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FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
SPECIALITY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**THE EUROPEAN UNION DIPLOMACY AND
THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AT THE
BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

SUMMARY OF THE PH. D. THESIS

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I. KEY – WORDS

International relations, diplomacy, European diplomacy, security, European/Palestinian/Israeli security strategy, global/regional security structures (the UN, NATO), crisis, the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, international conflicts/conflict resolution, international law, Europe, European Union, European Neighborhood Policy, the peace process in the Middle East, Near East, Israel, The Palestinian Authority, the mediation/management of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, USA, the Quartet for the Middle East, the Arab Peace Initiative, the League of Arab States.

III. SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN PARTS OF DOCTORAL THESIS

The thematic of the PhD thesis is based on the analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the regional and international context and on the effort of the international community, especially on the European effort which is focused on solving the Middle East conflict.

Referring to the reasons for which I have chosen to focus my study on this subject, I have to mention first and foremost that the historical and geographical space over which we have stopped is an old passion¹ and the social – political realities of the present generates multiple dilemmas and controversies which await relevant answers. On the second hand, it is remarkable the fact that this theme is so fresh and of interest considering that the Middle East has already been established as a classic power vacuum model, which has caught the eye of the most important states of the world (geopolitical and geostrategic).

Taking into consideration the degree of investigation of the current theme, we can start by estimating that at an international level, the Middle East conflict is a rather discussed and analyzed subject, the great number of conferences dealing with this idea (but also others relevant to the area) abundantly prove this. The interest for

¹ We mention that the theme of the project I presented at the end of my studies (1998) at the Faculty of Political and Administrative Science, “Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca was “The peace process in the Middle East – current perception”, and the theme of the project I presented at the end of my studies (2004) at the Law Faculty, Drăgan University from Lugoj was “Ways of peaceful solving of the disputes between states ”

this region has been reflected by the multiple analysis perspectives of the conflicts specific to the area, which have been studied by numerous researchers. In order to show this, we mention only a few papers of recent date which have been used for the preparation of our thesis and which are also dissertations or PhD projects: Rouba Al-Fattal, „*The Foreign Policy of the EU in the Palestinian Territory*”, Centre for European Policy Studies, CEPS Working Document No. 328/May 2010; Levi, Idan, „*The EU Policy in the Middle East. Problematic Nature and Potential Role*”, Dissertation zur Erlangung des Grades des Doktors der Philosophie im Fachbereich Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Hamburg, 2005; Hamntan, Michail, „*The EU's External Relations deficit towards the Middle East*”, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science, Academic Year 2004-2005.

As far as it concerns the implication of Romanian authors/researchers in the debate regarding the implication of the European Union in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I have come to the conclusion that, even though the main theme (the crisis in the Middle East) is a rather intense addressed issue, I have not manage to identify Romanian authors who have addressed the issue from the perspective of European diplomacy. However, we mention some enlightening titles in this respect: Raluca Popa, „*Secretele Orientului Mijlociu*”,² Niculescu Publishing, 2011; Dumitru Chican, „*România și Orientul Mijlociu în oglinzi paralele*”,³ Proema Publishing, Baia Mare, 2010; Raluca Rus, „*Între mit și realitate. Lupta pentru Țara Sfântă*”,⁴ Lumen Publishing, Iași, 2009; Traian Stambert, „*Fața ascunsă a conflictului din Orientul Mijlociu*”,⁵ PACO Publishing, Bucharest, 2009; Raluca Rus, „*România și conflictul israeliano-palestinian*”,⁶ Lumen Publishing, Iași, 2008; Valentina Tania Secheșan, „*Problema kurdă în contextul crizelor irakiene*”,⁷ Lumen Publishing, Iași, 2008; Constantin Moștoflei, Vasile Popa, „*Rolul UE în asigurarea securității globale*”,⁸ National Defence University „Carol I” Publishing, Bucharest, 2008; Raluca Rus,

² “Secrets of the Middle East”.

³ “Romania and the Middle East in parallel mirrors”.

⁴ “Between myth and reality. The fight for the Holy Land”.

⁵ “The hidden face of the Middle East conflict”.

⁶ “Romania and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

⁷ “The Kurdish problem in the context of the Iraqi crisis”.

⁸ “The role of the EU in guaranteeing global security”.

„*Conflictul din Orientul Apropiat în perioada 1948-2000*”,⁹ Lumen Publishing, Iași, 2006.

Regardless of this, we note that for the documentation of the first part of the thesis, regarding the institutional and functional structure of the European Union, as well as issues regarding the decisional process at the European level, a great help were the works of PhD Prof. Bărbulescu Ghe. Iordan „*Sistemul instituțional*”,¹⁰ Tritonic Publishing, Bucharest, 2007 and „*Procesul decizional în Uniunea Europeană*”,¹¹ Polirom Publishing, 2008.

Trying to clarify to which extend our theme is present in the PhD thesis presented at national level in the last few years we have come to the conclusion that even in the Romanian territory the problems specific to the Middle East have stirred to some level the interest of the researchers. Relevant papers that sustain this idea are: Lucian Sanda, „*Dimensiunile internaționale ale conflictului israeliano-palestinian*”,¹² University of Bucharest , Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, 2010; Yehuda Meir Roth, „*Leadership sub asediu, impactul 'proceselor Intifadei' asupra ofițerilor de comandă ai unităților de teren Tzahal și asupra ofițerilor în general*”,¹³ „Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, 2010; Hanna Kovel, „*Examinarea funcționării leadership-ului local la autoritățile locale, în vremuri de pericol, în timpul celui de-al doilea război din Liban (iulie-august 2006)*”,¹⁴ „Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, 2010; Essam Abou Salem, „*Conflictele contemporane și modalități de reglementare a acestora (în baza conflictelor transnistrean și palestino-israelian)*”,¹⁵ The Moldovian State University, Romanian History and Anthropology, Chișinău, 2006.

As it is normal, every author starts his thesis by building his own cronology and time line. Even though the title of the paper „**The European Union diplomacy and the Middle East crisis at the beginning of the 21st century**” places our time line at the beginning of the present century, we are going to deal with the Israeli-

⁹ “The Near East conflict during 1948-2000”.

¹⁰ “Institutional system”.

¹¹ “The decisional process in the European Union”.

¹² “The international dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

¹³ “Leadership under siege, the impact of the “Intifada trials” on officers on the ground control units Tzahal and the on officers in general”.

¹⁴ “Examination of local leadership for local authorities during time of danger, the 2nd Lebanon war (July – August 2006)”.

¹⁵ “Contemporary conflicts and ways of handling them (the Transnistrian and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts)”.

Palestinian conflict from a historical perspective, the evolution of the Jewish people which is related to Palestine thru the course of history between 2000-1000 B.C. In this way we are going to present the most important steps which the two entities (Israeli and Palestinian) had to go through. Therefore, we think that the theme of the present paper is better designed starting from the historical perspective, which we consider to be fundamental for what the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is today and the way in which the European Union understands to intervene in this effervescent region.

Looking back (and overall) this work appears as a sum of information covering about both theoretical and practical issues concerning the European Union organizational architecture, specific instruments and policies, particular elements of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis etc. We find all these to be essential, but for a better understanding of the reasons of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict we need: a careful and thorough analysis of the causes that have quarreled the two sides (but also neighbor states) in what is generically known as the Middle East crisis and also an analysis of the evolution of the peace process during history. The theme of our work requires not only to observe the causes/factors that have caused delays in the peace process, imposing at the same time a recognition of present realities when we intend to highlight/analysis the effort of the European diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis management starting with the European Communities.

The methodology used for this paper is based firstly on a diversified bibliography which we think justifies the final conclusions, in this way, the main focus is on the study of primary sources like: treaties, laws, official reports from different international organizations, interviews, press statements of Heads of State and Government on the occasion of high level meetings, press statements and press releases of officials, secondary sources: specialty books, manuals, dictionaries, studies and articles published in national or international magazines, on the historical reality, on the points of view of International Relations specialists, researchers whose works are based on a thorough scientific documentation. Among the strategies adopted to put this project together we mention: summarizing events that have marked the trigger context of Israeli-Palestinian crisis (and also highlighting their importance in the further development of the peace process); starting from the existing realities, which describe the evolution of the relationships developed by European Union with Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the context of the crisis, for a fair and pragmatic report also for putting together realistic predictions/scenarios; evaluation of proposed

solutions over time, but also those of recent date, in order to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We believe that the main merit of our approach goes out to the research conducted among specialists on specific issues of the Middle East (Israeli-Palestinian crisis by default), which have encourage our initiative and have kindly given us points of view about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as assessments regarding the role of the European Union diplomacy in managing/resolving the conflict; to our knowledge, this investigation has not been done in the context of a doctoral thesis which addressed a similar theme and were presented to the public until now in Romania.

Considering the hypothesis from which we started developing the present paper, we have set our mind on checking if we can talk about a real and effective diplomacy at the European Union level which is active and working at the same time in the Middle East region in order to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and whether it can have a decisive contribution considering the general effort of the international communities in this direction.

Given all these considerations, I have structured the paper as follows: abbreviations list, introduction, six chapters (to which we add the relevant subchapters), bibliography and the appendix.

The first chapter, entitled “*The diplomatic mechanism of the European Union – theoretical, structural and functional aspects*”, has the role of clarifying some specific conceptual issues, providing in a short form, a theoretical support by approaching some key concepts to which we are going to relate often in the future pages. The first two subchapters conceptualize diplomacy and security, diplomacy is also presented using concrete regulatory means for international conflicts. The last two subchapters take us in the institutional universe of the European Union by presenting a short history of the birth of the European diplomacy and the structural and functional specific of the institution since the beginning of the 21st century. This first chapter is the starting point in understanding the role and the function of diplomacy in general and of European diplomacy especially, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis which holds the Middle East region in a state of axiological vulnerability.

In order to understand better what we generically call “**The Middle East crisis**”,¹⁶ in **the second chapter** I have gradually presented general typologies of the crisis from the beginning of the 21st century (in the first two subchapters), offering some geographical and historical coordinates as well as some elements regarding specific policy in the Middle East at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The next subchapters focus on the crisis specific to the Middle East, analyzing the Arab-Israeli conflict from two perspectives: religious and historical, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian one. The last subchapter concentrates on the elements of the eventful history in their chronological order, in this way marking the most important moments in the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the beginning of the 21st century until the present day, as well as the reaction of the Arab and non-Arab states but also that of different international organizations involved directly or indirectly in pacifying the region.

The third chapter, entitled “**The European Union and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis**” makes the transition towards the main idea of the present research. In the first subchapter I have presented a historical retrospective thru which I wished to highlight the way in which the European Union deals with the crisis in different regions of Europe and the world. The next subchapter analyzes the implication of the European states and that of the European Union in the Middle East conflict, mentioning that we are going to relate to a specific time line which is 1950-2002. The last three subchapters focus on aspects that are related to the security issues in the Middle East, thru which we try to separate the security concept and the doctrine regarding security by using the Arab/Palestinian perspective but also the Israeli one. In the last but one subchapter we talk about the implication of some global and regional security structures in the management of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, considering the fact that from the debut of the crisis some structures have launched a series of initiatives meant to stabilize the Middle East by facilitating the efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and adopting multilateral regional platforms. For this, we point out the effort that the UN made, but also the potential role that NATO could have in the Middle East, on short to medium term. In the last subchapter we talk about the way in which the European Union understands to intervene in assuring security in the Middle East, but at the same time pointing out the formal instrument

¹⁶ This is also the title of the chapter.

that the European policy has for security and defense as part of the community external and common security policy.

The fourth chapter focuses on **“The European Union diplomacy and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis”**. In the related subsections we present a summary of the relations developed by the European Union with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the history of the peace process, evaluating at the same time the current diplomacy perspectives of the European Union regarding the peace process in the Middle East. Last but not least, thru this chapter we will try to answer the question whether if is, at the present time, a European diplomacy which acts in the direction of solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is visible.

In **the fifth chapter**, entitled **“Partners of the European Union in the mediation/management of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: purposes and limits of the current diplomacy in the effort to solve the crisis”**, starting from the idea that the mediation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a problem of the entire world, we will try to delimitate the role of the USA in the mediation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (as it is noticeable in the 21st), the role and relevance of the Middle East Quartet, as well as the solution given by the Arab states thru the Arab Peace Initiative in order to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The sixth chapter, entitled **“Instead of conclusions, forecasts – scenarios regarding the evolution of the peace process in the Middle East, based on a research conducted thru investigation and study of documents”**, is the final chapter which came as a result of a desire to put together a radiography of the perception level on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, more precise to identify methods to solve the conflict. Taking all these considerations, we thought that we could do this investigation by analyzing some points of view that have been offered by experts in the Middle East problem, International Relations experts, accredited diplomats on the subject, professors, politicians etc. I have conducted this research also from the desire to give the paper a practical-applicative character but also thinking that even though the responses given by our respondents are going to be helpful when we are going to draw important conclusions for the present thesis. These answers are important because, in essence, there are official and/or personal answers, which have been substantiated by experience or personal or professional expertise; even though more details are presented in the subchapter **“Perspectives on the peace process in the Middle East. Official/unofficial points of view concerning the resolving of the**

Israeli-Palestinian crisis” we have to mention that in developing our analysis we used as studying material the answers received from some respondents (as a consequence of releasing a questionnaire) who come from different social and geographical areas, with special but different training, focused mainly on the Middle East region. In the last but one subchapter I gave a number of predictions, scenarios for short, medium and long term, given the realities of the moment and milestone events that have marked recent months¹⁷ in the Near and Middle East region and North Africa.

In the last subchapter “**Final conclusions**”, starting from the question “*Is peace really wanted in the Near and Middle East? And if so, who can make a decisive contribution in this respect?*”, I tried to conclude by starting from the analysis of the role which the European Union diplomacy has taken in solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Surely these answers will be of use when thinking of the future of the Middle and Near East.

At the end, we hope that this thesis will bring a contribution in elucidating what the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represents thru the role of the European Union diplomacy; also the purpose of this paper is to contribute to an existing familiarity with the political situation in the Middle East conflict, proposing some scenarios and forecasts of the peace process.

We address in this context thanks to the institutions and persons who kindly provided us with a number of bibliographic materials without which we would not have been able to complete his doctoral thesis.

I give thanks to the 25 respondents/researchers and/or practitioners from around the world who kindly responded to my questionnaire in spite of distance and anonymity.

I also give thank to my family who unconditionally supported me, especially my husband and our little Ana Alexandra (not infrequently that I neglected all this time).

And last but not least, I express my gratitude to PhD. Univ. Prof. Vasile Vese, who helped me to better understand and clarify some problems, advised me, guided me, supported and criticized me with great generosity.

For all these sincere thanks!

¹⁷ It refers to the end of 2010 and beginning of 2011

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