***Defining just peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:***

***‘Legitimising power Europe’ in practice***

***Abstract***

The European Union is regularly criticised by observers across the political and academic spectrum for not having done enough, and sometimes even for not having done anything at all, to contribute to future peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The fact that the EU is entering its fifth decade of peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict suggests that there is a certain amount of truth in what the critics have to say. While acknowledging that the past four decades of EU involvement in the conflict can hardly be considered successful, this article argues that the EU has in fact made a significant contribution to the peace process in successfully defining and legitimising its notion of a just peace in the conflict. More importantly, over the years, the international community has gradually moved towards the acceptance of many of the ideas articulated in the Union’s declarations as the principles of a future just peace. This includes successive U.S. and Israeli governments, many of which had previously been highly critical of the EC/EU’s statements. All in all, this development underscores the important role of the EU as a visionary vanguard in the conflict, leading the international community towards new policy departures. In other words, this is an example of ‘Legitimising power Europe’ in practice.

***Key words:*** ‘Normative power Europe’, ‘Legitimising power Europe’, Just Peace, Israeli-Palestinian conflict