

GIES HONOURS PAPERS

Volume 3 | Academic year 2023-2024

THE EU'S RHETORIC-REALITY GAP TOWARDS ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Hayat Kassioui

Master International Politics – Ghent University^a

Dissertation promotor: Prof. dr. Tim Haesebrouck

Introduction

39,653. This is the approximate number of Palestinians in Gaza who have lost their lives in the last ten months since October 2023, including 15,000 children. The number of injured civilians has reached 91,535, and over 10,000 people are missing. In the West Bank, around 100 Palestinians have died, and numerous others have been injured since October 2023. Israel has reached 1,139 deaths and at least 8,730 injuries (Al Jazeera, 2024). According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), recent months have marked the deadliest period for journalists in decades (CPJ, 2024). This violence has triggered a severe humanitarian crisis on multiple fronts, compounded by escalating tensions with Lebanon and Iran. These conditions make us desire more research.

While much has been written about the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the EU's policies towards Israel, this research focuses on a lesser-explored concept: the "rhetoric-reality gap." This theory, particularly in the context of the EU and the Israeli-Palestinian issue, is primarily associated with Tocci (2005) but remains under-researched

beyond that. This study aims to examine and apply this perspective to the recent cycle of violence since October 2023. The posed research question is: **"To what extent does the EU have a rhetoric-reality gap in the Israeli-Palestinian issue between October 2023 and June 2024?"** Given that the EU's credibility is under increasing pressure (Tocci, 2005), the results and conclusions of this research could either reinforce or undermine that credibility.

Literature on policy discrepancies of the EU

Several authors have discussed the consistency of EU policy with its rhetoric and declarations, focusing on topics like the peace process or the two-state solution. Many agree that inconsistencies exist in the EU's foreign policy, particularly concerning Israel-Palestine (Baracani, 2009; Gatti, 2022; Del Biondo, 2012). Scholars attribute this to different gaps: the rhetoric-reality gap, the consensus-expectations gap, and the capability-expectations gap. This section examines these gaps, focusing especially on the rhetoric-reality gap.

For example, Siniver (2012), as well as Tocci (2010) and Strömbom and Petersson (2023), note the inconsistency between the EU's statements

^a In the GIES Honours Papers, students who wrote an exceptional master's dissertation under the supervision of a member of the GIES get the opportunity to present their main argument or findings in a concise paper.

and actions, particularly emphasising the capability-expectations gap. Hill (1993) originally defined this as the difference between the EU's aspirations and its capacity to fulfil them. Meanwhile, Toje (2008) argues that the capability-expectations gap has been replaced by a consensus-expectations gap, as the EU often struggles to reach internal consensus on its foreign policy. Others, like Tocci (2005), focus on the rhetoric-reality gap. Tocci argues that while the EU condemns Israel's occupation, its policies tend to accommodate it, affecting its credibility. Strömbom and Persson (2023) similarly find that while the EU rhetorically supports both Israeli and Palestinian rights, it mainly recognises Israeli claims, effectively dismissing Palestinian demands. This inconsistency could be influenced by Israel's strategic positioning, which often shapes EU responses due to Israel's economic importance and political influence (Gatti, 2022). Some authors, such as Lovatt (2022), analyse the EU's approach to the two-state solution, highlighting both successes and failures. Lovatt asserts that while the EU supports Palestinian sovereignty rhetorically, it fails to take political actions to support it. Khader (2013) echoes this by noting inconsistencies in the EU's policies, even as its declarations have strengthened Palestinian legitimacy.

In contrast to the authors above, Newman and Yacobi (2004) find some coherence in EU policy, noting that the EU consistently advocates for an end to the Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. However, they argue that sanctions or boycotts are not a good policy instrument, as they could backfire and potentially diminish EU influence in favour of the U.S. There are also views suggesting that the EU operates within a biased framework. Pasatoiu (2022) argues that the EU applies double standards to Israel, citing differing interpretations of international law. On the other hand, Ezzamouri and Zenobio (2023) claim that the EU's rhetoric and policies are in sync. The problem is not an existing gap but the fact that both policy and rhetoric exist in a spectrum where colonisation and apartheid are unproblematic. The

authors recommend a shift towards decolonisation and justice as a more sustainable approach.

In conclusion, there is an ongoing academic debate regarding the consistency of EU policy. Authors like Tocci (2005), Lovatt (2022), and Khader (2013) emphasize EU inconsistencies and gaps, while others like Newman and Yacobi (2004) and Pasatoiu (2022) argue for a more consistent EU stance, or Ezzamouri and Zenobio (2023) who plead for a drastic shift of both rhetoric and reality to a different non-colonial spectrum. Meanwhile, debates persist over the use of conditionality and sanctions (Tocci, 2005; Siniver, 2012), reflecting broader tensions within the EU's foreign policy frameworks.

Theoretical framework

In this section, we will explore the "rhetoric-reality gap" theory, breaking it down into two core concepts: "rhetoric" and "reality." The goal is to analyse whether a gap exists between the EU's rhetoric and its policies from October 2023 to June 2024. While the focus is not on testing the validity of the rhetoric-reality gap theory, the findings may contribute to reinforcing or challenging it. It is crucial to note that this case study is specific and cannot be generalised to other EU contexts.

The origin of the rhetoric-reality gap theory is unclear, but Tocci (2005) remains one of the few political scientists who has extensively developed this concept, particularly concerning the EU. The theory suggests a divergence between how the EU presents itself in speeches and declarations and how it implements its policies. Tocci also discusses potential explanations for this discrepancy, though the theory itself does not offer strict causes, leaving room for further research. Before diving into the empirical research, the concepts of rhetoric and reality as they pertain to this study will be defined and clarified.

What is rhetoric?

This section explores different definitions of "rhetoric", examining both ancient or classic and modern perspectives. Aristotle defines rhetoric as "the ability to see what is possibly persuasive

in every given case” (Rapp, 2022), focusing on identifying persuasive possibilities rather than solely aiming to convince. Plato, in contrast, views rhetoric as a craft of persuasion, but his definition is criticised for being too narrow, ignoring the legitimate goals of rhetoric (Kronman, 1999). To address this, five other scholars provide more nuanced definitions.

Knoblauch (1985) describes rhetoric as “the process of using language to organise experience and communicate it to others,” emphasising that rhetoric helps structure personal experiences for communication purposes. Bazerman (1988) adds that rhetoric is “the study of how people use language and other symbols to realise human goals and carry out human activities,” aligning with Knoblauch, but incorporating symbolic aspects and focusing on how rhetoric is used to achieve goals. Ratcliffe (1992) further refines this by stating that rhetoric is about “how we use language and how language uses us,” similar to Knoblauch, but emphasising the reciprocal influence between language and individuals. Perell (1998) elaborates on the classical form of rhetoric, focusing on five core elements: invention, arrangement, style, memorisation, and delivery, mainly in the context of spoken rhetoric. Perell’s definition, however, excludes written rhetoric, limiting its scope to oral presentations.

Bitzer (1998) shifts the focus to political rhetoric, defining it as “the engagement of motives, principles, thoughts, arguments, and sentiments in communications” to influence civic attitudes and judgments of political and/or societal issues. Bitzer’s definition, particularly its connection to politics, best suits this research, which examines the EU’s political rhetoric. His inclusion of motives, principles, and sentiment aligns with the analysis of EU communications, aiming to shape public attitudes about political and societal issues. Given that this study analyses the rhetoric and reality gap in EU policy, Bitzer’s framework is the most applicable.

In summary, rhetoric has varied definitions, ranging from language use to achieve goals (Knoblauch, 1985; Bazerman, 1988) to political expression (Bitzer, 1998). This research adopts

Bitzer’s definition to analyse the EU’s rhetoric and its connection to policy. The next section will focus on defining and comparing rhetoric with reality, understood as policy.

What is reality?

Reality encompasses much more than what is typically referred to in political science when the term is mentioned. While “reality” may be a perfectly usable term in everyday language, it is too broad and ambiguous for this research. In this context, “reality” specifically refers to policy. Where rhetoric ends, reality—that is, policy—begins.

Political rhetoric, in summary, is the expression of thoughts, feelings, principles, and motives through language in order to shape behaviour and persuade (Bitzer, 1998). Policy, on the other hand, involves the actions taken to achieve specific goals. In the context of this study, those actions are the implementation of policy and decision-making processes.

Although rhetoric and policy actions may overlap—since rhetoric can itself be seen as a form of “action”—it is crucial to distinguish them. Rhetoric seeks to communicate and influence, aiming to shape perceptions and persuade. Policy, by contrast, is the undertaking of actual (often physical) actions or decisions. For instance, issuing a condemning statement of an Israeli attack on a Palestinian hospital is rhetoric, as it involves using language to express thoughts, emotions, and motives, attempting to influence Israel’s behaviour. On the other hand, the policy would involve imposing sanctions on Israel—concrete actions meant to impact the situation directly.

Thus, while rhetoric and policy often aim at similar goals, they differ fundamentally in their nature and form.

Methodology and research design

To answer the research question, **“To what extent does the EU have a rhetoric-reality gap in the Israeli-Palestinian issue between October 2023 and June 2024?”**, a combined methodology was used. To analyse the policy we conducted a case study, while content analysis was employed

for examining the rhetoric. These two analyses were then compared to reach the conclusion of whether or not there is a gap between policy and rhetoric.

Content analysis

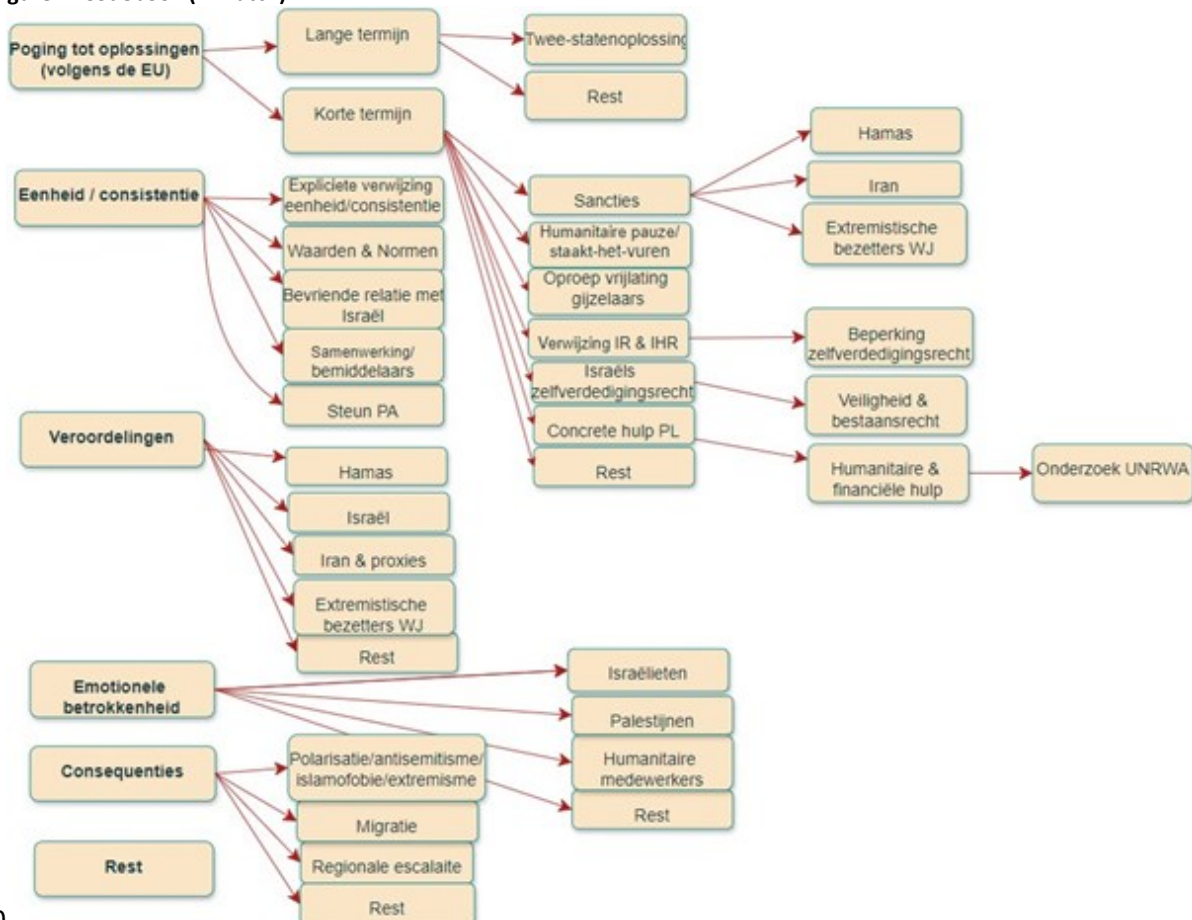
To analyse the EU’s rhetoric on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, a content analysis was conducted from October 2023 to June 2024, focusing on communications by three key EU figures: Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, High Representative Josep Borrell, and European Council President Charles Michel, chosen for their influence on this issue. Including statements from all EU member states would have added insight but was beyond this study’s scope. A separate policy case study was conducted in parallel, with both analyses compared to address the main research question.

Data collection focused on speeches and statements from the three representatives. When textual data was limited, tweets and audiovisual

sources were included. For von der Leyen, 27 sources were gathered (16 speeches/statements and 11 tweets); 53 items for Michel (14 speeches/statements and 39 tweets); and 48 speeches/statements for Borrell. From this initial pool of 128 sources, stratified sampling and single random sampling selected two sources per representative per month, resulting in a final sample of 47 sources.

An inductive approach guided segmentation and coding, identifying thematic units directly from the data rather than using a pre-existing framework. Each speech was reviewed for recurring themes, allowing flexibility to address the speeches’ complexity. The coding scheme outlined major concepts, ensuring unidimensionality, exclusivity, and completeness, with new categories emerging during initial coding rounds, such as “Unity/Consistency” and a subcategory under sanctions for “extremist settlers West Bank.” The codebook is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Codebook (in Dutch)



The codebook provided indicators and decision rules to maintain consistency in assigning content to categories. Coding was performed in Word, where each speech was divided by theme, and relevant sections were highlighted with appropriate codes. After coding, all categories were reviewed for completeness and exported to Excel for quantitative analysis, providing frequency counts of the various codes. These results provided insights into the EU's rhetoric and policy, forming a basis for interpreting the EU's stance and responses over the studied period.

Case study

The researcher collected data on policy during the period from October 2023 to June 2024 regarding the cycle of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Various sources were consulted, such as the websites of the European Commission, the EEAS (European External Action Service), and the European Council. Additionally, secondary sources, such as news articles on Euractiv, were used to map the policy process further. When searching these websites, targeted search terms such as 'Israel,' 'Gaza,' 'Palestine/Palestinians,' 'Middle East,' and 'Hammas' were used. Sources were reviewed for relevance and then stored. Ultimately, the researcher collected 24 unique sources, with at least one source per month.

The processing of all collected data began by carefully studying each source and noting relevant information about the EU's policy on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. These data were structured and organised by month and source. Key texts were linked to the date and source link.

After data collection, an in-depth analysis was conducted, systematically comparing notes and data. All findings, notable issues, and connections were recorded and structured thematically, such as short-term solutions (sanctions, humanitarian aid) and long-term solutions (e.g., two-state solution initiatives). Although the categorisation in the case study partly matched the themes of the content analysis, the focus in the case study was more on actual actions and less on rhetoric. The independence of the two analysis methods was important to maintain different perspectives in the study, despite the overlap in themes.

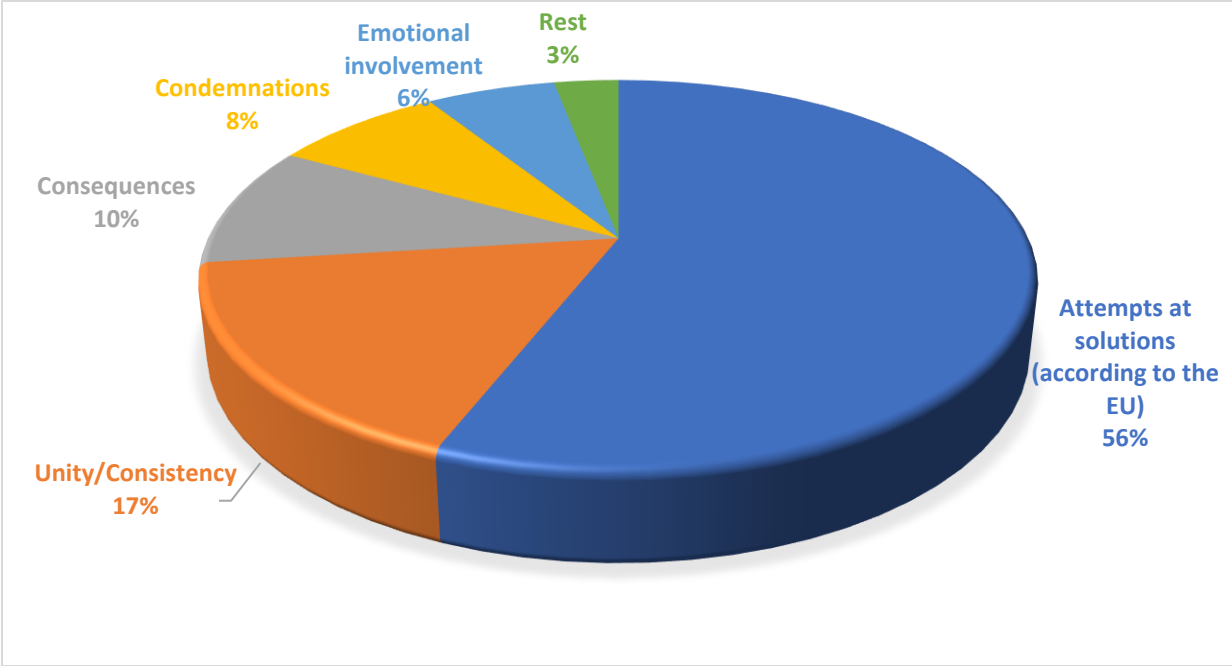
These findings and notes formed the basis for the final results and conclusions.

Results

Content analysis

The European Union, represented by Josep Borrell, Charles Michel, and Ursula von der Leyen in this study, dedicated the majority of its rhetoric (56% of the analysed statements) to exploring solutions to both the immediate cycle of violence and the long-term Israeli-Palestinian issue. This approach, however, largely followed the EU's own weak parameters and perspectives on potential resolutions, with little engagement in broader or alternative strategies. Additionally, 17% of the EU's statements emphasized EU unity and consistency, while 10% addressed the impacts of the violence cycle, 8% entailed condemnations of specific actors, and 6% expressed emotional involvement. Additional remarks fell into rest categories, which will be discussed in a separate section of this research.

Figure 2: Main dimensions



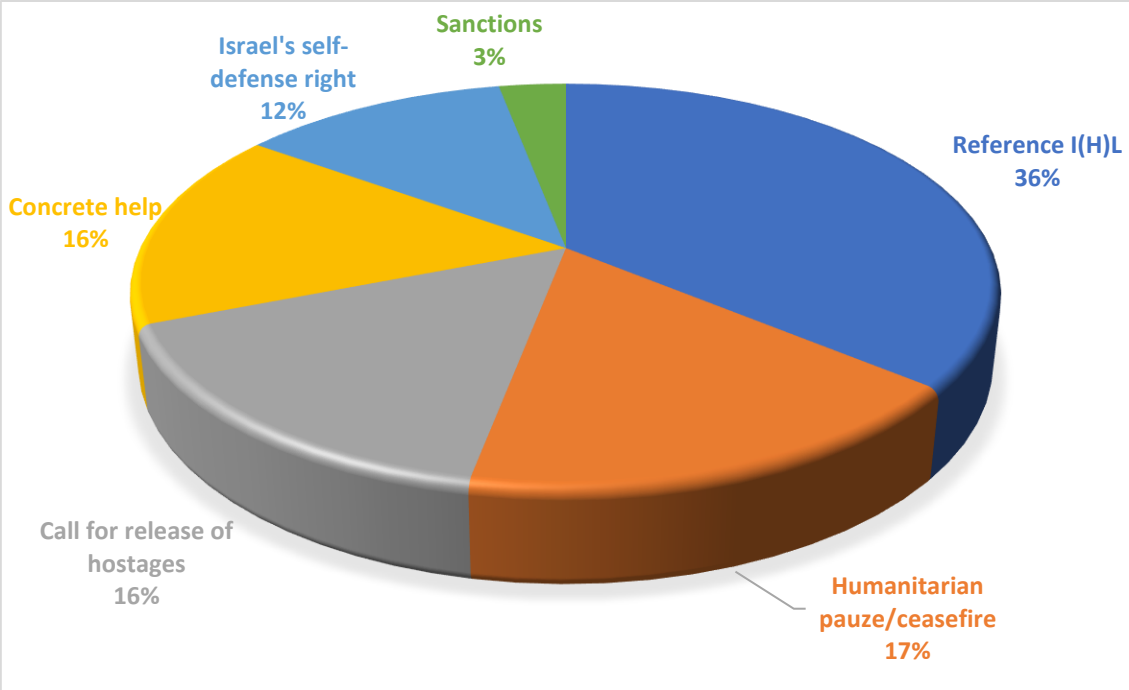
Short-Term vs. Long-Term Solutions

In discussing solutions, the EU devoted a significantly larger portion of its focus to short-term responses (81%) compared to long-term strategies (19%). For long-term solutions, the EU mentioned only the two-state solution (95%), a stance that has come under criticism for its narrowness and lack of creative engagement. No alternative long-term solutions, or even hypothetical considerations, appeared in the statements analysed.

The bulk of the EU’s short-term rhetoric on halting the violence involved appeals to international and humanitarian law (IHL). Within this, 36% of short-term responses cited the importance of IHL in contexts such as humanitarian aid access, Israel’s right to self-defence, and the EU’s general commitment to IHL. However, the EU rarely addressed concrete limits to Israel’s self-defence rights in these appeals: restrictions on this right were mentioned only 6% of the time.

Following appeals to IHL, the EU called for a humanitarian pause or ceasefire (17%), along with direct assistance to Palestinians and appeals for the release of hostages, each occupying 16% within the category of short term solutions. Nearly all assistance to Palestinians (96%) referred to humanitarian aid, with a little focus on the investigation of UNRWA (4%), which involved allegations of cooperation with Hamas. Statements supporting Israel’s right to self-defence comprised 12% of short-term rhetoric, balanced evenly between discussions on Israel’s right on self-defence and on ensuring Israel’s security and existence. Only 3% of statements referenced sanctions, which, when mentioned, targeted Hamas or extreme settlers on the West Bank in 20% of cases and Iran in 60%. None of the times the sanctions included Israel.

Figure 3: Short-term solutions

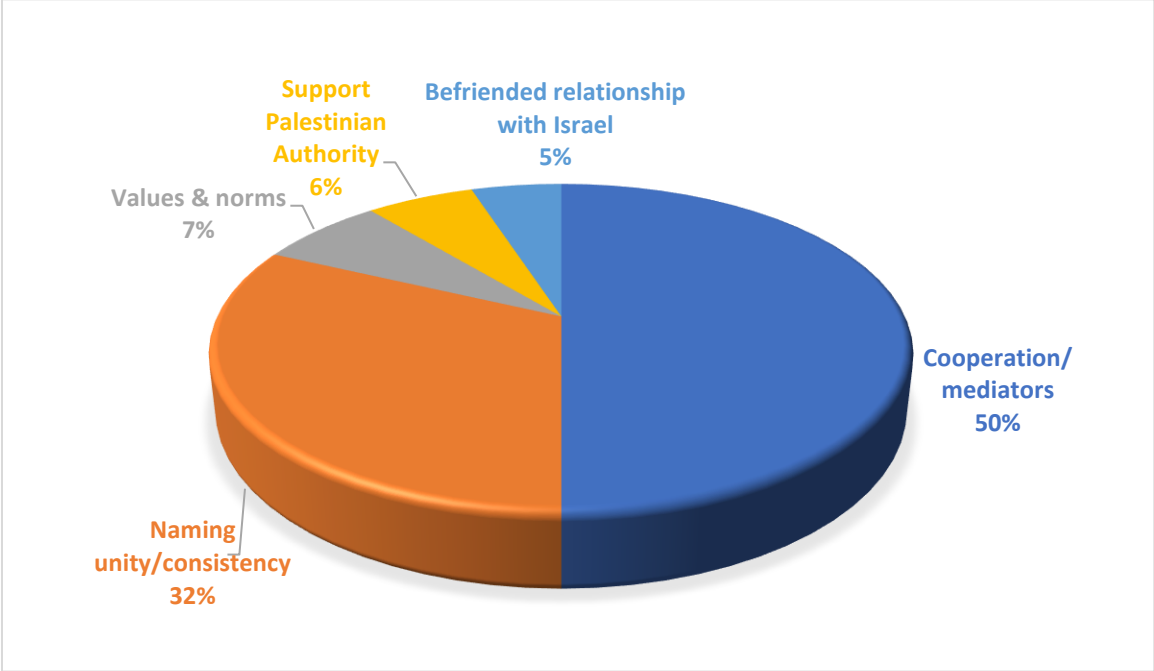


The EU’s dominant focus on short-term goals, particularly regarding international law, underscores its framing of IHL as central to EU values. Nonetheless, the EU cautiously avoided imposing clear limitations on Israel’s self-defence rights, while consistently calling for humanitarian pauses, a ceasefire, and the provision of humanitarian aid, treating these measures as effective short-term approaches to breaking the cycle of violence. Despite this, the EU continued to emphasise Israel’s right to self-defence, though this was less frequent than its calls for humanitarian interventions. This approach supports Israel’s security and right to exist, given that calls for self-defence frequently included references to Israel’s safety and existence. Sanctions, in contrast, formed only a minor part of EU rhetoric, with no references to sanctions specifically for Israel.

Unity and Consistency

In terms of unity and consistency, half of the EU’s statements highlighted collaborations with other actors and mediators, addressing both short-term violence mitigation and a long-term two-state resolution. Much of this rhetoric consisted of partner acknowledgments and affirmations of cooperative initiatives. The remainder (32%) focused directly on EU unity, with representatives emphasizing the importance of cohesion to advance the peace process, often highlighting areas of internal agreement. Small portions of this rhetoric also expressed support for Palestinian Authority (6%) and mentions of the EU’s friendship with Israel (5%). Although these references of support for the PA or Israel consist almost the same percentage (with even a bit more for the PA), the remarks of EU’s friendship with Israel illustrate a subtle difference in tone: the EU’s references to the Palestinian Authority remained formal, while statements about Israel carried a more familiar and collegial tone.

Figure 4: Unity/consistency

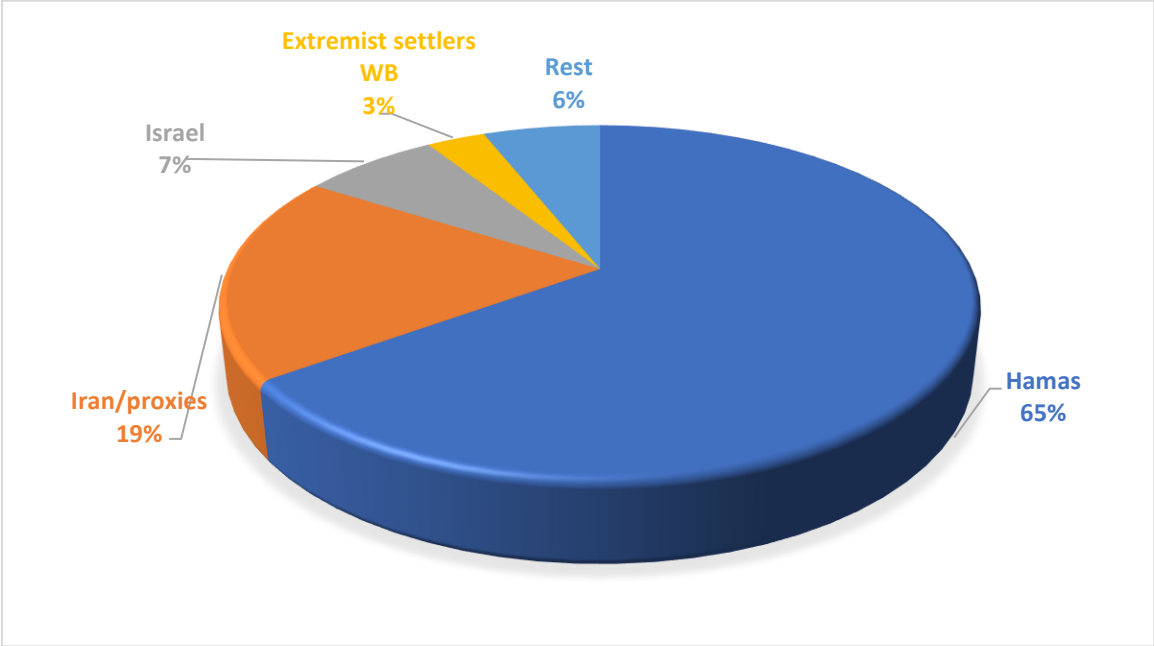


Condemnations

In the dimension of condemnations, the EU’s rhetoric overwhelmingly targeted Hamas, which received 65% of explicit condemnations. Iran and its proxies followed with 19% of these statements. Israel, by comparison, received only 7% of condemnations. Other actors, such as extremist

settlers on the West Bank, accounted for 3% of condemnations, while 6% fell into smaller categories. These numbers suggest that the EU attributes much of the violence to Hamas and Iranian influences, with a combined 84% of condemnations directed at these groups. By contrast, criticisms of Israel were rare and understated.

Figure 5: Condemnations

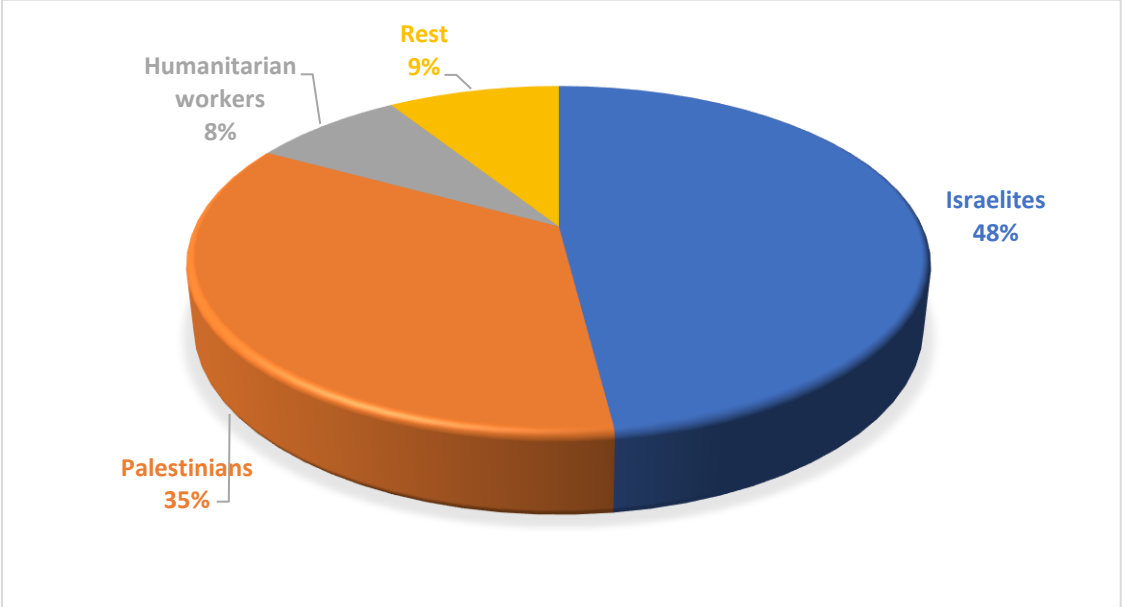


Emotional involvement

The EU’s emotional involvement mainly consists of expressions of solidarity with Israelis, comprising 48% of empathetic statements. Palestinians received a smaller share at 35%, while remaining

mentions concerned humanitarian workers and other categories. This distribution indicates a discernible EU preference for conveying sympathy toward Israel, potentially complicating its perception as an impartial mediator.

Figure 6: Emotional involvement

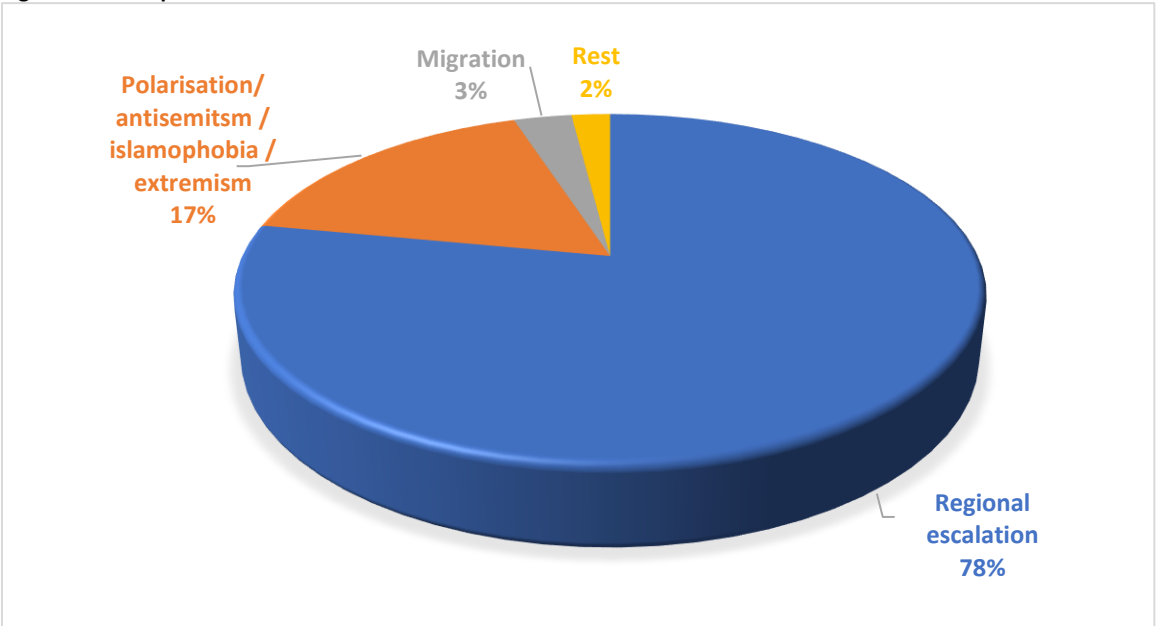


Consequences

The EU’s statements on the violence cycle’s repercussions predominantly (78%) addressed the risks of regional escalation, stressing that a broader conflict should be avoided at all costs. Concerns for EU communities about polarization, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and extremism

were also common, making up 17% of statements. Despite more frequent references to anti-semitism, there was not a separate category for analysing this, limiting the possibility of conclusions here. Issues related to migration and other minor categories appeared infrequently, comprising 3% and 2% respectively.

Figure 7: Consequences



Rest categories and nuances within the EU

Within other rest remarks, topics arose that didn't fit the main (sub)categories. For instance, the EU discussed how Russia might benefit from the violence cycle, the region's history, online misinformation, situational updates to the European Council, and Egypt's border policy.

Notably, EU representatives differed slightly in their approach to Israel. Borrell alone mentioned limits on Israel's right to self-defense, albeit just four times across all data. Michel and von der Leyen refrained from discussing such limitations entirely. Israel was never explicitly condemned by Michel or von der Leyen, whereas Borrell did so twice. Additionally, while Borrell and Michel showed emotional engagement toward Palestinians as much as toward Israelis, von der Leyen's statements, predominantly directed toward Israelis, brought down the average. This suggests that the EU representatives, though all cautious in criticizing Israel, vary in the degree of their closeness toward Israel, with von der Leyen showing the most restraint in addressing its actions.

Case-study

Over the past nine months, the European Union has taken some actions in response to the violence cycle, especially amid recent outbreaks of violence. While some efforts have focused on addressing immediate humanitarian needs, the EU has also pursued measures aimed at longer-term conflict resolution. This summary explores the nature and impact of these initiatives.

On the humanitarian front, the EU increased its aid to Gaza considerably. In October 2023, the EU announced it would triple its emergency aid to more than €75 million to provide urgent relief for civilians affected by the violence cycle. To facilitate this, the EU set up several initiatives aimed at speeding up the delivery of essential supplies. This included the launch of a humanitarian airlift operation through the European humanitarian response capacity, meant to ensure that lifesaving supplies such as shelter items, medical equipment, and hygiene kits could reach Gaza. The aid flights were routed through Egypt, and by April

2024, the operation had completed 44 flights delivering roughly 2,000 tons of aid. By June, this number had increased to 56 flights (European Commission, 2024). In collaboration with Cyprus, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates, the EU also launched the Cyprus Maritime Route. Given Cyprus's proximity to Palestine, this route was intended to expedite the delivery of humanitarian supplies during the crisis. However, much of this aid has faced significant challenges in reaching civilians due to Israeli blockades and other logistical obstacles. To address concerns about potential misuse of aid, the EU implemented tighter controls over humanitarian and development funding after allegations surfaced that some aid had reached Hamas (Brzozowski & Pugno, 2023). The EU also launched an investigation and audit into UNRWA and its staff, who were accused of collaborating with Hamas. While some member states called for suspending humanitarian aid to Gaza, this proposal was ultimately not implemented (EEAS, 2024).

The EU implemented targeted sanctions aimed at short-term solutions, directed mainly at Hamas and Iran. Sanctions focused on preventing the supply of drones and missiles to these groups. After some internal debate, the EU also imposed sanctions on individual Israeli settlers responsible for violence in the West Bank. These sanctions primarily affect individuals and include entry bans to Europe and the freezing of assets (EEAS, 2024; Consilium Europa, 2024). Additionally, in June 2024, the EU endorsed several United Nations resolutions, including Resolutions 2735, 2728, 2720, and 2712, which call for an immediate humanitarian pause or ceasefire, the safe release of hostages, respect for international humanitarian law by all parties, and sufficient humanitarian aid for Palestinians (EEAS, 2024). The EU also supported U.S. President Joe Biden's roadmap for peace, which emphasizes a durable ceasefire in Gaza, the release of hostages, and increased humanitarian assistance (Consilium Europa, 2024).

Alongside these immediate efforts, the EU joined with the Arab League, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to revive peace negotiations centred on a two-state solution. These talks began in earnest

in September 2023, and EU foreign ministers and officials within the G7 discussed possible post-conflict scenarios, such as a multinational peace-keeping force, interim UN oversight, and even a temporary Palestinian government (Euractiv, 2023). In a separate meeting in Barcelona, EU officials and representatives from Middle Eastern and North African countries evaluated the ongoing peace efforts, focusing on the viability of a two-state solution. The EU proposed a roadmap centred around three key principles or “no’s”: no forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, no reduction of Gaza’s territory or reoccupation by Israel, and no separation of Gaza’s issue from the overall Palestinian situation. On the positive side, the EU emphasized the need for legitimate actors, likely endorsed by the UN Security Council, to help build Gaza’s institutions, increase the role of Arab countries in finding solutions, and expand EU involvement in the region and a two-state solution (Euractiv, 2023).

In January 2024, the EU presented a 10-point plan intended to guide efforts towards a comprehensive solution to the Israel-Palestine issue. This plan includes proposals to organize preparatory peace conferences with other key states and stakeholders (Euractiv, 2023). The EU has also provided political and financial support to the Palestinian Authority to assist in implementing reforms within its governance structures. On a broader European level, the EU introduced measures to address hate crimes targeting Jewish and Muslim communities. As part of this, it allocated €30 million to secure public spaces, of which €5 million is dedicated specifically to combat antisemitism. Furthermore, the EU has moved forward with plans to classify hate crimes and hate speech as criminal offenses at the EU level, aiming for a more consistent approach across member states (Griera, 2023).

Despite the ongoing violence cycle, the EU did not take punitive measures against Israel or reconsider its association agreement with the country, even though some EU Parliament members, particularly from Ireland and Spain, urged for a reassessment. This agreement was neither suspended nor subjected to Article 2, which would enable

sanctions in response to human rights or democratic violations. The EU expressed its intent to hold an association council meeting with Israel to discuss the escalating situation, pending approval from the Council. While this council is typically held annually, it has not been consistent in recent decades (EEAS, 2024). Instead of suspending this association agreement, the EU and Israel went further in their cooperation. The EU extended a data-sharing agreement with Israel in January 2024, allowing Israel access to EU personal data without additional requirements. This arrangement is primarily aimed at enhancing commercial benefits for both sides (Bertuzzi & Tar, 2024).

In summary, over the last nine months, the EU has focused on intensifying humanitarian aid, supporting UN-led resolutions for temporary humanitarian pauses or ceasefires, sanctioning Hamas, Iran, and individual settlers, and promoting ‘peace talks’ towards a two-state solution. Meanwhile, the EU has refrained from imposing direct punitive measures on Israel that could actually weigh on the cycle of violence.

Conclusion

The dual analysis using content analysis and case-study methods led to findings that suggest there is no rhetoric-reality gap within the EU’s approach towards Israel and Palestine. Both in its rhetoric and policy, the EU consistently avoids confrontation with Israel and avoids addressing the colonial and apartheid nature of the Israeli regime. The EU’s rhetoric is focused on international (humanitarian) law, cooperation with partners, and the importance of humanitarian aid. In its statements, the EU stresses unity and consistency within its member states and frequently calls for a humanitarian pause or ceasefire and the release of hostages. A significant concern in its rhetoric is preventing regional escalation, and the EU also addresses issues like polarisation, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia. The EU continues to support the two-state solution as the primary resolution to the situation. The EU’s cautious stance is evident in how it refrains from condemning Israel or its violent settlers, rarely mentions the limits on Israel’s right to self-defence, and emphasizes

the protection of Israel's security and right of existence. This reticence, seen in both rhetoric and policy, mirrors a reluctance to challenge Israel directly. While the EU invokes international humanitarian law, it does so indirectly, reflecting its overall cautiousness. Furthermore, the EU appears emotionally more engaged when addressing Israeli concerns than Palestinian ones.

Regarding policy, the EU prioritises humanitarian aid, cooperation with other actors to prevent regional escalation, and supporting peace initiatives centred on the two-state solution. The EU also tries to take measures for securing humanitarian pauses and ceasefires, as well as the release of hostages, and has taken action to counter anti-semitism, polarisation, and Islamophobia in Europe. While sanctions have been imposed on Hamas, Iran, and violent settlers in the West Bank, none have been directed against Israel. No cooperation agreements with Israel have been suspended; on the contrary, one such agreement was extended, and the EU has not invoked the sanctions clause in the Association Agreement.

Thus, there is a clear alignment between the EU's rhetoric and policy. Both are marked by caution towards Israel, avoiding actions that could harm the EU-Israel relationship. The EU rarely condemns Israel, refrains from imposing sanctions, continues collaborations, and shows minimal restriction on Israel's right to self-defence. The EU is consistent, both in its rhetoric and policy, on humanitarian aid, the two-state solution, adherence to international humanitarian law, and opposition to Hamas, which the EU holds responsible for the current cycle of violence.

The conclusion drawn from this research is that there is no rhetoric-reality gap in the EU's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian issue between

October 2023 and June 2024. The EU's rhetoric and policy are largely aligned, contradicting the hypothesis of a rhetoric-reality gap proposed by Tocci (2010). Instead, the findings align more closely with Ezzamouri and Zenobio (2023), who argue that both the EU's rhetoric and policy operate on the wrong end of the spectrum, paying no heed to the colonial and apartheid nature of the Israeli regime.

Regarding EU sanctions and its conditionality policy, the results reflect patterns already noted in the existing literature. The EU did not suspend the Association Agreement or impose sanctions on Israel in recent months, thereby damaging the EU's credibility by signalling that Israel is not obliged to comply with the law. This research challenges the effectiveness of the EU as a global actor and prompts critical reflection on its role. The Israeli-Palestinian issue, with its near-century-long history and recent intensification of violence since October 2023, demands a robust response. Despite the EU's attempts to project its commitment to democracy, human rights, and freedom, both its rhetoric and policy remain superficial, and the EU essentially looks the other way when it comes to Israel. This research reveals that the credibility of the EU is severely undermined by its rhetoric and policy, especially given its neglect of the colonial and apartheid dimensions of the issue. This research concludes that the critical issue is not simply the existence of a rhetoric-reality gap, but rather the extent of alignment and the specific positioning of rhetoric and policy along a shared spectrum. As Ezzamouri and Zenobio (2023) suggest, the focus should shift from the gap itself to understanding the continuum on which both elements interact.

Bibliography

- AJLabs. (2024, August 13). *Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker*. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>
- Al Jazeera. (n.d.). *Timeline - PalestineRemix*. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/timeline_main.html
- Asseburg, M. (2003). *The EU and the Middle East Conflict: Tackling the Main Obstacle to Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*. *Mediterranean Politics*, 8(2–3), 174–193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629390308230011>
- Bazerman, C. (1992). *From cultural criticism to disciplinary participation: Living with powerful words*. In *Writing, teaching, and learning in the disciplines* (pp. 61–68).
- Benyaich, B. (2010). *Europa, Israël & de Palestijnen: van politiek deficit naar normatieve impasse*. ASP/VUB-PRESS/UJA.
- Bitzer, L. (1998). Political rhetoric. In *Landmark essays on contemporary rhetoric* (1st ed., Vol. 15). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003059226>
- Brzozowski, A. (2023a, November 14). EU maps out draft framework for post-conflict Gaza. *Euractiv*. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-maps-out-draft-framework-for-post-conflict-gaza/>
- Brzozowski, A. (2023b, November 27). Arab states, EU agree on need for two-state solution after Israel-Gaza war. *Euractiv*. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/arab-states-eu-agree-on-need-for-two-state-solution-after-israel-gaza-war/>
- Brzozowski, A. (2024a, March 8). Maritime corridor to Gaza from Cyprus could start this weekend, says von der Leyen. *Euractiv*. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/maritime-corridor-to-gaza-from-cyprus-could-start-this-weekend-says-von-der-leyen/>
- Brzozowski, A. (2024b, June 3). EU and Arab ministers to discuss Gaza war, future two-state solution. *Euractiv*. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-and-arab-ministers-to-discuss-gaza-war-future-two-state-solution/>
- Brzozowski, A., & Aurélie, A. (2024, January 22). EU's Borrell outlines 10-point peace plan to end Israel-Palestine conflict. *Euractiv*. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eus-borrell-outlines-10-point-peace-plan-to-end-israel-palestine-conflict/>
- Brzozowski, A., & Pugnet, A. (2023, November 22). EU says no Palestinian aid going to Hamas, programs to continue. *Euractiv*. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/development-policy/news/eu-says-no-palestinian-aid-going-to-hamas-programmes-to-continue/>
- Committee to Protect Journalists. (2024, August 13). *Journalist casualties in the Israel-Gaza war*. Retrieved August 10, 2024, from <https://cpj.org/2024/08/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>
- Demmelhuber, T., Marchetti, A., & Schumacher, T. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge handbook on the European neighbourhood policy* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315691244>
- EEAS. (2024, February 15). NATO: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell upon arrival at the NATO Defence Ministers Meeting. *European External Action Service (EEAS)*. Retrieved July 24, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/nato-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-upon-arrival-nato-defence_en
- EEAS Press Team. (2023, October 10). EU-Gulf Cooperation Council: Opening remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the Joint Ministerial Council. *European External Action Service (EEAS)*. Retrieved July 23, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-gulf-cooperation-council-opening-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-joint-ministerial_en
- EEAS. (2023, October 21). Address of President Charles Michel at the Cairo Peace Summit. *European External Action Service (EEAS)*. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/address-president-charles-michel-cairo-peace-summit_en
- EEAS. (2023a, October 18). Israel/Gaza: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell in the EP Plenary on the situation. *European External Action Service (EEAS)*. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary-situation_en
- EEAS. (2023b, October 23). Foreign Affairs Council: Remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the press conference. *European External Action Service (EEAS)*. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-press-conference-4_en

- EEAS. (2023c, November 13). Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell upon arrival. *European External Action Service (EEAS)*. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-upon-arrival-12_en
- EEAS. (2023d, November 16). *Israel: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell after his visits to Kibbutz Be'eri and Re'im with Foreign Minister Eli Cohen*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israel-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-after-his-visits-kibbutz-beeri_en
- EEAS. (2023e, November 18). *Gaza/Israel: Intervention of High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/gazaisrael-intervention-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-manama-dialogue-bahrain_en
- EEAS. (2023f, November 18). *Gaza/Israel: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after meeting with Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal in Bahrain*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/gazaisrael-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-after-meeting-foreign-minister-saudi_en
- EEAS. (2023g, November 19). *Qatar: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell after meeting with Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/qatar-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-after-meeting-prime_en
- EEAS. (2023h, November 22). *Israel/Gaza: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP Plenary*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary-1_en
- EEAS. (2023i, November 24). *Israel/Gaza: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell on the release of hostages and pause in hostilities*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-statement-high-representative-josep-borrell-release-hostages-and-pause-hostilities_en
- EEAS. (2023j, November 27). *Israel/Gaza: Opening remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the 8th Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-opening-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-8th-regional-forum-union_en
- EEAS. (2023k, December 4). *Human Rights: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the 25th EU-NGO Forum for Human Rights*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/human-rights-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-25th-eu-ngo-forum-human-rights_en
- EEAS. (2023l, December 12). *Israel/Gaza: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell in the EP plenary*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary-2_en
- EEAS. (2023m, December 14). *European Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell upon arrival*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-upon-arrival-4_en#top
- EEAS. (2023n, December 16). *Israel: Statement by the High Representative on state budget for settlement construction and related activities*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israel-statement-high-representative-state-budget-settlement-construction-and-related-activities_en
- EEAS. (2024a, January 6). *Lebanon: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell after his meeting with Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Abdallah Bou Habib*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/lebanon-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-after-his-meeting-lebanese_en
- EEAS. (2024b, January 9). *Gaza conflict: Remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell after his visit in Saudi Arabia*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/gaza-conflict-remarks-high-representative-joseph-borrell-after-his-visit-saudi-arabia_en
- EEAS. (2024c, February 16). *Israel/Palestine: Statement by the High Representative on a planned Israeli military operation in Rafah*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representative-planned-israeli-military-operation-rafah_en
- EEAS. (2024g, March 8). *Israel/Palestine: Statement by the High Representative on further settlement expansion*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representative-further-settlement-expansion_en

- EEAS. (2024m, May 20). *Palestine: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on attacks on medical and civilian infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank*. Retrieved on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/palestine-statement-high-representative-josep-borrell-and-commissioner-crisis-management-janez_en
- EEAS. (2024n, May 26). *Palestine: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell ahead of the Ministerial International Partners Meeting on Palestine in Brussels, with the Palestinian Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Norway*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/palestine-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ahead-ministerial_en
- EEAS. (2024o, May 26). *Palestine: Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the joint press conference with the Norwegian and Saudi Foreign Ministers*. Consulted on August 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/palestine-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-joint-press-conference-norwegian_en
- EEAS. (2024p, May 31). *Israel: Statement by the High Representative on attempts to label a UN agency a “terrorist organisation.”* Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israel-statement-high-representative-attempts-label-un-agency-terrorist-organisation_en
- EEAS. (2024q, June 1). *Shangri-La Dialogue: Speech by High Representative Josep Borrell on security in the Asia-Pacific region*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/shangri-la-dialogue-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell-security-asia-pacific-region_en
- EEAS. (2024r, June 4). *Schuman Security and Defence Forum: Keynote speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the opening session*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/schuman-security-and-defence-forum-keynote-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell_en
- EEAS. (2024s, June 24). *Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell upon arrival*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-upon-arrival-19_en
- EEAS. (2024t, June 27). *European Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell upon arrival*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-upon-arrival-6_en
- European Commission. (2021). *International cooperation with Israel in research and innovation*. Research and Innovation. Consulted on July 16, 2024, from https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/europe-world/international-cooperation/association-horizon-europe/israel_en
- European Commission. (2023, November 1). *EU welcomes opening of Rafah border crossing and safe passage of EU citizens*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_5483
- European Commission. (2023a, October 11). *Statement by President von der Leyen on the occasion of the minute of silence held by the College in honour of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Israel, in presence of the ambassador of Israel to the EU*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_4901
- European Commission. (2023a, October 16). *EU launches Humanitarian Air Bridge operation to bring aid to Gaza*. Consulted on July 23, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_5051
- European Commission. (2023b, November 22). *Statement by President von der Leyen on the agreement between Israel and Hamas on the release of hostages and a pause in hostilities*. Consulted on July 23, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_5961
- European Commission. (2023b, October 13). *Statement by President von der Leyen with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_4986
- European Commission. (2023c, November 24). *Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Michel and Prime Minister Trudeau following the EU-Canada Summit*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_6041
- European Commission. (2023c, October 13). *Statement by President von der Leyen with President Metsola and Israeli President Herzog*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_4987
- European Commission. (2023d, November 27). *Statement by President von der Leyen on the agreement between Israel and Hamas on an extension of the pause in hostilities*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_6121

- European Commission. (2023d, October 14). *European Commission will immediately triple humanitarian assistance for Gaza to over 75 million euros*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ga/ip_23_5001
- European Commission. (2023e, October 17). *Opening statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Michel on the occasion of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council of 17 October 2023*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_5064
- European Commission. (2023f, October 18). *Speech by President von der Leyen at the EP Plenary debate on the despicable terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel, Israel's right to defend itself in line with humanitarian and international law and the humanitarian situation in Gaza*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ga/SPEECH_23_5069
- European Commission. (2023g, October 20). *Statement by President von der Leyen with President Michel and President Biden at the beginning of the EU-US Summit*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_5182
- European Commission. (2023h, October 25). *Opening speech by President von der Leyen at the Global Gateway Forum*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_5305
- European Commission. (2023i, October 27). *Opening remarks by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Michel following the meeting of the European Council of 26 October 2023*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_5361
- European Commission. (2023j, October 27). *Opening remarks by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with President Michel following the meeting of the European Council of 26 October 2023*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ga/statement_23_5361
- European Commission. (2023k, November 9). *Speech by President von der Leyen at the International Humanitarian Conference for the Civilian Population in Gaza*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_5664
- European Commission. (2023l, November 18). *Press statement by President von der Leyen at El Arish Airport*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_23_5881
- European Commission. (2023m, November 21). *The Commission finalises the review of EU aid to Palestine*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ga/ip_23_5941
- European Commission. (2024, March 18). *Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on famine in Gaza*. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_24_1541
- European Commission. (2024, April 5). *Commission statement on Israeli commitments related to the opening of further humanitarian aid access points*. Consulted on July 24, 2024, from <https://ec.europa.eu/>
- European Council. (2024, April 14). *Iran: Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/04/14/iran-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu/>
- European Council. (2024a, April 18). *European Council conclusions on Ukraine, the Middle East and Türkiye, April 17, 2024*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 24, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/04/18/european-council-conclusions-on-ukraine-and-turkiye/>
- European Council. (2024a, February 1). *Remarks by President Charles Michel at the press conference of the Special European Council*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/02/01/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-press-conference-of-the-special-meeting-of-the-european-council/>
- European Council. (2024b, February 6). *Report by President Charles Michel to the European Parliament plenary session*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/02/06/report-by-president-charles-michel-to-the-european-parliament-plenary-session/>
- European Council. (2024b, June 4). *Israel/Palestine: Statement by the HR on behalf of the EU in support of the three-phase roadmap to an enduring ceasefire and release of hostages*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 24, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/04/israel-palestine-statement-by-the-hr-on-behalf-of-the-eu-in-support-of-the-three-phase-roadmap-to-an-enduring-ceasefire-and-release-of-hostages/>

- European Council. (2024c, March 28). *Speech by President Charles Michel at the “Enabel 25 years old” event*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/03/28/speech-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-enabel-25-years-old-event/>
- European Council. (2024d, April 16). *Invitation letter by President Charles Michel to the members of the European Council*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/04/16/invitation-letter-by-president-charles-michel-to-the-members-of-the-european-council/>
- European Council. (2024e, June 11). *Speech by President Charles Michel at the Gaza aid conference in Jordan*. Consilium Europa. Consulted on July 13, 2024, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/11/speech-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-gaza-aid-conference-in-jordan/>
- European Commission. (n.d.). *Rules of origin*. Access2Markets. Consulted on July 17, 2024, from <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/rules-origin>
- Ezzamouri, A., & Zenobio, M. (2023). *Shifting paradigms for Israel-Palestine: Why the EU must heed the wake-up call now*. RAM, 23, 20.
- Pasatoiu, F. (2022). *EU and Israel as genuine strategic partners*. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.
- Fox, B., & Vasques, E. (2023, November 2). *Cash for Cairo*. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/cash-for-cairo/>
- G7’s top diplomats discuss long-term plan for Gaza. (2023, November 8). *Euractiv*. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/g7s-top-diplomats-discuss-long-term-plan-for-gaza/>
- Gatti, M. (2022). *The EU’s statements about the Israel-Palestine «11-Days Crisis»: On the side of the oppressor*. Quaderni Di Sidiblog, 8, 117–132.
- Gerring, J. (2004). *What is a case study and what is it good for?* American Political Science Review, 98(2), 341–354.
- Griera, M. (2023, December 7). *EU Commission boosts Jewish, Muslim protection amidst Israel-Hamas war*. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/non-discrimination/news/eu-commission-boosts-jewish-muslim-protection-amidst-israel-hamas-war/>
- Griera, M. (2024, February 21). *EU lawmakers back Ireland, Spain in call for EU-Israel agreement review over Gaza*. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-lawmakers-back-ireland-spain-in-call-for-eu-israel-agreement-review-over-gaza/>
- Heimann, G., & Herman, L. (2018). *Israel’s path to Europe: The negotiations for a preferential agreement, 1957–1970*. Routledge.
- Hill, C. H. (1993). *The Capabilities Expectations Gap, or Conceptualising Europe’s International Role*. Journal of Common Market Studies, 31(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1993>
- Khader, B. (2013). *The European Union and the Palestinian Question (1957-2013): Soft diplomacy and hard realities*. Arab Study and Research Center at Louvain University.
- Knoblauch, C. H. (1985). *Modern rhetorical theory and its future directions*. Perspectives on Research and Scholarship in Composition, 26–44.
- Kronman, A. T. (1999). *Rhetoric*. University of Cincinnati Law Review, 67(3), 677–710.
- Lovatt, H. (2022). *Occupation and Sovereignty: Renewing EU Policy in Israel-Palestine*. European Council on Foreign Relations.
- Martins, B. O. (2016). *Interpreting EU–Israel relations: A contextual analysis of the EU’s Special Privileged Partnership proposal*. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 29(1), 151–170.
- Michalák, T. (2021). *European diplomacy and Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 1978–1980*. Asian & African Studies, 30(2)
- Michel, C. (2023, November 30). *X.com*. X (formerly Twitter). Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://x.com/CharlesMichel/status/1730137802728186271>
- Michel, C. (2024a, February 1). *X.com*. X (formerly Twitter). Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://x.com/CharlesMichel/status/1753064007479542122>
- Michel, C. (2024b, April 18). *X.com*. X (formerly Twitter). Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://x.com/CharlesMichel/status/1780986373345812918>
- Newman, D., & Yacobi, H. (2004). *The role of the EU in the Israel/Palestine conflict*. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.
- OCHA. (n.d.). *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - occupied Palestinian territory / Home Page*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory. Retrieved August 10, 2024, from <https://www.ochaopt.org/>

- Ochsenwald, W. L., & Stone, R. A. (2024, August 13). *Israel | Facts, History, Population, & Map*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Israel/industry>
- Olsthoorn, K. (2020). *Oude wijn in nieuwe zakken: over de oorsprongsmarkering van levensmiddelen uit de door Israël bezette gebieden*. *Nederlands Tijdschrift Voor Europees Recht*, 26(1–2), 7–18. <https://doi.org/10.5553/nter/138241202020026102006>
- Palestine: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell before the Ministerial meeting hosted by Norway and Saudi Arabia in Brussels. (n.d.). EEAS. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/palestine-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ministerial-meeting-hosted_en
- Pappe, I. (2023). *A history of modern Palestine* (3rd ed.).
- Pardo, S., & Peters, J. (2012). *Israel and the European Union: A documentary history* (1st ed.). Lexington Books.
- Pardo, S., & Zahavi, H. (2024). *Israel and the European Union*. In *Routledge Handbook on Israel's Foreign Relations* (1st ed., Vol. 1, pp. 278–289). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003048398-26>
- Perell, P. M. (1998). *The case for rhetoric*. York University.
- Rapp, C. (2022, March 15). *Aristotle's Rhetoric*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved July 11, 2024, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/#Aca>
- Stein, S., & Eran, O. (2021). *The EU and Israel: At least on speaking terms*. Institute for National Security Studies.
- Stöckl, B., & Mandilara, S. (2023, November 15). *Leak of confidential Israel memo sparks outrage in Dutch parliament*. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/leak-of-confidential-israel-memo-sparks-outrage-in-dutch-parliament/>
- Strömbom, L., & Persson, A. (2023). *The two-state impasse in Israel/Palestine—The EU caught between egalitarian norms and expansionist realpolitik*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Tar, J., & Bertuzzi, L. (2024, January 19). *Dual-use R&D options, France's influencer law EU alignment*. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/dual-use-rd-options-frances-influencer-law-eu-alignment/>
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2024, August 13). *Hamas | Definition, History, Ideology, & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hamas>
- Tocci, N. (2005). *The widening gap between rhetoric and reality in EU policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. CEPS Working Documents No. 217.
- Toje, A. T. (2008). *The Consensus–Expectations Gap: Explaining Europe's ineffective foreign policy*. *Security Dialogue*, 39(1), 121–141.
- Van Copenolle, H. (2023). *Content Analysis Course: Political Science Methods*.
- van Essen, J. L. (1953). *The principle of non-discrimination and the most-favored-nation clause: With comments on recent judgments of the international court of justice*. *Netherlands International Law Review*, 1(4), 395–418.
- van Miltenburg, E. (2024). *Content Analysis Workbook*.
- von der Leyen, U. (2024a, March 8). *X.com*. X (formerly Twitter). Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://x.com/i/broadcasts/1YqKDgjXWYExV>
- von der Leyen, U. (2024b, March 12). *X.com*. X (formerly Twitter). Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://x.com/i/broadcasts/1mnxepWLWjRJX>