on the 1967 borders and that there is no alternative solution that would be both viable and sustainable, meet the aspirations of the two sides and address the legitimate concerns. This is the position of the entire European Union and this is what all 28 Foreign Ministers said yesterday morning to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, one by one, in full unity. Our position is built on the most solid foundations. It is based on the Oslo Accords between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and on the international consensus embodied in UN Security Council Resolution 478. Our partners know very well where we stand and we have made it very clear – always, and during these last very difficult days.

As a partner and as a friend, we have always been clear in our contacts with the United States, before and after the decision was taken. Exactly one week ago, I met with Rex Tillerson, the US Secretary of State, together with the 28 Foreign Ministers of the European Union Member States, and we invited the United States to carefully consider the repercussions that such a decision may have had on public opinion in the region and all around the world, because what happens in Jerusalem has global repercussions for good and for bad. This move risks strengthening radical forces in the region and weakening forces of wisdom and moderation, being completely counterproductive. We discussed these arguments with our American interlocutors, including a couple of days ago with Jared Kushner, President Trump's Middle East adviser, and our contacts with our American friends will continue in the coming days and weeks.

The Israelis and the Palestinians also know where we stand and this makes us a credible, predictable and indispensable partner for them to restart a meaningful peace process. It therefore comes as no surprise that our meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Netanyahu was very open and frank. We did not hide our disagreements because this is what good friends and partners, as we are, should always do. We have made it clear that we will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem as Europeans, including on the location of our embassies, until the final status of Jerusalem is resolved through direct negotiations between the parties.

At the same time, we understand Israel's security concerns and we want to see them properly addressed. I took the opportunity of the visit of Prime Minister Netanyahu – the first one for more than 20 years – to condemn in the strongest possible terms all attacks against Jews everywhere in the world, including in Europe, and all attacks against Israeli citizens. At the same time, we believe that Israel's security interests are best served by having a stable, viable, independent Palestinian state living in peace and security at the side of the Israeli state. This is what many great Israeli leaders have rightly believed throughout the years and this is what led Yitzhak Rabin to sign the Oslo Accords.

I presented the very same position, very openly and very clearly, to our Palestinian and Arab friends. Last week, I spoke with President Abbas and guaranteed that the European Union will continue to work for Jerusalem to be the capital of both the state of Israel and the state of Palestine. We agreed with President Abbas that he will join us in Brussels on the occasion of the January Foreign Affairs Council, and we will have a similar discussion with him on the perspectives of the relaunch of the Middle East peace process that we had yesterday with Prime Minister Netanyahu. I also asked President Abbas to do all he can to make sure that all demonstrations remain peaceful.

On Friday, in Brussels, I met with my Jordanian counterpart, and also my friend, Foreign Minister Ayman Al Safadi, and with him contacts have continued on a daily basis, actually several times a day. We are in contact with what we consider to be a key player at this moment because Jordan plays a very special role when it comes to Jerusalem. His Majesty the King of Jordan is the custodian of the holy sites, as agreed in the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. He is also a very wise man and I believe all of us remember the very wise words he addressed to this very Chamber a couple of years ago. I thank the Minister for the restraint and the wisdom shown by Jordan in this difficult situation, including the work done by Jordan and others during the League of Arab States

Ministerial Meeting in Cairo last Saturday, where the Arab Peace Initiative was recalled as a useful framework to re—advance the possibility to start negotiations. The steps taken by the Arab states in these days and in the coming days, in the near future, will be particularly important: to show leadership, wisdom, restraint and moderation, keeping the clearly defined position that we are backing in full consistency with our consolidated position and role.

I can say that I believe that, in these hours and days, the European Union is an important point of reference for the Arab world. Regardless of all the narratives and the rhetoric about the Arab world and the West, Europe constitutes an important point of reference to uphold the principle and the consensus developed on Jerusalem. For us Europeans this situation is a call to mobilise with even greater conviction for peace between Israel and Palestine. We are determined to play an even more active role in trying to provide, first, a political horizon for the two-state solution – there is no realistic alternative to two states – and, second, to work to create the appropriate international and regional framework to relaunch direct negotiations. So we will keep working. We are continuing to work at this time with both parties and with the Middle East Quartet, which means together with the United States, Russia and the United Nations. This format, as I have said in recent days, could possibly be enlarged to include key regional players such as Jordan and Egypt, but we could also involve other important partners, such as Norway, who could play an important part in supporting this process. The United States should – and could – continue to play an important role in that framework.

It is in the darkest hours, such as these, that the work of peacemakers becomes more difficult – yes – but more important. We must first of all engage to prevent any escalation around Jerusalem, which could have terrible consequences for the region and beyond, and we must engage to preserve the objective of two states and recreate the conditions for the peace process to restart – the key to restart the engine.

Let me conclude by saying that Jerusalem is not just a city. Jerusalem is the cradle of three faiths. Our ancestors believed that it was the centre of the entire world and the whole world still looks at Jerusalem. It can be a reason for division and even war or it can be the most powerful symbol of peace and reconciliation. The region and the world count on Europe – count on the European Union – to stay engaged with a clear, united message and clear, determined work and this is exactly what we are doing in the clearest and most united manner. [Official transcript]

“Foreign Affairs Council, 3587th meeting: press conference by Federica

Mogherini”

Mogherini: Well first of all, as you have noticed, we started our day welcoming, after 22 years, the prime minister of Israel, in a moment of particular tension, in Jerusalem and in the region, very timely, following the recent developments and US announcement on Jerusalem. Our exchange focused mainly in the situation of Jerusalem and the Middle Eastern Peace Process, even if we touched upon the other two points we decided to discuss with the Prime Minister – being the bilateral relations between the EU and Israel and the regional developments. But obviously the situation in Jerusalem and the prospective of the Middle East Peace Process have been the main points of our exchange. After the US announcement, we see an even stronger engagement for peace with the parties and international and regional partners. During the exchange we had with the prime minister, almost two hours, myself, and the 28 foreign ministers, we underlined that a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains top priority for the EU. We have a consolidated and very much united position. I have to say that Prime Minister Netanyahu realized, I think, from the ministers themselves that there’s a full EU unity on this. That the only realistic solution for the conflict between Israel and Palestine is based on two states with Jerusalem as the capital of both the state of Israel and the state of Palestine. The EU and its member states will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem until the final status of the holy city is resolved through direct negotiations between the parties. That was a clear and united message that all the 28 foreign ministers conveyed to the Prime Minister. We also stressed strongly the importance of the holy sites of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam and our strong support by the all 28 member states and the EU institutions to Jordan and the key role, his Majesty, the King of Jordan is playing as custody of the holy places as I could reiterate to the Jordanian foreign minister last Friday.

So, the message was clear but also a clear message from the EU side to help in all possible manners to find or re-find the key to start the engine of the peace process. This is first of all in the security interest of Israel and this is why we will continue to work with both sides, Israelis and Palestinians. We will receive President Abbas for at the next foreign ministry council for similar talks. But also, we will continue our work together with the international parties starting from the US within the quartet with Russia and the UN and

with important partners we have in the region, starting from Jordan and Egypt. We have seen an important meeting of the ministers of the League of Arab State on Saturday that reiterated the Arab Peace Initiative as the basis for their engagement. We very much share that view, and we will work together with the group they have established to explore all possible to restart the process and accompany it. We then moved, ah, so maybe to sum up, because I heard that some Arab talking about the European Union initiative or proposals, we are not looking at multiplying initiatives. We are looking at playing at full our role as usual, as determined, quiet, rational, cooperative, convening power, as always reliable, predictable. We will try to help finding solutions avoiding any dangerous vacuum that could only strengthen radical positions or extremists' positions which is something we do not want to see. Neither in the region nor elsewhere.

We then met the ministers only for our foreign affairs council proper. It was quite a natural continuation of the conversation because the main point of our agenda was the wider Middle East, we recognize the connections that are there in the many different crises' areas in the region. And we had a sort of a... *French* with the ministers of all the different hot spots of the region, checking where we are as a EU and what we can do further. I have to say also in this other phase we have registered a remarkable level of unity and determination by the member states. First of all, I will mention Yemen, where we have played so far a major humanitarian role and we have worked on some practical initiatives on the political and diplomatic side. We have expressed a willingness together, EU member states, to play more of a political role to try and facilitated a political solution for a crisis that we see is spiraling to something awful. And we need to avoid that this becomes the spark of a broader confrontation in the region.

On Lebanon, our objective is to ensure that the country keeps focusing on its internal priorities after the return of prime minister Hariri to Beirut that we welcome very much. We see a renewed willingness to the full respect of the disassociation policy of the country that we support very much. I'll visit Beirut myself next week on the 19th to show the EU support to the prime minister, the government, the institutions of the country that needs to be accompanied and supported and the EU is there for that, together with all our international partners.

On Syria we are preparing, as you know, the second Brussels conference in the spring that will give us the opportunity to put on the table some positive leverages that the UN. a special invoice ... can use to incentivize a political agreement in Geneva. I have had the

opportunity to say several times in the last couple of weeks we believe that on the Syria crisis all roads need to lead to Geneva. I am from Rome; I took the liberty of distorting a bit the usual saying for a good purpose. Because we believe that the only credible framework for a political solutions, a political solution, can be guaranteed by the UN and we hope to see steps forward and solution there. Though conflict is still ongoing, even if some wish to pretend it is over. We know very well that on the ground fighting is still going on, civilians are still attacked, and we see that with our humanitarian support every single day inside Syria. So that the assumption that the war is over, and the things can go back to normal, unfortunately has no real ground. We wish it could become reality in the upcoming months and we are to support any positive development. Both on the de-escalation zones implementation and on political negotiations with concrete action, with concrete support, including economic support. But what is clear that the European money will come for reconstruction once a political agreement is reached in Geneva under UN auspices and the right guarantees of credibility.

Sorry, I'm going around quite quickly over a region that is a bit crowded. I would say only one last word on Iraq, because we are preparing the new EU strategy to support the country in this critical moment. We are seeing going developments on the defeat of Daesh on the ground. We believe this is not the time to forget about Iraq, this is the time to increase our work in the country. So, we will work to preserve Iraq unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, help on including minorities and keeping diversity of the society through better inclusiveness and governance. We are working on strengthening institutions, including with our new mission that has started last 22nd of November to help on the security sector reform and obviously as always, we are working on to support the role of civil society, women and young people in the difficult phase the country is facing now. So, our work to support Iraq will increase in the coming months. In particular to also make sure that relations between Baghdad and Erbil get on a cooperative tone and the country manages to avoid mistakes that in the past were done. Underestimating problems that then developed into something major that we all had to face.

I believe I went around all the set of issue we discussed with the ministers and I present to you, somehow, the conclusions that we had reached as a common ground for the EU and its members states action in the next months on this. Also, to mention that we welcome the fact that the GCC meeting took place even if we would expect more steps in the direction of re-finding in that format a way for the countries of the golf to cooperate

among themselves and with others – including the EU. We have always valued enormously the bilateral relations between the EU and the GCC as a forum, and we support and continue to support very much the work that, in particular, the emir of Kuwait is carrying on save and relaunch the format that we believe is essential for cooperation around the golf.

Now the foreign affairs council will continue with other of important points, one is lunch that we will have now, a bit late lunch, and this is now if you'll excuse me to keep this press point quite short... We will have the foreign ministers of the G5-Sahel countries with us to discuss together our common work on security but also on development together with the African Union and the UN. This is a work that we stated several years ago, I started myself the format of ministerial meetings between the 5 foreign ministers of G5- Sahel countries and myself regularly we meet, at least once a year. Actually, much more often now as our challenges in common increase and also our cooperation increases. So we will have a discussion with them on how to support the joint force they have put in place...

Reporter #1: Two questions on Netanyahu if I may. First of all, what was the EU response if there was any to Netanyahu's request for help to contain Iran in Syria, particularly on the Israeli border. And secondly, I know your words saying we want to avoid multiple peace initiatives, but I do sense there is some impatience in Europe with how long Washington is taking to advance what it wants to do, what it's thinking. How long are you willing to wait for the vacuum, as you call it, to be filled?

Mogherini: On this point, I can say very clearly that there's no peace initiative, no attempt to restart peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians that can happen without an engagement from the US. But there can be no illusion from the US side that the US initiative alone would be successful. Because there's the need for an international and regional framework to accompany the beginning, hopefully, inshallah, of the negotiations. Which seem very far away at the moment. Also, because in order to restart negotiations you have to define the horizon, the horizon and the framework. And that for that moment, even if I talk very frequently with our American friends, I spoke with Kushner just the other day, both the horizon and the framework, appear to be...still to be determined, let's put it this way. On top of that, it is a European concern that we've shared obviously with our American friends, with Teareson last week, but also with Prime Minister Netanyahu today, we don't want to see a discredited US administration when it

comes to negotiations in the Middle East. We want to continue to work within the quartet with the US, with Russia and with the UN and we want possibly to enlarge it to Jordan, Egypt, to name two. But also, there are other friends in the international community that can help us defining the horizon and the framework. I was mentioning in the last days the Norwegians as those that have worked so much and so well in the past to determine framework and horizon for a different era. Now we need to have a collective thinking and most of all we need to unite forces. Forces of reason and determined to find a solution. Because the real danger that we shared with prime minister Netanyahu, all of us. And again, I can tell you the unity that we have shown today, the ministers have shown today has been remarkable. Is that this move can open space for radical forces on all sides and in the region, and this is a development we do not want to see. So, we are not working on a specific EU initiative. We are not simply sitting and waiting, waiting for Godo attitude. But we are working actively with our partners including the US, including the actors in the region, on a clear horizon which is a two-states and with a clear framework of direct negotiations and an international regional framework to accompany that.

On Syria, yes, we discussed briefly about that, because as I told you that the news of the week brought us to discuss mainly Jerusalem and the Middle East Peace Process. We discussed briefly the situation in Syria and the approach we have as Europeans of guaranteeing as I said the solution for Syria is a negotiating one, political one that gives space to Syrians with a Syrian own process that recognizes all identities of the different Syrian societies. And doesn't put Syria neither under one or another or split the country into different areas of influence. This has always been the European position, and this continues to be the European position.

Reporter #2: Just shortly two questions, the first one about Mr. Netanyahu saying that the peace is always built on reality while you are saying only the only real solution is Two-State. Until which limit you are going to support the two-state solution horizon? And the second you said about Lebanon in Rome, that Lebanon has nine souls. You are visiting Lebanon. What is your advice to the Lebanese and what they need to do to reserve some souls for darker times, maybe? And what can the EU and you mean to bring on the table? Thank you.

Mogherini: ...On your other question, the two states. Listen, I have not... reality. Reality is about perception. I have not heard by anyone and from anyone, not only in the last weeks, but also in the last decades, any other idea than the two states to preserve Israeli

security, the Palestinians need to have their own country and their own authority. And we always say, the two states solution is the only realistic one. It's not out of idealism or the fact that we like the ideas of the past. One state, we know very well, will not guarantee for demographic trends Israel's identity to continue to exist or will not allow the right of Palestinians to exist as full citizens. You want to introduce three states? Four? Five? Ten? Two states are the only viable and realistic option and so far, I have not heard any other idea that is more realistic than that one from anyone. The point is as I said: one state of Israel recognized with Jerusalem in the 67 lines as its capital, one state of Palestine with Jerusalem in the 67 lines recognized as its capital. It's the only way to go. If others have other ideas – I have not heard them. This is where the EU stands, and its member states stand. And I even would like to add one thing, I didn't say it so far, but I would do it now, especially after the round of talks we had with the ministers and the prime minister. I know that PM Netanyahu mentioned a couple of times that he expects others to follow President Trump's decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem. He can keep his expectation from others because from the EU side this will not come.

Parts of the transcription were removed due to irrelevance to the topic.

“Prime Minister Netanyahu in a Summit with the Visegrád Heads of State”

Thank you, PM Orbán. (In Hebrew) I'll shortly say in Hebrew, because I understand that the Israeli journalism has already gotten an intensive report, I'll focus on the main things. (Back to English) I want to summarize briefly this meeting. First, I'm honored to be the first Israeli PM to visit the Visegrád summit. And I want to thank the prime ministers of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia for this great honor which I think is also of importance. I believe that we stand together as 5 democracies that are facing great opportunities and great challenges.

The great challenge that faces all of us is the threat pose by the rise of militant Islam and the sparks of terror that it sends, flying throughout the Middle East and sweeping into Europe, Africa and elsewhere. Asia. Israel serves a unique function in being the one Western country in the region, the one country that is able to limit and fight from the region, within the region, this great danger to all of us. And I suggest we will have a working group, as Orbán said, a working group on how to work together, to cooperate and in this battle against terrorism, the spread of militant Islam and terrorism to the world. I believe that we can do all more together than separately.

The second challenge is to seize the promise of the future. The future belongs to those who innovate. The countries that innovate will be able to improve the income of their people and to give, to justify, the price that we expect from products and services by adding value. Technology is key. And technology is revolutionizing every single industry: water, agriculture, energy, transportation, health. Every single activity. Communications obviously. So, we are an innovation nation. We have thousand and thousand of start-ups and we seek to have this cooperation with you, the Visegrád group and with Europe. And I believe it's in the interest of Europe, the objective interest of Europe to cooperate with Israel on these two areas: the fight against terrorism and technology for the future. One is fighting the forces of the past and the other is securing a better more prosperous future for our peoples.

In this regard, I also express my appreciation for the positions taken by the Visegrád countries on several occasions for representing this position about Israel to the countries of Europe. There is an anomaly, I don't hide it. We are often criticized by Europe, often more any other place, by Western Europe, often more than any other place in the world. Israel is the one democracy in the Middle East. Israel is the one beacon of tolerance in a very wide area. Israel is the one place where Christians are safe and the Christian community in Israel not only survives but thrives and grows. Israel is a ... of European and Western values in the heart of a very, very dark area. This is understood today not only in serving our interests, and I believe your interests. I believe that many Arab countries understand that Israel serves their interest. So, it's time to have a reassessment in Europe about the relations with Israel. We have much to offer each other. We have much to offer in the realm of security, much to offer in the realm of technology. This is not only good for us, but I believe good for you.

In this regard, I am very happy that the Visegrád group has decided to accept my invitation to have the next meeting in Israel. And so, end my statement by saying what the Jewish people have been saying for thousands of years, next year in Jerusalem. Thank you, thank you very much.

**“PM Netanyahu and French President Macron at Gala Event in Honor of 70 years
of the State of Israel”**

"We are celebrating tonight 70 years of Israeli independence and 70 years of Israeli-French friendship. There is much to celebrate. There are great moments that decided the

future of our peoples – one of them took place here. It took place over 100 years ago, close to 120 years ago, when Émile Zola wrote "J'accuse". He attacked anti-Semitism and he paved the way for Zionism because a young Jewish journalist, Theodor Herzl heard those words, understood what they meant and wrote the seminal track that changed Jewish history – he wrote the "Jewish State". The "Jewish State" is the most important work of Zionism and the rebirth of the Jewish people.

The second most important work is Émile Zola's "J'accuse" because it clarifies in moral terms why the attack on the Jews was unjust, just as Herzl said, why the creation of the Jewish state was a necessity. So we celebrate today 70 years of Israel's founding, of Israel's ingenuity and 70 years of this profound relationship between our two nations.

I mentioned anti-Semitism but it is one aspect of a different relationship altogether which is based on shared values. Why are our nations such great allies? And I suppose the answer might be summed up in three words – words with which you all are familiar: *Liberte, egalite, fraternite!* First, *liberte*. For Israel, that vision, the vision that has always guided us is the hope that has inspired us, the words that have always sung by our national anthem is to be a free people, a liberated people in our homeland. So to establish Israel 70 years ago and to protect Israel every day since then, we have had to fight against forces of tyranny and terror who despise liberty. Like France, Israel believes in liberty. Like France, Israel cherishes liberty.

Like France, Israel is a proud democracy – proud of our record in preserving liberty in the heart of the Middle East. This is truly a remarkable achievement because in the 70 years there was not a single moment, a second even, in which Israel's democracy was put into question. We stand for *liberté*.

We also stand for *egalite*. Like France, Israel values equality. Our people gave the world the most powerful statement of equality ever made – the Bible's statement that all are created in the image of God, and that fundamental vision of equality guides our nation today. That's why Israel is home to Arab Supreme Court Justices, Christian diplomats, Muslim police officers, Druze ministers, in fact, a Druze minister in my cabinet is right here – Ayoob Kara. Ayoob, stand up. You probably are standing up. There you are. Thank you. It is home to female fighter pilots, to gay members of Knesset. We draw on the

passion and creativity of all our citizens regardless of gender or religion, or ethnicity or race. In Israel, we believe that all are equal under God and in Israel, and in the Middle East only in Israel - all are equal under the law.

And *fraternite* - Like France, Israel is a friendly nation that stands in solidarity with so many around the world. You see that solidarity when Israel sends medical aid to countries like Haiti and Nepal after devastating natural disasters. In fact, when I leave here tonight I'm going to speak to my friend, the President of Guatemala and offer whatever help we can help. Israelis go to various places around the world and offer light and hope.

So we see that solidarity also when we treat thousands of wounded Syrians who are the victims of a terrible war and a brutal regime. We see that solidarity in the life-saving technology we share with Indian farmers and African mothers who don't have to walk days, hours every day to get water because Israeli technology solved that problem. We see that solidarity also in the peaceful relations we have enjoyed for decades with two of our Arab neighbors, Egypt and Jordan – peace agreements that have stood the test of time. And as I told President Macron today, I believe that this broader peace will expand to the Arab countries and ultimately to our Palestinian neighbors.

So these cherished values - liberty, equality and fraternity - unite our two peoples and our two countries. But they have opponents – people who oppose these values try to strike us down. They strike us down not because they hate us for what we are but for what we believe. They believe everything opposite to *liberte*, *egalite* and *fraternite*. They want a different world – a dark world, to go back to the middle ages. In France, these people have targeted a supermarket, a satirical newspaper, a music concert. In Israel, they've targeted kindergartens, cafes and clubs. And these militant terrorists are united and we should be united against them. But I believe that we can win the war against terrorism by uniting around our common values. President Macron and I had the opportunity to speak about that today and I think that we have opportunities that will prove to be very valuable for our quest for peace and security in the Middle East and beyond. [Official Transcription].

Statements by PM Netanyahu and Baltic Leaders

Thank you, prime minister. Thank you, prime ministers- Saulius, Maris, Juri. This is a wonderful opportunity to make a historic beginning. This is a first visit of an Israeli prime minister to the Baltic states, to Lithuania. It is deep with meaning. Both in an historical sense - the experience of the Jewish people, the community that had been here, was destroyed, was reconstituted really in the Jewish state which now comes here to the reconstituted democracies of the Baltic group. We are all small democracies, but with giants spirits of our people. Committed to freedom, committed to liberty, committing to seizing the future and I believe we can cease it better together.

I am delighted that the prime ministers have accepted my invitation to have the next or the future B3 meeting in Jerusalem. We want to enhance it with the meaning of the Baltic business and technological people and scientists. Because I think this is where our future is. We discussed two big areas: the first is the area of innovation, the future belongs to those who innovate.

There are tremendous intellectual powers in Israel, in Estonia, in Latvia, in Lithuania. And if we pull them together for certain projects, we have some ideas, clear ideas in mind, then we can make our people advance in a much greater pace and to be in the cutting edge of certain industries. Even new industries that people have not realized. I can give one example is cyber. You can give other examples here, whether it is laser or e-government. Where there is a tremendous advancement here that I, and in other areas, that I admire in the Baltic region. We can be at the forefront. The fact that we are small does not mean that we can't be big. If we focus our energies in the technologies of our future and harness the talents of our people - we can be very big. And I think that is the first area.

The second area is security. We are already cooperating in number of security and defense related areas. And here too I think we can do a great deal more. We discussed this in some detail and I believe that more can be done. I unabashedly asked the help of my friends here in making, correcting, what I think is a distorted position, a distorted view on Israel in the EU. I don't mean the EU countries. We are doing that on our own with all the countries of Europe, large and small. I am talking about the organization as such. We discussed a number of way that we can, we can advance better agreement. One of the areas that, I think, is not fully understood is Iran. The nuclear deal with Iran threatened Europe as well. Because it didn't really stop the race to a nuclear weapon. In fact, it

enabled Iran to pursue the enrichment of Uranium unlimited. Within a few years what would open a path not to a nuclear bomb but to an entire nuclear arsenal.

But at the same time, it has also brought to Iran coffers of billion and billion dollars that were used for the purposes of oppressing their own people, inside Iran, who suffer under that tyranny. And of course, seeking to expand the conquest of the Middle East to Iran – In Iraq, In Syria, in Yemen, in Lebanon and so many other places. I think that the decision yesterday by the EU to give 18 million euros to Iran is a big mistake. It's like a poison pill to the Iranian people and to the efforts to curb Iranian aggression in the region and terror beyond the region. Iran tried to conduct a terror attack on the soil of Europe just a few weeks ago while Iran's foreign minister was meeting European leaders. That is incredible. And I think giving money to this regime in this time is a big mistake and should be stopped. Where will this extra money go? It's not going to go to solve the water problem in Iran, it's not going to go for Iranian truck drivers. It's going to go to the missiles and the revolutionary guards in Iran and in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East. I think this should be changed. All countries should join the efforts to restore sanctions on Iran in order to press them, to stop their aggression and desist on their terror activities.

We have had, I believe, not only a meeting of the minds but also a meeting of the hearts. There was a tragedy that befell the Jews here, was one that resonates for our people and resonates for me personally. My family came from Lithuania over a century ago to what is now Israel. But there's not a person among us who does not know the depth of that tragedy. The fact that the governments here have taken strong positions both in restoring Jewish sites and also in fighting anti-Semitism so unequivocally, so clearly, is something we appreciate deeply and it's also part of this ongoing friendship between us. So, from every respect I think this has been a very, very successful meeting and I hope to continue it, as we say, next year in Jerusalem.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Statement at the Craiova Forum Meeting

Prime Minister, Boyko Borisov, Thank you for the hospitality and this wonderful invitation. To president Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă, these are all real friends.

You know, in political life, you say friends and that supposes to be preformer but these is not preformer. These are warm and close friends and I want to start by saying what a

singular honor it's for me and really for my country to be invited to attend your regional meeting which I think makes for advancing your interests within the context of Europe. I think that these regional meetings, as I can judge from Visegrád and the Baltics, are a very wise approach to advancing your national and regional interests, and I am very proud that you have invited me in this context.

But I want to touch first on history. The Jewish people went through the greatest torment of mankind during the Holocaust, and in each of your countries there were brave men and women who stood up and saved Jews, very often in the endangerment of their own lives. And this was done repeatedly, and it is something that we will never forget. I attach this to two things: first, your common position against anti-Semitism today, it still rears its ugly head. Each one of your governments takes a very strong position against it and we appreciate it very much. We think this is important, primarily because this hatred, perhaps can start with Jews but it quickly spreads to everyone else. So, I think it is for our common humanity, it is a great service you are all performing. Also, the commemoration of Jewish sites, Jewish synagogues and documentation is something that we in Israel deeply appreciate.

I would like to say also that we only reciprocate this historic action on the part of your brave citizens by protecting European lives, by having exchanges with our intelligence services, which I believe are second to none in fighting terrorism, in uncovering terrorist attacks. We have done that. Dozens of terrorist attacks on the soil and in skies of Europe we have prevented. And we do so with your excellent cooperation from your various services. And it's something that I think safeguards the citizens of each of our countries and not everyone knows about it, but I take this opportunity to thank you for this cooperation and to express our commitment to continue this important cooperation in saving lives.

We discussed bilaterally with each, I discussed with each of our friends here how we can increase Israeli cooperation but within the group context, let me say that we have three things that I think are important to our common future. The first is technology, the second is energy and the third is security. Which I will expand on.

On technology, there is a revolution in the world, an extraordinary revolution where single human endeavor is being technologized. Israel is an innovation nation. We have 8,000 start-ups and the numbers grow all the time - anything from cyber security, to health,

water management, IT, every field: growing food, making crops last longer, making them better suited for people's diets and so on. These things we want to share, are eager to share, with our friends here in various ways. And I think the future belongs to those who innovate.

We can do much more together, and we in Israel are eager to do so. We have discussed a number of ideas on how to do this and we are already doing some of that. There is much more to do. Products of the mind are enormously valuable. And we can see that because in the last ten years, the ten leading companies in the world have shifted to companies that produce products of the mind. There is more to be done. We would like to do it with you.

The second field is energy. We need energy. Everyone needs energy. And we discussed how Israel can help meet the energy goals of the countries represented here. We are two projects that we discussed. One relates to a one that is already been discussed and is already underway, and to the extent that we can help your countries increase the efficiency of the energies that you receive, obviously we are going to help as best we can.

Second, we are developing what has already been mentioned here - the EastMed gas pipeline. It will be the longest underwater gas pipeline in the world. It will go from our gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean through Cyprus, to Crete, Greece, to Italy and possibly go up to the Balkans. We have discussed that. We are now in the feasibility phase. We want to move it very rapidly and I hope that the feasibility shows that it can be done because if it can be done - it must be done. And I think that this will be a great assistance to us, exporting this gas and also to you in diversifying your gas resources. So we are discussing this in a very serious way, in a very purposeful way.

The third question is security. I discussed the ways that Israel prevents terrorist attacks, but I think in a larger sense, we are part of a common civilization. We are all democracies. We all seek to better the future of our peoples through choice and respect for human life and human dignity. These concepts are under assault by extremist forces, the greatest of are the forces of militant Islam that threatens our civilization and our future. One way it does so is by trying to bring down our airplanes or murder our citizens on the streets and when I said that I was talking about things like ISIS, or Al Qaeda on the extremist Sunni Islam but there is also an extremist Shiite front led by Iran. Iran, I believe, is posing great danger to the world. On Sunday, President Trump will issue new sanctions against Iran.

I want you to know that the sanctions that have already been imposed, we could see, a decrease in the amount of money that goes to these various aggressive and terrorist activities of Iran. It is already have shown its signs and I believe that Iranian aggression will be further constricted by these sanctions and I hope that all the countries here will join in this effort. I think we should not lose our gaze on what's important. That are things that are very important.

For example, what happened at the Istanbul consulate was horrendous and it should be totally dealt with. Yet at the same time, I say, that it is very important for the stability of the region and the world that Saudi Arabia remains stable and I think that away must be found to achieve both goals because I think that the larger problem is on the part of Iran and I think that we have to make sure that Iran does not continue the malicious activities that it has been doing over the last few weeks in Europe. We had helped uncovered two terrorist attacks, one in Paris and the other in Copenhagen organized by the Iranian secret services. And I think that blocking Iran is in uppermost our agenda for security, not only for Israel, but I believe for Europe and the world as well.

These are small parts of the cooperation we had with the countries represented here. I have to say say that there is something beyond interest here – It is common values, It is also a great sympathy, sympathy of our peoples that is expressed in the growing tourism to each one of the countries here. Many Israelis come to Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Romania. That expresses, I believe, tremendous fondness for the cultures, peoples and future of the countries represented here.

All I can say is: Next year in Jerusalem. We will be happy to receive each of you individually or in a group, however you choose, and thank you. Thank you at Boyko for this wonderful invitation. I appreciate it very much.

“Situation in Israel and Palestine, including the settlements” (2019)

Let me start by sharing with you a personal memory. Maybe an anecdote, it's not mystery. When I took office exactly five years ago, five years and a couple of weeks ago, I paid my first visit outside of the EU to Israel and Palestine, including visiting Gaza. And I said at that time that two-state solution can be achieved during my mandate. This was the goal that I kept in my mind and in my actions all of the years and at some point this goal seemed to be getting closer. But we all know what the situation looks like today. This doesn't that the perspective is not there and not valid anymore. It is a matter of political

will and political conditions and I'll get back to that. But today clearly If I've paid the same visit, I probably wouldn't say that I believe that the solution can be achieved in the coming months and years. The very idea of two states today has come under attack as never, never before, from many sides. Yet we should know that the two-state solution remains the best and the only realistic chance for peace and also for security in the holy places. This is a principled and a pragmatic position at the same time. Nobody, nobody has presented a credible alternative to the two states so far. Many have argued against it but nobody has expressed any clear view that can substitute that objective realistically. And any plan that is not firmly anchored in international law and let me add also in the profound aspirations and interest of the people, not only of Palestine and Israel but also in the region will ultimately fail. Our support of the two states is a matter of international law, is a matter of justice and democracy. But as I mentioned it's also a matter of realism. In these years we have worked full-time to avoid the dissolution of the two states perspective and the work continues to date. Even in such difficult circumstances and let me say, especially in such difficult circumstances. Because something we have the impression, us, some of our friends in the UN system, in the Arab world, but also a little far away in Africa and Asia, that especially in this moment when it's so difficult to keep the perspective alive that the voices of wisdom and realism need to be heard and need to speak up. This is why we have actually as the objective was fading away, kept the position and the work at full speed and with all our strength. This explains the positions on all our recent developments.

First on settlements, we have always believed that border changes can only be decided through direct negotiations between the parties based on the pre-67 borders. Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law. They constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make the two states solution impossible. In addition, settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving the capital of both states. We have never shied away from restating this position. Including just a week ago. And with a united European position. I hear many times many inviting us to speak in one voice in difficult times in difficult years this has remained and remains the strong united European Union position.

Our position is clear and unchanged also regarding the security of the state of Israel. Firing rockets on Israeli civilian population is simply unacceptable. And I am grateful to Egypt for the diplomatic efforts which helped to stop the recent escalation. And I will

repeat once again, Israel has the right to security, Israelis have the right to security. But we are also convinced that security will only be sustainable and real if it will be based on peace and on a two-state solution. As you know in these years, we have also worked constantly to alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza. With the Gaza desalination plant, we are providing concrete and long-lasting support which will benefit hospitals, schools, enterprises and every citizen of Gaza. Yet the crisis in Gaza is inherently political in nature and requires a political solution. The closure must end, and crossings must be fully opened. At the same time, it's also clear that Gaza is part of the future state of Palestine and that Palestinians themselves must find unity beyond their divisions.

We know that the current political outlook is uncertain both in Palestine and in Israel. Discussions among Palestinian factions have not yet led to a substantial reconciliation. President Abbas has announced his intention to set a date for Elections. In the Israeli side, the political stalemate continues and might lead to an unprecedented situation to a third election in just one year. This is my firm conviction that with courageous leadership a return to negotiations is possible. I am still confident today five years after my first visit as a High Representative in Palestine and Israel that that is the goal and that is realistically achievable. Actually, I am convinced that it is the only achievable, sustainable, realistic solution to this conflict. And let me say, personally I am also deeply convinced that out of all the crises and conflicts of the region, of the Middle East, this is possibly the easiest to settle in concrete terms, provided and this is the most difficult thing to achieve, that there's a political will among the parties and among the international players to accompany this process. There won't be peace without strong political commitments by both sides and by the international community. On the EU side we have always been, and we will continue to be, I am sure about that, ready to support, to encourage, accompany all efforts to build peace and security and a negotiated two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.

Appendix 2 – Codes

Category Code	Category Name	Subcategory
VN	Values & Norms	Peace
		Rule of Law
		International Law
		Justice
		Security
		Right to exist
		Friends and Partners
		Peace and Security
		Common Interests
		The International Community
		Common Threats
		Liberty
		Human Rights
		Common Values
		Fight against Terrorism
		Democracy
		Unbiased International Actor
		Leadership
		Good Governance
		Right to self-determination
		Reliable Partner
		Regional Cooperation
		Sovereignty
		UN/EU Skepticism
Realistic Peace		
United EU		
Fight against Antisemitism		
Innovation		
UH	Uses of History	The Holocaust
		Shared History
		History of the Conflict
		Modern History
		Modern Jewish History
		Ancient Jewish History
P	Policy	Peace process
		Trade
		Iran Nuclear Deal
		Technological Cooperation

		Bilateral Agreements
		Regional Cooperation
		Migration
		Humanitarian Aid