

THE EUROPEANIZATION PROCESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: THE CASE OF TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS OVER THE LAST DECADE

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Introduction

It has become commonplace to define the process of European integration along the lines of internal and external implications of Europeanization. The transformation process within which national interests become European interests and European interests - through the creation of a set of common norms, values and institutions; the implementation of common rules; and continuous interaction, regular consultation and communication between the EU Member States - refer to internal Europeanization. On the other hand, the EU's projection of its norms and values and system of governance to non-EU countries refers to external Europeanization. The major focus of this study is external Europeanization as it attempts to explain Europeanization in the Mediterranean through an analysis of Turkish-Israeli relations over the last decade and the EU's impact on these relations.

The EU's nature as a "civilian power"¹ marks its global actorness. Despite criticisms of the EU's foreign policy impact in situations which necessitate a hard security approach, the Union's major strength lies in the soft security tools that it uses. It can be

¹ Please note that this concept was first introduced by François Duchêne in 1972. Please see: François Duchêne, "Europe's Role in World Peace", in Richard Mayne, *Europe Tomorrow*, (London: Fontana, 1972). Also see his "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence", in Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (eds.) *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the European Communities*, (London: Macmillan, 1973). Both of these references are quoted here from: Henrik Larsen, (2002) "The EU: A Global Military Actor?", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 37, No.3, pp. 283-302. The former reference is also cited in Roy Ginsberg, (2001) *The European Union in International Politics - Baptism by Fire*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, pp. 39-40.

contended that through the use of its economic and political instruments the EU creates a considerable foreign policy impact. The framework instruments (economic cooperation, association and partnership agreements); development aid which also includes rehabilitation and reconstruction aid as well as humanitarian aid; political dialogue (bilateral or multilateral) and EU enlargement itself appear as the major economic and political tools that the EU uses in its relations with third countries. Especially the conditionality that it attaches to the use of these tools is the major factor which creates the desired impact on these countries.

The Barcelona Process can also be regarded within this context as an economic, political and cultural project designed to export the EU's values and norms to the Mediterranean region as a whole. Despite criticisms that the EU is a payer rather than a player in the region, the foreign policy impact of the EU in the Mediterranean is rising significantly. It can also be argued that the EU is especially upgrading its efforts to deal with the Middle East. The purpose of this study is to support this argument through an analysis of the implications of Europeanization for Turkish-Israeli relations.

This study is composed of four sections. The first section defines the concept of Europeanization as understood by the authors. After a definition of Europeanization with regard to the internal and external levels, European foreign policy on the Middle East over the last decade is examined and the EU's actorness in this regard is evaluated. The second section describes EU's relations with Turkey and Israel respectively. This analysis is based on the EU's bilateral relations with the two countries and it attempts to approach these relations from all possible dimensions: economic, political and security. The third section examines the development of Turkish-Israeli relations in various fields over the last decade. Their relations are viewed from both the Israeli and the Turkish perspectives. Finally, the last section sorts the findings and establishes the connection between the external Europeanization process and Turkish-Israeli relations.

Europeanization and the Mediterranean

The definition of “Europeanization” is a rather subjective and contextual practice. Therefore, it can be argued that there is no common definition of “Europeanization”. The conception of “Europeanization” that is used in this study refers mainly to its external dimension. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that internal Europeanization is an important condition for external Europeanization. Internal Europeanization is the process in which national interests transform into European interests while European interests begin to be regarded as national interests through continuous interaction and communication, through the creation of common rules and procedures and institutions as well as norms and values. In this sense, it is regarded both as a top-down and a bottom-up process at the EU level. External Europeanization, on the other hand, is the ability of the Union to speak with one voice and project its values, norms and system of governance at the international level. External Europeanization thus refers to the Europeans’ ability to expand their common norms and values to other countries and persuade them to pursue similar political and economic policies even if they lack the prospect of EU membership.

The EU uses a cross-pillar approach to achieve external Europeanization and employs a wide-range of foreign policy tools (economic, political and security) in this regard. The EU’s economic tools seem to be the most effective ones among this wide range of foreign policy instruments. It can also be argued that the EU uses economic tools to create political and security impact.

It has long been commonplace for governments to influence other states by using economic instruments². Such economic instruments include both economic sanctions and incentives. Economic incentives involve commercial concessions, technological assistance and other economic carrots whereas economic sanctions take the form of embargoes or suspension of economic cooperation

² David Baldwin (1985), *Economic Statecraft*, New Jersey and West Sussex: Princeton University Press; especially chapters 2 and 3.

and agreements. These are all used to achieve political compliance by the target of these activities³.

The EU's relations with the Mediterranean are also based on an intensive use of economic incentives besides political dialogue at bilateral and multilateral levels. The EU tries to project its values and norms to the Mediterranean through the Barcelona process. The main purpose of this process is to create a region of peace and stability with a greater understanding between the countries in the region and the EU. In order to accomplish this goal the EU transferred a sum of 8 billion Euros to the region between the years 1995 and 1999; 3.4 billion of which were in the form of financial assistance and 4.6 billion of which were provided by the European Investment Bank for infrastructural development⁴. The EU provides financial and technical assistance to the southern Mediterranean countries, especially to reinforce political stability, democracy, free trade and full social and political cooperation in the region⁵.

The EU also encourages the Mediterranean countries to sign association agreements with it. These bilateral agreements provide numerous economic incentives to the Mediterranean countries, on the one hand, and enable the Union to influence policy-making in these countries, on the other. In this way, the EU helps stabilise the region. Furthermore, it gains greater influence at the same time. Each one of the association agreements refers to specific topics such as political dialogue between the country concerned and the EU; respect for democracy and human rights; provisions relating to intellectual property and services, public procurement, state aid and monopolies; economic cooperation in a wide range of sectors; and

³ Blanchard, Mansfield and Ripsman (2000) , "The Political Economy of National Security", in Blanchard, Mansfield and Ripsman (ed.s) *Power and the Purse*, London: Franc Cass, p.5.

⁴ Fourth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers, 15-16 November 2000, Chairman's Formal Conclusions, accessed through: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/conf/marseilles/conclusion_s_en.pdf .

⁵ MEDA Council Regulation No. 2698/2000, accessed through: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/meda2_reg.htm

cooperation relating to social affairs and migration (including cooperation against illegal migration)⁶. Currently the EU's association agreements with Tunisia, Morocco, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have entered into force⁷.

It can be contended that over the last decade the EU has upgraded its efforts to expand its involvement in the Mediterranean region. The EU also supports the Middle East process, and is trying to become a more active actor in this regard. Despite the fact that the US has the upper-hand in the region, the EU is trying to become a crucial player its involvement in the *Quartet* and increased efforts to find a solution to the conflict and to facilitate the Middle East Peace Process through the use of a variety of economic and political instruments such as technical and financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority; economic partnership with Israel, Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

The EU's "silent disciplining power"⁸ also plays a role in bringing peace and stability to problematic regions since, without directly addressing the conflicts in one region, it can create a more indirect impact through influencing and disciplining the major actors in the region (those who are parties to the conflict and other regional actors which may help the solution of the problem). If one examines the EU's relations with Turkey and Israel respectively, one can notice a similar line of action. It can even be argued that the EU's policies vis à vis these countries have produced effective

⁶ For the content of association agreements concluded within the framework of EuroMed Partnership, see:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/med_ass_agreemnts.htm.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ For the term silent disciplining power, please see: Ole Wæver, (1998) "Insecurity, security, and a security in the West European non-war community" in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 69-118; (1998) "Integration as security - Constructing a Europe at Peace", in Charles A. Kupchan (ed), *Atlantic Security - Contending Visions*, New York: Council of Foreign Relations, pp. 45-63 and (2000) "The EU as a security actor - Reflections from a pessimistic constructivist on post-sovereign security orders", in Morten Kelstrup and Michael Williams (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration - Power, Security and Community*, London: Routledge, pp. 250-294.

results and enabled the Union to have a greater influence in this respect.

The EU's Relations with Israel and Turkey

Both Turkey and Israel have deeply-rooted relations with the EU. Turkey has very close ties with the Union and is seeking to become a full member. Israel, on the other hand, currently lacks the prospect of becoming an EU member. Nevertheless, it is seeking to progressively improve its relations with the Union. Despite criticisms of EU foreign policy on the Middle East, the Union has upgraded its role in the region in recent years and its relations with Turkey and Israel are indicative of this fact. In this section, the EU's relations with Israel and Turkey are analysed respectively.

The EU and Israel

During the last decade, EU relations with Israel have improved significantly. This improvement came after the EU had taken some serious actions. One such action was the ratification of the Association Agreement with Israel on 1 June 2000 which was signed on 20 November 1995. As mentioned before, association agreements are not simple trade agreements but rather have political and societal implications. This is especially so in the case of the EU's association agreements with the countries in the Middle East. The general belief prevailing in EU circles is that with association agreements the Middle East can become a more stable region both economically and politically.

The EU-Israel Association Agreement is also the main document on which the relations between the EU and Israel are based. The major points emphasised in this agreements are constant economic and political dialogue (Israel must update the EU on the peace process and its regional actions); freedom of establishment and liberalisation of services; free movement of capital and competition rules; strengthening of economic cooperation on the widest possible basis and cooperation on social matters supplemented by cultural cooperation; free trade in manufactured goods and industrial products; and progressive and reciprocal liberalisation of

trade for agricultural products⁹. The Association Agreement is significant in the sense that with the ratification of this agreement the EU has become Israel's biggest economic partner.

The Association agreement is also crucial for its emphasis on the importance of the principles of the United Nations Charter, especially the observance of human rights, democratic principles and economic freedom¹⁰. This emphasis is a significant feature of the EU's association agreements with the Mediterranean countries. Furthermore, the Association Agreement between the EU and Israel also calls for regional cooperation and regular political dialogue between the countries in the region, especially on issues of common interest. In this regard, it can be contended that the "silent disciplining power" that the EU exerts through framework instruments is also at work in its relations with Israel, especially when it is considered that it has become Israel's biggest economic partner since the entry into force of the Association Agreement.

Another important development in Israel's relations with the EU is the country's acceptance as an equal partner in the European Community's Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (RTD) in August 1996. Israel was the first non-EU country to be associated to the EU framework programme for RTD. Israel is included in this framework due to its very high level of scientific competence and the dense network of longstanding scientific and technological cooperation between Israel and the EU¹¹. Israel's inclusion in the framework programme for RTD creates multicultural cooperation and economic networks between Israel and the EU. For example, during the 5th Framework Program (1999-2002), Israeli organizations participated in 623 cooperative projects with EU partners. At the political level, the RTD programme has increased Israel's susceptibility to EU's political pressures and its dependence on the Europeans; since the Union provides most of Israel's RTD funds. A third development

⁹ On the Association Agreement between the EU and Israel, see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/israel/intro/index.htm

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

was Israel's inclusion in the Union's space policy "Galileo" since March, 2004. Finally, a recent development was the EU's inclusion of Israel in the first wave of countries to negotiate its participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy with the Union¹².

The developments mentioned above assist Israel to develop its strongest economic fields and encourage it to increase its cooperation with the EU. Also, these developments serve as a means to increase the EU's involvement in the Mediterranean region and upgrade its influence on the Israeli decision-making process. The Association Agreement requires Israel to update the EU about the political situation and about its actions. Moreover, the R&D projects increase Israel's dependency on EU funds.

It is due to this enhanced relationship with the EU that Israel understands the greater importance of the Union in its politics and in the peace process. Israel has started to take into consideration the EU's opinions about the conflict and understands its upgraded role in the region. Also, recently, Israel has agreed to institutionalise a role for the EU in the regional peace process and non-proliferation issues. Therefore, it can be argued that, over the last decade, the EU - mainly through economic agreements - has paved its way to become an important actor in the Mediterranean; one that Israel must take into consideration before it acts.

The EU and Turkey

Turkey's relations with the EU are also based on an association agreement; the so called Ankara Agreement which was signed on 12 September 1963 and came into force on 1 December 1964¹³. This agreement stipulated the establishment of a customs union between Turkey and the European Community (EC) in three stages and it also foresaw the *possibility* of Turkey's eventual membership

¹² Keinon Herb, "EU allowed greater role in peace process", *Jerusalem Post*, 26/08/2004.

¹³ It should be noted that the Ankara Agreement was supplemented by an Additional Protocol signed on 23 November 1970 and which entered into force on 1st January 1973.

of the Community. What is crucial to note at this point is that although this agreement set the target as Turkey's eventual membership, it did not render this an automatic consequence of the association process and rather referred to it as a possibility¹⁴. Nevertheless, without waiting until the end of this association process, Turkey applied for membership of the EC on 14 April 1987.

In 1989, in its evaluation of Turkey's application for full membership in the EC, the Commission declared that although it found Turkey eligible for membership in the EU, it would not be useful to open accession negotiations with the country straight away¹⁵. Instead, the Commission called for closer cooperation with Turkey given the country's general opening towards Europe¹⁶. On the other hand, the process stipulated by the Ankara Agreement was still on track despite some interruptions; and it eventually led to a decision by the EC-Turkey Association Council on 6 March 1995 to move to the final phase of the customs union between the two parties. The final phase of the customs union entered into force on 31 December 1995. Turkey's relations with the EU have gained another dimension with the Barcelona Process and Turkey was included in the MEDA Programme which was adopted by a Regulation on 15 July 1996 by the General Affairs Council.

Turkey's relations with the EU almost came to a halt when the Luxembourg European Council of December 1997 excluded Turkey from its list of candidates for membership in the Union. Turkey immediately suspended any political dialogue with the EU

¹⁴ Article 28 of the Ankara Agreement provides: "As soon as the operation of this agreement has advanced far enough to justify envisaging full acceptance by Turkey of the obligations arising out of the Treaty establishing the Community, the Contracting Parties shall examine the *possibility* of the accession of Turkey to the Community." [emphasis added] For the text of the Ankara Agreement and its Additional Protocol, see: Official Journal of the European Communities, Vol. 16, No. C113, 24 December 1973; accessed through: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/pdf/association_agreement_1964_en.pdf

¹⁵ Representation of European Commission in Turkey, "EU-Turkey: Historical Review", accessed through: <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/historical.html>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

and relations could not improve before the EU realised the strategic mistake that it made in Luxembourg in 1997 and declared Turkey as a candidate for membership in the Helsinki European Council in December 1999. The Luxembourg European Council was a watershed in EU-Turkey relations in the sense that it revealed that the Union's main intention was to develop economic ties with Turkey without the promise of membership¹⁷. This had a detrimental effect on democratization in Turkey, and, coupled with general frustration over the support provided to Ocalan (the leader of the PKK) by some European countries, the huge rise in the votes of the nationalist party in the next elections came as no surprise. Therefore, it was not before the 1999 Helsinki European Council that Turkey's relations with the EU improved. The Helsinki European Council became another turning point in EU-Turkey relations and Turkey's attempts at political and economic reform gained unprecedented impetus upon confirmation of Turkey's candidacy. It can be contended that EU conditionality on Turkey could only begin to function effectively after the Helsinki decision. Therefore, it would not be erroneous to regard the Helsinki decision as the turning point which started the Europeanization processes in the country.

Turkey's Accession Partnership was adopted by the European Council on 8 March 2001 and the Turkish government adopted the country's National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis on 19 March 2001. Turkish governments have adopted a series of EU Harmonization packages since 2001, composed of provisions for extensive political reform in the country. Through the adoption of these Harmonization Packages many issues - from freedom of expression to the role of the military in Turkish politics - have been addressed and brought up to European standards.

Turkey has also entered a period of Europeanization of its foreign policy. It has developed good neighbourly relations with its neighbours; especially with Greece. Its rapprochement with Greece

¹⁷ Ziya Önis, (1999) "Turkey, Europe and Paradoxes of Identity: Perspectives on the International Context of Democratization", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 129.

and its softened attitude on the Cyprus issue, which led to the referendum on the Island, have shown that Turkey has started to pursue a softer line on the world scene. This was mainly because Turkish political and security elites realised that an emphasis on soft security benefits of Turkey's accession to the EU would better help the country in its quest for membership in the Union.

Two major incidents also reflect the shift in Turkish foreign policy towards a softer attitude. The first one is that the Turkish parliament did not agree to provide the military support which the US sought for in its war in Iraq. The second incident which can be evaluated in parallel with this development is that Turkey did not resort to unilateral use of force in Northern Iraq, taking advantage of the US invasion there. The Turkish attitude in both incidents came as a surprise for many Europeans. The decision of the Turkish parliament was not only significant as a democratic practice (since it was known that the military was in favour of military support for the US) but also in terms of the country's preference for the use of soft security measures instead of hard ones. Antonio Missiroli asserts that Turkey "did not act in accordance with its constructed self-image"¹⁸ in this respect. On the other hand, it can also be contended that Turkey's stance on the issue was more compatible with the EU's security identity than most of the other candidate countries'. Dimitrios Triantaphyllou states: "It should also awaken the Europeans that a clearer strategic vision which does not write off Turkey is necessary for the EU - the current crisis having demonstrated that Turkey has much more in common with the vast majority of the current 15 EU Member States and their public opinion than most candidate nations"¹⁹.

All in all, it can be argued that the EU's conditionality over Turkey started to succeed only after the Union offered the country a clear prospect of membership. This has brought about a Europeanization process in Turkey at the domestic and international level. Even the

¹⁸ Antonio Missiroli, (2003) "Turkish Delights? A Response to Bilgin", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 354.

¹⁹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, (2003) "The Turkish Dilemma", unpublished paper, Paris: EU-Institute for Security Studies (04.03.2003).

shift in Turkish policy on Israel in recent years can partially be explained by reference to this Europeanization process in the country.

Turkish-Israeli Relations over the Last Decade

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Israel-Turkey relations have changed a great deal. Several reasons led to such a change. First of all, the removal of the overlaying impact of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet threat freed both states from regional constraints. Secondly, the regional developments that took place after the Gulf War gave Turkey the opportunity to place its relations with Israel on a different basis; independent of its relations with Arab Countries²⁰. It can also be contended that Turkey released itself from the economic policy of the oil producing countries and came closer to the US (especially during the Gulf War)²¹. Turkey's closer links with the US after the Gulf War also led to improved relations with Israel due to American support. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the improvement in Turkish-Israeli relations has been the result of Turkish initiative rather than of US making. On the other hand, it can be argued that the US support in this regard has been a facilitating factor.

Thirdly, the improvements in the Middle East Peace Process created a suitable ground for the establishment of closer ties between Turkey and Israel since Arab reactions to such ties could have been severer if the Middle East Peace Process was not on track. Fourthly, it can be contended that both Turkey and Israel were faced with the same types of threats in their region. Their

²⁰ Gencer Özcan (1999), "Türkiye-İsrail Yakınlaşmasının Nedenleri, Parametreleri ve Gelecek için Perspektifler" (The Reasons and Parameters of Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement and Perspectives for the Future), in *Türkiye-İsrail Yakınlaşması: Nedenler, Parametreler ve Gelecek için Perspektifler* (Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement: Reasons, Parameters and Perspectives for the Future), Istanbul: Ekonomi Forumu-Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, p. 7.

²¹ Alon Liel (2001), *Turkey in the Middle East: Oil, Islam and Politics*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers (translated by Emanuel Lotten - first published in Hebrew in Israel, in 1993), p. 241.

stakes can be listed as concerns over the potential aggressive policies of Iran, Iraq and Syria, the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the challenge of radical Islam, and international terrorism. Finally, it should be recalled that the two countries are the only parliamentary democracies in their region and they both have liberal economic systems. In terms of their military potential, social structure and cultural traits, the two countries can also be easily separated from their counterparts in the region. The historical ties between the Turks and the Jews also constitute a crucial factor in this regard. Furthermore, the fact that both Turkey and Israel are non-Arab countries located in this region led to their “being grouped together in the eyes of other regional players”²².

All in all, it can be argued that contextual developments that took place after the end of the Cold War paved the way for closer relations between Turkey and Israel at political, economic and security levels. These warm relations and the US support for such relations between Turkey and Israel led to the conclusion of military and economic agreements between the two countries. In the economic field, Turkey and Israel signed a free trade agreement on 14 March 1996²³. This agreement established cooperation between the two countries in fields such as agriculture, industry, telecommunication, medicine, and high-tech industry. As part of this agreement, the parties agreed to lower the tax barriers and achieve greater economic cooperation.

As part of their cooperation efforts in the military field, Turkey and Israel signed a Military Training and Cooperation agreement on 23 February 1996. On 28 August 1996, a Cooperation Agreement on Defence Industry was signed. These agreements strengthened the ties between the two countries and paved the way for strategic partnership between them. This strategic partnership was designed in such a way to form the basis of common action in the future (if and when needed) since it heavily relied on interoperability

²² Efraim Inbar (2002), “Regional Implications of the Israeli-Turkish Strategic Partnership”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 22.

²³ For the text of the free trade agreement between Turkey and Israel, see: <http://www.moit.gov.il/NR/exeres/63E541B5-FDEE-4EC0-BEB9143CB49BOBD2.htm>

between the two countries' armed forces (especially air and naval forces) that would be developed through joint military exercises and training, staff-to-staff meetings and intelligence exchanges. A "Strategic Dialogue Forum" was also established between the two countries as part of the Military Training and Cooperation Agreement.

The scope of the Turkish-Israeli relationship, in this regard, was even regarded as a loose alliance by some analysts and some countries in the region²⁴. Nevertheless, it seems more appropriate to define this relationship as a strategic partnership since it lacks the adoption of the principle of *casus foederis* by the two parties. Furthermore, the two countries keenly reiterated that their partnership was not directed at third countries²⁵. It should also be recalled that Turkish-Israeli partnership is not exclusive and in many instances close cooperation with Jordan and the US has been pursued.

Despite the fact that both countries have been cooperating in many fields, from tourism to education, the most important dimension of their relationship is usually regarded as its military aspect. This may be due to the fact that, once an issue has a security tag attached to it, it inevitably carries a certain degree of importance right from the beginning. Furthermore, the impact of Turkish-Israeli cooperation in the region has been more strongly felt in the security field as the two countries are "militarily stronger than any combination of regional states"²⁶. Although both countries have been careful to stress that their military partnership was not directed at third countries, it would not be erroneous to state that the strategic partnership provided them with a "deterrence impact",

²⁴ See Inbar (2002) for more on how Arab countries regarded this partnership.

²⁵ An important incident to be taken into account in this regard is that Israel refrained from becoming a part of the Turkish-Syrian crisis in 1998. This example also shows that the Turkish-Israeli strategic partnership was not directed at third parties. Efraim Inbar also draws attention to the fact that Turkey and Israel are reluctant to use the coercive potential of their alignment (Inbar (2002), p. 27).

²⁶ Inbar (2002), p. 23.

the degree of which can only match up to that provided by alliances²⁷.

At this point, it would be useful to touch upon the basic motives that led Turkey and Israel to improve their relations respectively. First and foremost, Turkey saw a strategic partnership with Israel as crucial for its internal and external security. The support provided by Syria and Iran to PKK terrorists and the terrorist group's deployment in Northern Iraq were the major factors that urged Turkey to establish closer ties with Israel. Especially, Israeli intelligence capabilities have helped Turkey a great deal in its fight against PKK terrorism. Secondly, both Turkey and Israel had a stake in regional stability and security. This is an important factor in the sense that as the only two democratic countries governed by principles of liberal economy, they were forced to cooperate to achieve peace and stability in the region and for their own survival.

Thirdly, Turkey's relations with the EU had been coloured by mutual mistrust until 1999. Therefore, Turkey sought alternative ways to compensate its mostly problematic relations with the Union. The only regional alternative in this regard was cooperation with Israel. This would also mean better ties with the US not only because of the scope of US-Israel relations but also because of the weight of the Jewish lobby in the US. Through better ties with Israel, Turkey would be able to balance the acts of Greek and Armenian lobbies in the US against Turkey since it would have the support of the Jewish lobby against such acts.

Fourthly, through a cooperation agreement on defence industry, Turkey would be able to purchase high-tech weaponry without the conditionality attached to such contracts by the US and European

²⁷ For example, Israel gained the capability for deterrence against missile attacks from Syria, Iran and Iraq since its partnership with Turkey made it possible for this country to monitor their activities from the north as well. On the other hand, Turkey successfully managed the issue of deployment of S-300 missiles. The purchase of Popeye I missiles (to counter the attack of S-300 missiles) from Israel helped to a considerable extent in this respect. Both instances show that the two countries benefited from their partnership especially in terms of enhanced deterrence capabilities.

countries. Israel has been an alternative source of weaponry in this respect. This was especially significant due to Turkey's need for modernising its military capabilities. Israel has been an apposite partner to help the modernisation of the Turkish armed forces due to its high-tech competence. Furthermore, Turkey would also be able to make use of Israeli technology in fields other than the military.

The motives of Israel were also similar to those of Turkey, especially with regard to the promotion of stability and security in the Middle East. However, the major motive behind Israel's quest for better ties with Turkey was its need to strengthen its legitimacy in the region and its acceptance as a regional actor. Turkish-Israeli cooperation is crucial for ending Israel's isolation in the region and its worries of encirclement by Arab countries. Secondly, Israel also had security concerns which it could effectively handle through partnership with Turkey. Deterring a possible missile attack from Iran, Iraq or Syria was a crucial motive in this respect. A related security concern was the need to enhance the country's early warning capabilities. It was clear that intelligence cooperation between the two countries would lessen the chances of their opponents to carry out surprise attacks against them.

Thirdly, Israel's strategic interest in the Eastern Mediterranean also facilitated security cooperation between the two countries. Inbar contends that a growing number of Israeli strategists consider the Mediterranean Sea to be Israel's new strategic depth²⁸. Naval partnership with Turkey - because of the Turkish ports in the Mediterranean and its naval capabilities - would, thus, provide Israel with the strategic depth that it sought. Such partnership would increase Israeli strike capability and deter a nuclear attack against Israel.

Fourthly, Israel needed to expand its trade to larger and new markets. Turkey seemed an apposite new market in this regard. On the other hand, Turkey needed to upgrade its industrialisation process and thus needed Israeli cooperation in this regard,

²⁸ Inbar (2002), p. 25.

especially to improve its technological competence. Turkey and Israel could also benefit from economic partnership in a variety of fields from water and energy to tourism.

All in all it can be contended that the Turkish-Israeli strategic partnership effectively addressed their security concerns and benefited both parties to a great extent. They have enhanced their regional actorness and could effectively deter their adversaries in the region. They have also benefited economically from their cooperation in different fields. Nevertheless, in recent years, especially after the US invasion of Iraq, a cooling-off of relations between Turkey and Israel has been observed. The negative developments in this regard reached their peak when Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan accused Israel of “state terrorism” upon the deadly consequences of the Israeli military operation in Rafah in May²⁹.

The cooling-off of relations between Turkey and Israel can be explained with reference to several factors. The US invasion of Iraq has tipped the scales in Northern Iraq in an unprecedented way and Turkey’s security concerns in this region have become more complex than ever. Due to US involvement, it is uncertain if Israeli-Turkish intelligence cooperation can produce the same results as it did before in Northern Iraq. The US’s close ties with the Kurds in the region and its ambivalent intentions with regard to the future of Iraq further complicate the picture. Recent developments in Northern Iraq have clearly shown that the US is not a very reliable strategic partner for Turkey. Recent rumours that

²⁹ For different comments on the Turkish government’s and Erdogan’s remarks upon various Israeli acts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, see: “Turkish Foreign Ministry ‘harshly’ condemns Israeli attack on refugee camp”, *BBC Monitoring Service*, 20.05.2004; “Turkish Premier calls for action to stop use of excessive force against Iraqis, Palestinians”, *AP Online*, 20.05.2004; “Turkey signals shift in Israeli policy”, *Turkish Daily News*, 27.05.2004; “Gaza action triggers Turkey-Israel tension” *BBC Monitoring Service*, Aluf Benn “Background/Diplomatic storm swirls”, *Ha’aretz*, 27.05.04; “Turkey’s Erdogan raps Israel”, *Ha’aretz*, 01.06.2004; Honoch Marmari, “Turkish PM: Israel targeting Palestinians as Jews were treated 500 years ago”, *Ha’aretz*, 03.06.04; “Turkish Prime Minister blames Israel for rising anti-Semitism”, *Reuters*, 16.06.04.

Israel was given military training to the Kurds in Northern Iraq have not been helpful, either.

On the other hand, after the endorsement of Turkey's candidacy for full membership in the EU in 1999, Turkey has been upgrading its relations with the Union and is expecting to start accession negotiations in the year 2005. As its prospects for full membership in the EU have increased, Turkey's relations with the US and Israel have taken a different course. Although the difference in the course of its relations with the US and Israel cannot be attributed solely to the improvement in its relations with the EU, this improvement can be regarded as one of the many factors that shifted Turkey's attention from closer ties with the two countries.

It can also be argued that Turkey has entered a process of Europeanization of its foreign policy which inevitably urges it not to act solely upon security concerns and to adopt a more balanced approach to the Middle East. On the other hand, Turkey has improved its relations with its neighbours; particularly with Greece and Syria. Moreover, it has based its relations with Iran on the basis of economic cooperation despite the problematic nature of their relations. Turkey's attempts to improve its relations with its neighbours can be regarded not only as a part of a necessity for regional stability but also as part of its Europeanization. It should be noted that the requirement of good neighbourly relations is an important condition for EU membership although it is not listed among the Copenhagen criteria. On the other hand, the improvement of Turkey's relations with its neighbours has led to a lessening of its security concerns and thus diminished its need for Israel's strategic partnership in this regard.

Finally, it can be asserted that the pro-Islamic orientation of the Turkish government has also impacted on Turkey's relations with Israel and the government has found itself less constrained condemning Israeli actions on several occasions. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that despite all the factors listed above, which lessened the imminence of the Turkish need for strategic partnership with Israel, there are still very compelling factors which render the need for strategic partnership between the two countries

unquestionable. It should also be recalled that Turkish-Israeli cooperation is mainly based on national security concerns (and especially military/security ones). Therefore, it is rather unlikely that political reactions (such as those of the Turkish government) can go that far to impede Turkey's strategic partnership with Israel. Despite its relatively downgraded role in Turkish politics (due to final constitutional reforms) the military is still an important actor in Turkey especially when national security is concerned. This is also why such a beneficial military partnership with one country cannot be easily pushed aside by any Turkish government's unilateral decision.

Thus, the reasons for the cooling-off of relations with Israel should be traced to factors other than superficial ones like the government's pro-Islamic orientation. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish-Israeli Military Training and Cooperation Agreement was signed at a time when a fundamental Islamist party was the head of the coalition government in Turkey. It can therefore be contended that if the rumours that Israel was giving military training to Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq proved true then this would have a more important determining impact on the future of Turkish-Israeli relations than other superficial factors.

Despite harsh remarks by Erdogan on Israeli acts against Palestinians, Turkish-Israeli relations have not derailed. Especially, Israel's official denouncement of claims that Israel was giving military training to Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq has eased the tension between the two countries. Nevertheless, the Israeli attitude in the occupied territories still raises concerns in Turkey. Turkey has offered several times to become a mediator in the Arab-Israeli dispute and despite lukewarm responses by the Arabs and Israelis, Turkey may become well-placed to take on such a task, especially if it can manage to attain a balanced approach towards both parties. With a clear prospect of EU membership, Turkey can more easily strike that balance and be up for such a task. On the other hand, a mediatory role for Turkey in Arab-Israeli relations would also increase the possibilities for the EU to upgrade its role in the region and would help the initiation of a Europeanization process in the region.

Conclusion

Israel, like Turkey, needs to further Europeanise its policies. In order to establish better ties with Turkey and the European Union, it has to take their stance into consideration. Peace and stability in the Middle East depends heavily on Israeli attitudes and if Israel chooses to deal with its problems through softer measures - if it can Europeanise its policies in this regard - it would be beneficial both for Israel and the region in the long term.

Turkey has achieved an emphasis on the softer elements in its foreign policy to a certain extent and has started to benefit from it. This is especially apparent in its relations with Greece and Syria. If Turkey had not stuck to its quest for membership in the EU and started to Europeanise its policies - despite some potential negative consequences in the short term - it would not have achieved improved relations both with its neighbours and with the EU. There is still much to be done in Turkey's Europeanization process. Nevertheless, even at this point, it can be argued that Turkey has achieved a great deal.

The recent cooling-off in Turkey's relations with Israel can be regarded as part of the process of Europeanization in its foreign policy. If Israel needs to legitimize itself in the region and to end its isolation, it has to follow a similar path and enhance the softer – European – element in its foreign policy. This would undoubtedly ease the tension with its neighbours and open the way for peace and stability in the region.

On the other hand, the EU needs to recognise the importance of Turkey and Israel in the Mediterranean region and has to put more emphasis on these countries in its Mediterranean policy. The EU can benefit a great deal from the current partnership between Turkey and Israel, in this respect. Especially if the two countries can achieve further Europeanization of their policies, this would clearly enhance the EU's role in the region. It should also be kept in mind that Turkey's eventual membership of the EU would enable the Union to maintain full control of the northern Mediterranean and this would tip the scales in the region in the

EU's favour in an unprecedented way. In such a case, the Turkish-Israeli partnership would also provide the EU with an opportunity to have an enhanced role in the Eastern Mediterranean; further nurturing its actorness in the Middle East.

To conclude, it can be said that Europeanization (both internal and external) is an irreversible process. Even a country like Turkey, which was mainly known as a military power and a stubborn international actor, has entered a process of Europeanization and started to adopt European values of compromise and tolerance in its relations with third countries. This not only marks the effectiveness of the EU's "silent disciplining power" but also shows the strength of the Union's foreign policy. This is why the EU should be regarded as a very important international actor.

Despite current American influence in the Middle East, it can be contended that the hard security approach adopted by the US in the region may have negative consequences in the long run. On the other hand, the EU's soft security approach may prove more efficient and effective in the future. It is therefore vital for Israel to approach the problem in the Middle East from all possible dimensions and take on a softer - more Europeanised - attitude in this regard. Such a softer attitude may prove more beneficial in the long run.