

Divided and Divisive

Europeans, Israel and Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking

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Over the last 40 years, since the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty and the European Community's 1980 Venice Declaration, Europe has been seeking ways to help advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. The task is not an easy one, mostly due to US dominance of peace negotiations and negative Israeli attitudes towards Europe as a mediator. Thus, while Europeans were key in shaping international language on the conflict, they have remained in the back seat when it comes to shaping dynamics on the ground.

Since the collapse in 2014 of the John Kerry initiative to advance the peace process, the task has become even more difficult for the Europeans. Realities on the ground, such as a right-wing government in Israel lacking interest in advancing a peace process, expanded settlement construction, as well as the internal Palestinian split and governance deficiencies in the Palestinian Authority, make the two-state solution ever more difficult to achieve. In addition, Israel's leadership has worked to weaken and divide the European Union (EU) in order to limit its role on the issue. In this endeavor, it has profited from different interests and priorities among EU Member States as reflected in discussions and decision-making processes regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These trends have increasingly intensified in recent years, and it is the goal of this publication to analyze them, assess their impact on European capacities and policies, and devise recommendations to tackle and perhaps even reverse them.

This publication includes three analytical chapters: *A More Inward Looking European Union*, *The Structural Limits to a more Effective EU Foreign and Security Policy* by Dr. Nicolai von Onderza, *Divisive Policies, Israel's Foreign Policy towards the EU and its Member States* by Dr. Eyal Ronen with Dr. Nimrod Goren and *Political Paralysis, The Impact of Divisions among EU Member States on the European Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* by Dr. Muriel Asseburg. It also includes a set of recommendations geared towards the EU, its Member States, and the Government of Israel.

The recommendations call for a European initiative based on several guiding principles. These include maintaining a realistic option for conflict settlement based on the self-determination of two peoples and human rights; preventing breakdown and rebuilding legitimate governance structures in Palestine; expanding the space for dialogue and communicating European policies and approaches clearly; and supporting Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and providing building blocks for future peacemaking. The recommendations call upon the Government of Israel to adopt a positive political attitude and public discourse towards the EU and its Member States; strengthen relations between the Israeli and European policy elites; implement a pro-peace foreign policy, acknowledging a European role in the peace process; and be committed to liberal democratic values, even when pursuing national interests.

The full report as well as more information can be found on the websites mentioned below

www.mitvim.org.il

www.paxforpeace.nl

www.swp-berlin.org

