

# The End of European Union Democracy Promotion and of the Two-State Solution?

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**Michelle Pace** (</staff/profiles/government-society/pace-michelle.aspx>) recently contributed a chapter entitled **The End of European Union Democracy Promotion and of the Two-State Solution?** in the highly prestigious Chaillot Paper series of the European Union Institute of Security Studies (EUISS) which is based in Paris (pp. 87-95).

Current EU reflection on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict comes at a time when Brussels is also preoccupied by the stalled state of the democratisation process in the Middle East. Since the 1960s the EU has been deploying a range of instruments, particularly economic levers, for influencing the Arab-Israeli conflict and democratisation in the region. However, both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the wider democratisation issue continue to pose dilemmas for, and prompt contradictions in, EU policy.

**This chapter argues** that the EU should abandon the politics of empty gestures, address the adverse effects that undemocratic regimes in the region have on the conflict, revisit the overly narrow policy parameters of its conflict-resolution efforts and develop an overall strategy towards the region that actively promotes democracy through its own example.

**The chapter then outlines** areas where the EU can reassess policy in the light of lessons learned, in particular regarding Palestinian democratisation and civil society. The EU should urgently heed these lessons as the region currently appears to be headed towards further 'de-democratisation' and a single state outcome to the conflict.

Without a clear strategy on the linkage between democracy building in the Middle East and the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the EU has very few choices left for future policies in these domains. On the Palestinian reform front, EU actors have already acknowledged that they missed a golden opportunity to encourage Palestinian unity and should therefore prepare themselves for the eventual resuscitation of such unity and should actively encourage it. The EU should also convince Israel that a unified Palestinian body politic is the only way forward for a just resolution to the conflict and for Israel's security to be guaranteed. This may require the EU to make some hard choices in its enhanced relations with Israel, including with regard to the 'golden carrot' of upgrading relations.

Further information on the **European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)** (<http://www.iss.europa.eu/nc/actualites/actualite/news/back/article/european-involvement-in-the-arab-israeli-conflict/>) website

