



Course module and manifesto on EU-Arab relations

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Abstract

This course module, developed under the SHAPEDeM-EU project (Work Package 3), investigates the historical, political, and normative dimensions of Euro–Arab relations through a critical and decolonial lens. The module seeks to understand how ideas, institutions, and power relations have co-evolved across the Mediterranean, shaping the contemporary political landscape between Europe and the Arab region. Rather than treating Europe and ‘the Arab world’ as separate entities, the course explores how their mutual entanglement – from colonial encounters to present-day cooperation and contestation – has produced hybrid political forms and enduring asymmetries.

The course is organized into two parts. The first lays out the conceptual and historical foundations, beginning with colonialism and anti-colonialism, anti-imperial struggles, and the emergence of postcolonial statehood. Students engage with texts by Fanon, Said, and key archival sources such as the Balfour Declaration and the Suez crisis, as well as with films that capture the experience of resistance and decolonization. The second section turns to thematic and policy-oriented issues such as arms trade, security, democratization, migration, and solidarity. Each week pairs theoretical discussions with empirical material drawn from either the SHAPEDeM-EU project, the Routledge’s *Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, and open-access academic publications.

Pedagogically, the module combines lecture-based seminars, film analysis, and guided discussions. It encourages students to engage with diverse materials – official EU communications, NGO reports, and local civil society narratives – in order to grasp the layered meanings of democracy support and its limits in Euro–Arab relations. The inclusion of a one-page Manifesto at the end of the course allows participants to synthesize their understanding of the material and produce their own vision for decolonial and inclusive cooperation between the two regions.

By the end of the course, students will have developed:

- a nuanced understanding of the historical evolution of Euro–Arab relations;
- familiarity with competing theoretical frameworks, including postcolonial, sociological, and critical security approaches;
- analytical skills to evaluate EU democracy-support and external-relations policies;
- and an awareness of the ethical and legal dilemmas that shape contemporary regional politics.

Ultimately, the module contributes to SHAPEDeM-EU’s broader objective of rethinking democracy support through comparative, historically grounded, and participatory learning. It provides both academic depth and policy relevance, positioning students to critically engage with Euro-Arab relations beyond the dichotomy of ‘giver’ and ‘receiver’ – and to imagine new forms of partnership built on equality, justice, and mutual respect.

1 Model Course Description

Welcome to the Seminar on EU–Arab Relations. This seminar interrogates how Europe (primarily the EU and its member states) and ‘the Arab world’ have been co-produced historically and politically through intersecting processes of colonialism, development, and diplomacy. Part I builds the conceptual and historical foundations of this relationship, examining orientalism, empire, and the construction of ‘normative’ and ‘bordering’ Europe through institutional architectures such as the ENP, UfM, and Barcelona Process. Part II applies these analytical lenses to thematic case studies, including EU action against Palestinian liberation, arms and security governance, democratization, human rights,

migration and externalization, energy and climate cooperation, and solidarity and peacekeeping as practices of power and intervention.

The course blends critical theory, policy analysis, and case-based learning. Drawing on SHAPEDem-EU research outputs, Routledge's *Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, and other academic and policy sources, students will explore how democracy support and international cooperation are framed, contested, and enacted across the Euro-Arab space. Through weekly discussions and a final Manifesto, participants will leave with a critical, research-ready grasp of Euro-Arab relations and their contradictions, equipped with analytical and methodological tools to engage in policy and scholarly debates on democracy, rights, and security in the region.

2 Methodology

The construction of this syllabus is guided by the analytical and pedagogical aims of the SHAPEDem-EU project, which seeks to rethink democracy support and Euro–Arab engagement through historically grounded, critical, and comparative perspectives. The course is therefore designed not merely as a sequence of readings but as a progressive learning journey that mirrors the intellectual challenges of understanding Euro–Arab relations as a shared, co-produced space. The design process begins by identifying the conceptual foundations needed for students to situate the field within both global and regional histories, and then gradually moved toward contemporary issues and themes.

The methodological approach behind the syllabus rests on three pillars: *historical contextualization*, *theoretical pluralism*, and *applied analysis*. The first pillar acknowledges that Euro–Arab relations cannot be understood outside the legacy of colonialism, empire, and post-independence state formation. This awareness shapes the first part of the course, which introduces students to classic and postcolonial texts—from Fanon's reflections on decolonization to Said's critique of orientalism—and complements them with visual and archival materials such as *The Battle of Algiers* and the Balfour Declaration. These sources are used not simply to teach history but to illuminate how ideas of Europe and 'the Arab world' were simultaneously produced through power, representation, and resistance.

The second pillar, theoretical pluralism, structures the transition from historical readings to conceptual debates. Students are exposed to different interpretive frameworks – postcolonial, sociological, and critical security approaches – that help them interrogate both the content and the assumptions underlying EU–Arab cooperation. The course intentionally moves beyond a purely policy-oriented narrative by showing how concepts like democracy, modernization, and stability are contested and redefined in practice. This design encourages students to compare how similar themes are treated in different academic traditions and policy documents, thus developing an independent and critical analytical voice.

The third pillar, applied analysis, guides the second part of the course. Here the emphasis shifts from conceptual debates to thematic case studies covering arms exports, migration, human rights, energy, solidarity, and peacekeeping. Each theme is paired with selected SHAPEDem-EU outputs, open-access academic research, and EU policy documents to bridge theory and empirical reality. The intention is to enable students to link abstract ideas to the mechanisms and contradictions of policy implementation. The inclusion of recent topics—such as the EU's response to the Gaza war, the securitization of migration, or externalization agreements with Tunisia—ensures that the course remains dynamic and relevant to ongoing political developments.

In choosing readings, the guiding principles were accessibility, diversity of voices, and academic integrity. The syllabus integrates English-language scholarship with perspectives from the region,

prioritizing open-access materials whenever possible to ensure inclusivity. It also draws directly on SHAPEDEM-EU research to connect classroom learning to broader project outputs, making the module a living extension of collaborative inquiry.

Finally, the syllabus culminates in a collective Manifesto, an exercise designed to translate theoretical understandings into an actionable policy-oriented paper. Students are invited to articulate their vision of just and equitable Euro–Arab relations, grounded in the analytical and ethical discussions of the semester. This closing assignment captures the methodological essence of the course: learning not as passive accumulation of knowledge, but as active engagement with ideas, histories, and possibilities for transformation.

3 Learning Outcomes

- *Understand key* historical and conceptual frameworks shaping Euro–Arab relations, including the legacies of colonialism, orientalism, and postcolonial state formation.
- *Critically assess* European Union policies towards the Arab world through postcolonial and decolonial lenses, identifying the continuities and contradictions between normative claims and political practice.
- *Evaluate the* intersections of democracy, security, and human rights in the region by linking theoretical debates with empirical case studies drawn from SHAPEDEM-EU research and contemporary policy developments.
- *Develop independent research* perspectives on Euro–Arab cooperation, formulating evidence-based arguments that integrate academic and policy-oriented sources.
- *Reflect on* the ethical and methodological challenges of studying Euro–Arab relations, including questions of positionality, representation, and the politics of knowledge production.

4 Assessment

Assessment in this course is designed to combine continuous engagement, analytical rigor, and creative synthesis. Students are evaluated across four complementary components: *class participation* (20%), *weekly reflections* (20%), *midterm paper* (30%), and a *final Manifesto* (30%).

Active participation is essential to the success of this seminar. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class, contribute thoughtfully to discussions, and engage critically with their peers. The weekly reflections serve as an ongoing dialogue between the student and the material: short written pieces (around 400–600 words) that connect theoretical debates with current events or policy developments. These reflections help develop analytical discipline and ensure continuous learning throughout the semester.

The midterm paper offers students an opportunity to apply conceptual frameworks to a specific case study or theme of their choice, linking theory to practice. Papers (2,500–3,000 words) should demonstrate critical understanding, originality, and engagement with the relevant literature, including both academic and policy sources.

The final component – the collective *Manifesto* – replaces a traditional final exam. It is both a reflective and a constructive exercise in which students articulate a shared vision of Euro–Arab relations, grounded in the semester’s discussions and readings. This creative assignment assesses students’ ability to synthesize complex ideas, work collaboratively, and translate academic insight into normative imagination.

Together, these four components ensure that evaluation reflects not only individual performance but also collective learning and intellectual growth, in line with the course's participatory and critical methodology.

5 Course Structure and Weekly Outline

Part I – Concepts, History, Colonialism

Week 1: Colonialism & Anti-Colonialism (Fanon; *Battle of Algiers*; Balfour; Suez)

Week 2: Euro–Arab as Co-Constitution (Said; “Normative Empire”; Khader)

Week 3: Institutions (EAD, EMP/Barcelona, ENP, UfM; EU–LAS; EEAS)

Week 4: Restudying Euro–Arab after the Uprisings (learning loop; contradictions)

Part II – Themes, Cases, Practices

Week 5: Arms & Export Controls (add SIPRI Oct 2025 + 1–2 empirical case pieces)

Week 6: Reframing Security (Beirut School; security/governance critiques)

Week 7: EU vs. Palestinian Liberation (state-building without a state; differentiation)

Week 8: Democratization in Lebanon (ENP logics; SHAPEDEM Lebanon paper)

Week 9: Comparing Neighbourhoods (Eastern vs. Southern; SHAPEDEM D4.4 etc.)

Week 10: Sport/Politics (Israel, Gaza & 2024–25 qualifiers; sport & diplomacy)

Week 11: Migration & Externalization (Tunisia 2023 MoU; ASILE brief)

Week 12: Solidarity from Below (student/labour networks; restrictions on solidarity)

Week 13: Peacekeeping/Peacebuilding (UNIFIL post-2006; Turner on OPT)

Week 14: Perceptions (Edited-book Ch. 20–21 + SHAPEDEM synthesis)

Week 15: International Law, Norms & Justice—Looking Ahead (IHL, HR, accountability)

6 Detailed Weekly Readings

6.1 Part I – Concepts, History, Colonialism

Week 1: Colonialism and Anti-colonialism

Aim: Understand how colonialism and anti-colonial movements shaped the early foundations of Euro–Arab relations.

Required Readings:

- Frantz Fanon, ‘The Wretched of the Earth’, chapters ‘On Violence’ and ‘Colonial War and Mental Disorders’. <https://dn790007.ca.archive.org/0/items/the-wretched-of-the-earth/The%20Wretched%20Of%20The%20Earth.pdf>
- Battle of Algiers (Film) – screening link to be provided
- Haugbølle, Sune, and Roberto Mazza. “French and British Colonialism and Its Legacy in the MENA Region.” In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 35–49. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Lafi, Nora. “Longue-Durée Reflections on Anti-Colonial Movements in the Middle East (1798–Today).” In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris,

Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 50–64. London: Routledge, 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>

- The Balfour Declaration, November 1917. <https://britainpalestineproject.org/bp/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/extract.pdf>
- Khalidi, Rashid. 'Consequences of the Suez Crisis in the Arab World', in Wm. Roger Louis, and Roger Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences*, Clarendon Paperbacks (Oxford, 1991; online edn, Oxford Academic, 3 Oct. 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198202417.003.0022>

Week 2: Euro–Arab: A Co-Constitutive Relation?

Aim: How have Europe and “the Arab world” been mutually constituted through knowledge, empire, and bordering?

Required Readings:

- Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Intro + Chapters. 1–2). https://www.eaford.org/site/assets/files/1631/said_edward1977_orientalism.pdf
- Cebeci, Münevver. “The EU’s Constructions of the Middle East.” In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 103–116. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Larbi Sadiki, 'Decolonising Democratic Knowledge in Euro–Mediterranean Relations', IAI Research Studies (2002). https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iairs_7.pdf
- Raffaella A. Del Sarto, 'Normative Empire Europe', *JCMS* 54(2) (2016). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcms.12282>
- Khader, B. (2017). *The European Union and the Arab World: From the Rome Treaty to the “Arab Spring”*. Fondation ACM. <https://fundacionacm.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/KHADER-EU-AW-FINAL-FULL-Version2.pdf>

Week 3: Institutional Frameworks: EAD, EU–LAS, Barcelona/EMP, ENP, UfM

Aim: What architectures structure Euro–Arab relations and with what power effects?

Required Readings:

- Allen, “The Euro-Arab Dialogue,” *JCMS* (1977). Allen, David. “THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE.” *Journal of common market studies* 16.4 (1977): 323–342. Web.
- Miller, “The Euro–Arab Dialogue and the Limits of European Normative Power,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50(3) (2014). Miller, Rory. “The Euro-Arab Dialogue and the Limits of European External Intervention in the Middle East, 1974–77.” *Middle Eastern studies* 50.6 (2014): 936–959. Web.
- Kourtellis, “A quarter-century of studying Euro-Mediterranean relations,” *Mediterranean Politics* (2024). Kourtellis, Christos. “A Quarter-Century of Studying Euro-Mediterranean Relations: A Systematic Literature Review.” *Mediterranean politics (Frank Cass & Co.)* 29.2 (2024): 165–185. Web.

- Background on Barcelona/EMP: EUISS Report on the UfM; “Ten Years of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.” “The Euro-Mediterranean partnership ten years on.” *Politique étrangère* 70.3 (2005): 525–557. Print.

Week 4 — Restudying Euro–Arab (the “Learning Loop”)

Aim: Reflexivity after the Arab uprisings; democracy support vs. practice.

Required Readings:

- Sadiki, “Towards a ‘democratic knowledge’ turn?” (2018), in *Democratic Knowledge and Knowledge Production*. Sadiki, Larbi. “Towards a ‘democratic Knowledge’ Turn? Knowledge Production in the Age of the Arab Spring.” *The journal of North African studies* 20.5 (2015): 702–721. Web.
- Sadiki, Larbi, and Layla Saleh. “On EU–Arab Democratisation: Towards a Democratic ‘Learning Loop.’” In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 253–266. London: Routledge, 2022.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Achraimer, Christian & Pace, Michelle. “EU Democracy Support in the Southern Neighborhood: How the EU Contradicts its own Practices”. 2023.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375693191_EU_Democracy_Support_in_the_Southern_Neighborhood_How_the_EU_Contradicts_its_own_Practices
- Abrami, Samuele Carlo, Bourekba, Moussa and Arco Escriche, Inés (eds.). Democracy Support or Authoritarian Enabling? The Impact and Perceptions of Non-EU Actors in Lebanon, Palestine, and Tunisia. SHAPEDEM-EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_45_Democracy_Support_or_Authoritarian_Enabling\(D6.3\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_45_Democracy_Support_or_Authoritarian_Enabling(D6.3).pdf)

6.2 Part II — Thematic & Case Studies (Weeks 4–11)

Week 5: EU and Palestinian Liberation

Aim: Go beyond “Palestine as case” to interrogate how EU policy architectures reproduce domination and foreclose liberation.

Required Readings:

- Bouris, *The EU and Occupied Palestinian Territories: State-Building without a State* (Routledge, 2014), chapters. 1–2. Bouris, Dimitris. *The European Union and Occupied Palestinian Territories: State-Building without a State*. 1st ed. vol. 101. London: Routledge, 2014. Web. (AUB libraries)
- Makdisi, Karim. *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict: 100 Years of Regional Relevance and International Failure*. MENARA Working Papers No. 27, December 2018. <https://yplus.ps/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Makdisi-Karim-Palestine-and-the-Arab-Israeli-Conflict-100-Years-of-Regional-Relevance-and-International-Failure.pdf>
- Akgül-Açıkmeşe, “EU Policy towards the Israel–Palestine Conflict,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 29(1) (2024). Akgül-Açıkmeşe, Sinem, and Soli Özel. “EU Policy towards the Israel-

Palestine Conflict: The Limitations of Mitigation Strategies." *The International spectator* 59.1 (2024): 59–78. Web. (AUB libraries)

- Pace, "Firm in Rhetoric, Compromising in Reality: The EU in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict," *JCMS* (PDF available on AUB libraries) Tocci, Nathalie. "Firm in Rhetoric, Compromising in Reality: The EU in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict." *Ethnopolitics* 8.3–4 (2009): 387–401. Web. (AUB libraries)
- Persson, "'EU differentiation' as a case of Normative Power Europe," *Journal of European Integration* 40(5) (2018). Persson, Anders. "'EU Differentiation' as a Case of 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict." *Journal of European Integration* 40.2 (2018): 193–208. Web.

Week 6: Arms and Export Control

Aim: Examine how the European Union's arms export policies towards the Middle East reflect the tension between its proclaimed normative values and its strategic, security, and economic interests.

Required Readings:

- Hussain, Zain. "How Top Arms Exporters Have Responded to the War in Gaza." Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 3 Oct 2024.
<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2024/how-top-arms-exporters-have-responded-war-gaza>
- Wearing, David. "Their Violence or Ours? EU–Middle East Arms Sales and Military Cooperation." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 447–456. London: Routledge, 2022.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Chiara Bonaiuti, 'Article: Arms Transfers and Human Rights: Assessing the Impact and Enforcement of the EU Common Position on Arms Exports in a Multilevel Analysis', (2022), 27, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Issue 4, pp. 463–484,
<https://kluwerlawonline.com/journalarticle/European+Foreign+Affairs+Review/27.2/EERR2022035>
- Maletta, Giovanna. "Seeking a Responsible Arms Trade to Reduce Human Suffering in Yemen." *The International Spectator* 56 (1): 73–91. 2021.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2021.1876862>

Week 7: Reframing Security

Aim: To explore how alternative perspectives, such as the Beirut School, redefine security in the Euro–Arab context beyond militarized and state-centric frameworks.

Required readings:

- Abboud, S., Dahi, O. S., Hazbun, W., Grove, N. S., Pison Hindawi, C., Mouawad, J., & Hermez, S. (2018). Towards a Beirut School of critical security studies. *Critical Studies on Security*, 6(3), 273–295. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2018.1522174>
- Schumacher, Tobias. "The EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council: A Troubled Relationship." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 157–169. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>

- Hazbun, Waleed. "The Politics of Insecurity in the Arab World: A View from Beirut." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 3 (2017): 656–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517000336>.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2009. Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries. New York. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/challenges-human-security-arab-countries>

Week 8: Democratization (Lebanon): Support, Selectivity, and Stability/Instability

Aim: EU democracy agenda in Lebanon; ENP logics; "stability first" dilemmas.

Required Readings:

- Seeberg, "EU policies concerning Lebanon and the bilateral cooperation on migration and security," *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications* (Nature) 5 (2018). Seeberg, Peter. "EU Policies Concerning Lebanon and the Bilateral Cooperation on Migration and Security – New Challenges Calling for New Institutional Practices?" *Humanities & social sciences communications* 4.1 (2018): n. pag. Web.
- Mouawad, Jamil, Karim Makdisi and Sarah Sabra. EU Foreign Policy Practices and Democracy Support in Lebanon. SHAPEDEM-EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_40_EU_Foreign_Policy_Practices_and_Democracy_Support_in_Lebanon_\(D4.2\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_40_EU_Foreign_Policy_Practices_and_Democracy_Support_in_Lebanon_(D4.2).pdf)
- Jallad, Zeina et al. Three case country papers detailing local democratic politics. SHAPEDEM EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_43_Three_case_country_papers_\(D3.2\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_43_Three_case_country_papers_(D3.2).pdf)
- Khatib, "How Promotion of Political Reform by the EU Works in Lebanon & the PTs," International IDEA Discussion Paper (2009). <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/chapters/the-role-of-the-european-union-in-democracy-building/eu-democracy-building-discussion-paper-58.pdf>

Week 9: Comparing Neighborhoods: The EU's Approach to the Arab Region and Beyond

Aim: This session will explore how the EU's strategies towards the Arab region compare with its approaches to other neighbourhoods, drawing on conceptual, empirical and policy-oriented work across SHAPEDEM-EU's work packages. (Distinguishing between EU Eastern and Southern neighborhoods).

Required Readings:

- Ezzamouri, Akram. Fragmented Practices, Shared Lessons: EU Democracy Support in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods. SHAPEDEM-EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_47_Fragmented_Practices,_Shared_Lessons_EU_Democracy_Support_in_the_Eastern_and_Southern_Neighbourhoods_\(D4.4\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_47_Fragmented_Practices,_Shared_Lessons_EU_Democracy_Support_in_the_Eastern_and_Southern_Neighbourhoods_(D4.4).pdf)
- Daniela Huber, Anna Khakee, Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Youssef Cherif, Silvia Ferabolli, Moch Faisal Karim, Elena Korosteleva, Forum: Global Perspectives on Democracy Support in Light of the Wars in Gaza and Ukraine, *International Studies Perspectives*, 2025;, ekaf003, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekaf003>

- Osypchuk, Anna and Anton Suslov. EU Foreign Policy Practices and Democracy Support in Ukraine. SHAPEDEM-EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_36_EU_Foreign_Policy_Practices_and_Democracy_Support_in_Ukraine_\(D4.2\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_36_EU_Foreign_Policy_Practices_and_Democracy_Support_in_Ukraine_(D4.2).pdf)
- Mikhelidze, Nona. EU Democracy Support and Civil Society in Georgia. SHAPEDEM-EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_35_EU_Democracy_Support_and_Civil_Society_in_Georgia_\(D4.2\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_35_EU_Democracy_Support_and_Civil_Society_in_Georgia_(D4.2).pdf)

Week 10: Playing Through War: Israel, Gaza, and the Global Politics of Football

Aim: To critically examine how international sporting events, particularly Israel's participation in the 2024–2025 World Cup qualifiers, intersect with politics, conflict, and diplomacy in the Middle East.

Required readings:

- Naser-Najjab N, Akleh SA. Palestinian Football and the Struggle for Identity. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 2024;56(2):244-252. doi:10.1017/S0020743824000151
- Maharmeh, I. "The Evolution and Impact of the Sports Boycott of Israel", *Al-Muntaga, Doha Institute*, vol.6, no.3, September/October 2023. <https://almuntaga.dohainstitute.org/en/issue014/Documents/almuntaga-14-2023-Maharmeh.pdf>
- Belcastro, F. A Game of Politics? International Sport Organisations and the Role of Sport in International Politics. *The International Spectator*, 58(2), 107–122. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2023.2205789>
- Khalidi, Ibrahim. "The Destruction of Sports Infrastructure in Gaza." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, August 2024. <https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/jq-articles/The%20Destruction%20of%20Sports%20Infrastructure%20in%20Gaza.pdf>

Week 11: Migration & Externalization (Tunisia)

Aim: EU–Tunisia MoU (2023), legal-political critiques, governance outcomes.

Required readings:

- Strik, Tineke, and Ruben Robbesom. "Compliance or Complicity? An Analysis of the EU-Tunisia Deal in the Context of the Externalisation of Migration Control." *Netherlands international law review* 71.1 (2024): 199–225. Web. (AUB libraries)
- Natter, "What the EU–Tunisia deal reveals..." Leiden University Scholarly Publications (2023). <https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A3714626/download>
- Sha'ath, "Tunisia's approach to asylum: cooperation within reason," *European Journal of Migration & Law* 26(2) (2024). Sha'ath, Hiba, and Fatma Raach. "Cooperation within Reason: Tunisia's Approach to Asylum and Readmission." *European journal of migration and law* 26.2 (2024): 179–196. Web. (AUB libraries)
- ASILE Project Policy Brief—Tunisia (2024) (for data/background on cooperation). <https://www.asileproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ASILE-POLICY-BRIEF-Tunisia.pdf>

Week 12: Environment, Climate & Energy: Green Deal Meets MENA

Aim: External dimensions of the EGD; justice, dependency, and megaprojects.

Required readings:

- Almeida, “The ‘Greening’ of Empire: the European Green Deal as geo-economic project,” *Political Geography* 102 (2023). el Almeida, Diana et al. “The ‘Greening’ of Empire: The European Green Deal as the EU First Agenda.” *Political geography* 105 (2023): n. pag. Web. (AUB libraries)
- Dominion, Parks & Pauli, “The external dimensions of the European Green Deal,” *International Environmental Agreements* 25 (2025). Dominion, Goran, Louisa Parks, and Markus Pauli. “The External Dimensions of the European Green Deal.” *International environmental agreements: politics, law and economics* 25.2 (2025): 171–176. Web. (AUB libraries)
- EuroMeSCo Policy Study, *Energy Megaprojects in North Africa* (2024), selected chapters on Egypt/Tunisia renewables and interconnections. <https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Policy-Study34-Megaprojects.pdf>
- Bergmans, “The European Green Deal: a compass in the storm? Assessment and prospects for the European Union’s environmental action”, SciencePo, *IDDRI*, <https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Catalogue%20iddri/Etude/202406-ST0424-green%20deal.pdf>

Week 13: Solidarity from Below

Aim: examine forms of transnational solidarity between European and Arab actors, focusing on student, labor, and civil-society movements that challenge dominant state narratives and EU foreign-policy.

Required Readings:

- Sunnemark, Ludvig. “The Palestine Solidarity Movement as Solidarity Ecology: Discourses and Strategies of Solidarity within the pro-Palestinian Student Movement.” *Critical sociology* (2025): n. pag. Web.
- Nagarajan Nithya, “Intervention – “On Solidarity : Responses of European Labor to the Gaza Genocide””, *Department of Politics, York University*, 2024. <https://antipodeonline.org/2024/04/10/on-solidarity/>
- Ziadeh Adeeb, “EU Foreign Policy and Hamas: Inconsistencies and Paradoxes”. *EU Foreign Policy and Hamas: Inconsistencies and Paradoxes*. 1st ed. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018. Web.
- de Jong, Anne. “Violence in Nonviolent Action: Power Relations in Joint Activism in Israel and Palestine.” *Journal of Resistance Studies* 6(2) (2020): 112–148. <https://resistance-journal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/JRS-2-2020-Anne-de-Jong.pdf>
- Qutami, Loubna. “Transnational Histories of Palestinian Youth Organizing in the United States.” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 50(4) (2021): 33–49. https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/attachments/jps-articles/JPS198_Qutami_final.pdf

Week 14: Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

Aim: To critically assess EU and UN peacebuilding missions in the Arab world, exploring how peacekeeping practices such as UNIFIL in Lebanon and EUPOL COPPS in Palestine reflect broader debates on intervention, resilience, and postcolonial governance.

Required Readings:

- Makdisi, Karim et al, "UNIFIL II: Emerging and Evolving European Engagement in Lebanon and the Middle East" (2009), <https://www.euromesco.net/publication/unifil-ii-emerging-and-evolving-european-engagement-in-lebanon-and-the-middle-east/>.
- Isleyen & co-authors, "The EU and practices of governing space & population: insights from EUPOL COPPS," (academic paper, 2020). https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/55357818/The_European_Union_and_Practices_of_Governing_Space_and_Population_in_Contested_States_Insights_from_EUPOL_COPPS_in_Palestine.pdf
- Makdisi, Karim & Prashad, Vijay, eds. *Land of Blue Helmets: The United Nations and the Arab World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016. <https://www.ucpress.edu/books/land-of-blue-helmets/paper>
- Galariotis, Ioannis, and Maria Gianniou. "EU Foreign Policy Incoherence in the United Nations: The Case of the Middle East." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, edited by Dimitris Bouris, Daniela Huber, and Michelle Pace, 169-180. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Al Jazeera. "UNIFIL's mandate in southern Lebanon was renewed. What happens next?" *Al Jazeera*, 31 August 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/8/31/unifils-mandate-in-southern-lebanon-was-renewed-what-happens-next>

Week 15: Perceptions and Narratives

Aim: To analyze how mutual perceptions between Europe and the Arab world shape political and cultural relations, drawing on both empirical data and discourse analysis from project studies and the academic literature.

Required Readings:

- Teti, Andrea; Gervasio, Gennaro; Abbott, Pamela. "Perceptions of the EU: Activists and Public Opinion in the Middle East." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, eds. Bouris, Huber & Pace. pp. 217-230. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Kaya, Ayhan. "Populist Politics in Europe and their Impact on EU Relations with the Middle East: EU–Turkey Relations as a Case Study." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU–Middle East Relations*, eds. Bouris, Huber & Pace. pp. 231-241. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429317873>
- Fahmi, George et al. Chronology of EU-Arab engagement and Cluster of thematic contextual papers on EU-Arab relations. SHAPEDEM-EU Publications, 2025. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_42_Chronology_of_EU-Arab_engagement_and_Cluster_of_thematic_contextual_papers_on_EU-Arab_relations_\(D3.1\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_42_Chronology_of_EU-Arab_engagement_and_Cluster_of_thematic_contextual_papers_on_EU-Arab_relations_(D3.1).pdf)
- Rahman, Omar H. (ed.). "Arab Public Opinion Under Pressure." *Afkār – Middle East Council on Global Affairs*, 12 December 2024. https://mecouncil.org/blog_posts/public-opinion-under-pressure/

- Isani, Mujtaba, & Schlipphak, Bernd. "The Desire for Sovereignty – An Explanation of EU Attitudes in the Arab World." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 3 (2017): 502-517.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12485>

Week 16: International Law, Norms, and Justice – Arab-EU Relations Looking Ahead

Aim: To reflect on the future of Arab–EU relations through the lens of international law, human rights, and global justice, examining how norms are constructed, contested, and enforced within evolving geopolitical contexts.

Required Readings:

- Dimitris Bouris, Irene Fernández-Molina, The International Norm–Practice Relationship, Contested States, and the EU’s Territorial (Un)Differentiation toward Palestine and Western Sahara, *Global Studies Quarterly*, Volume 4, Issue 2, April 2024, ksae041, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksae041>
- Mattar, Mohamed Y. "Article 43 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights: The Dilemma of Civil and Political Rights." *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 26 (2013): 91–126.
<https://journals.law.harvard.edu/hri/wp-content/uploads/sites/83/2013/05/V26-Mattar.pdf>
- Gathii, James Thuo. "International Law and Eurocentricity." *European Journal of International Law* 9, no. 1 (1998): 184–211. <https://www.ejil.org/pdfs/9/1/1476.pdf>
- Council of the European Union. "EU position on the situation in the Middle East." *Council of the European Union*, last review 23 October 2025. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-position-situation-middle-east/>
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab Region*. E/ESCWA/CL4.SIT/2024/TP.1. Beirut: ESCWA, 2024.
https://archive.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/statistical-overview-progress-sustainable-development-goals-arab-region-english_0.pdf
- UN (2021). *Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General*. <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210010122/read>

Additional List of Readings

- Woertz, Eckart & Irene Martínez. "Embeddedness of the MENA in Economic Globalization Processes." *Middle East and North Africa Regional Architecture: Mapping Geopolitical Shifts, Regional Order and Domestic Transformations* Working Paper No. 8 (June 2018).
https://www.menaraproject.eu/files/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/menara_wp_8.pdf
- Zahran, Alaa Hosny. "EU’s Democracy Promotion in Egypt before and after Arab Uprisings." *Review of economics & political science : REPS* 8.6 (2023): 605–621. Web.
- Bordón, "The European Union and the Egyptian Neighbour: assessing the characterization of resilience as an external action priority" Annual no. 7, 2019.
<https://portal.amelica.org/ameli/journal/474/4742149011/html/>

- Del Sarto, Raffaella A. *Borderlands: Europe and the Mediterranean Middle East*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2021. Web.
- Achraimer and Pace, Policy debate (optional): Carnegie Europe, “How the EU Supports Authoritarianism in Egypt” (2023). <https://carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2023/12/how-the-eu-supports-authoritarianism-in-egypt?lang=en>
- CIVIC Space report on restrictions on Palestine solidarity (2024). <https://civic-forum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CIVIC-SPACE-REPORT-2024-RESTRICTIONS-ON-PALESTINE-SOLIDARITY.pdf>
- Daga, “European Contestations of EU Democracy Support in Lebanon,” SHAPEDEM-EU (2025), exec. summary + findings. [https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_31_European_Contestations_of_EU_Democracy_Support_in_Lebanon_\(D4.3\).pdf](https://shapedem-eu.eu/user/pages/06.publications/SHAPEDEM-EU_Publication_31_European_Contestations_of_EU_Democracy_Support_in_Lebanon_(D4.3).pdf)
- News context (optional skim for policy salience): EU €1bn package to Lebanon (2024). <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/eu-offers-1-bln-euros-economic-security-support-lebanon-2024-05-02/>
- SIPRI Yearbook (Dual-use & arms trade controls), section on EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP (overview of legal regime). <https://doi.org/10.1093/sipri/9780198869207.003.0014>

7 Manifesto: To Reimagine EU-Arab Relations from the Bottom Up

The Arab region has seen unprecedented violence and disorder since the early hope of the Arab uprisings erupted in 2011 in Tunisia and spread across the region. Arab people were trying to unshackle from a Western-supported regional order accommodating authoritarianism in both republican and monarchical varieties, just as anti-colonial movements fought for self-determination against European colonialism. Europe initially responded positively to these uprisings, at least in rhetorical terms, with the declared aim of listening to the voice of the people and by supporting democracy and human rights in its Southern Neighbourhood. However, they quickly reverted when the counterrevolutions quelled the challenges to the Arab national and regional status quo. Europe, in essence, shifted from professing “values” of democracy and human rights to perceived core interests: working with authorities to thwart security threats—including what they term as “radicalization” and “terrorism”—and halt migration at all costs.

In Palestine, throughout this period, Europe continued to fund Israel’s occupation via peacebuilding projects and protecting Israel from any form of accountability not just with respect to international law but Europe’s own policies and values. Over the last two years, the EU commission and other member states largely supported Israel’s brutal war in Gaza, with the EU President’s early unconditional support for Israel’s war crimes and (the then) German Foreign Minister going as far as to suggest civilians in Gaza should no longer enjoy protection under international humanitarian law. As what the UN has called a “genocide” became more apparent, including a full-blown imposed famine on Gaza’s civilians, EU officials began to criticize Israel—with the EU president finally calling out the “humanitarian catastrophe” in September 2025—but with little actual policy changes to hold Israel accountable. Indeed, eleven out of 27 EU states (such as the United Kingdom, Spain, France, and Belgium) have recognised the state of Palestine. However, but this recognition has had very limited practical as they did not clearly define Palestine’s borders, an omission that renders the very notion of statehood largely indeterminate. People across the region could see what Amnesty International and other human rights organizations were confirming, namely that the EU’s reputation as a credible actor for human rights and international law lay in tatters. Simultaneously, Europe’s increasingly draconian

anti-migrant policies pushed it to support retrenched authoritarianism in key transit countries such as Tunisia. This too has led to Europe's standing to fall further.

Our research has clearly shown that Arab perception today of the EU is highly sceptical and negative. It reveals that the EU has not only failed to address the deep-seated structural causes of democratic deficits, such as authoritarianism, elite capture, and occupation but has in fact contributed to their reinforcement. This has cultivated widespread disillusionment, which manifests differently in each context: as deep-seated cynicism in Lebanon, where the EU is seen as propping up a failing status quo; as bitter disappointment in Tunisia, where early post-revolution optimism has dissolved in the face of the EU's muted response to democratic ongoing backsliding; and as profound anger in Palestine, where the EU is widely perceived as being complicit in the ongoing Israeli occupation and the dehumanization of Palestinians. This perceived prioritization of interests over principles has intensified significantly, with many local actors, former ambassadors to the EU, as well as human rights organizations arguing that the EU's actions, including continued material support for Israel and its silence on ongoing atrocities, constitute an atrocity and complicity in severe human rights violations, most starkly evidenced by its response to the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Our findings show that EU's current approach to democracy support in the Southern Mediterranean has eroded local trust and, in many cases, proven counterproductive and even complicit. It calls for a fundamental recalibration of EU policy towards a more participatory, transparent, and context-sensitive model. This requires moving beyond security-driven transactionalism, rethinking harmful conditionalities, dismantling gatekeeping structures, and genuinely prioritizing local voices and needs to become a truly collaborative partner in the region's democratic development. Crucially, it also requires the EU to reckon with its own violent colonial past and present, and the racist ideologies that continue to shape its engagement. If the root causes of the Palestine question and the related colonial harm in Tunisia and Lebanon are not addressed, the EU will continue to reinforce the status quo, trapped in a cycle of historical amnesia.

Recalibrating this flawed EU-Arab relationship is a matter of urgency if the EU is to remain a relevant and credible actor in a region now dominated, more than ever, by a US that has increasingly relegated the EU to a marginal role globally. This endeavour, we find, requires more than superficial adjustments to programming or the addition of new budget lines. Rather, we suggest that it requires a fundamental shift in the institutional mindset and political culture of the EU's foreign policy apparatus.

We urge the EU to transition from its current posture as a donor that imposes its own technocratic models and often regressive political priorities to a genuine partner that listens to, learns from, and empowers local democratic actors on their own terms in ways that go beyond rhetoric. We suggest that if the EU continues to maintain a 'value' based policy, it needs to summon the political courage to move beyond its perceived short-term, security-driven interests that have failed (particularly in the case of Palestine) to longer-term, shared interest of fostering empowered, inclusive, and just societies.

This is a pivotal time in the history of both the region and Europe as the choices made now could very well resonate beyond the Southern Neighbourhood and shape not only EU's credibility and role at the international level especially, but also EU's domestic politics.

The recommendations outlined in our research offer what we suggest is a roadmap for this radical transformation. They are not minor tweaks but rather call for a more participatory, transparent, accountable, and politically courageous engagement. We view the implementation of these recommendations—reconsidering funding mechanisms, reducing reliance on gatekeepers,

fundamentally rethinking conditionality, and above all, confronting the strong perception of double standards, and in the case of Palestine, acceptance and even support for occupation and apartheid—is the best path to rebuild the trust that has been so profoundly eroded.

This is the essence and the practical meaning of creating a genuine 'inclusive bottom-up democracy learning loop'. Such a loop is not a theoretical construct but a political commitment: a commitment, we suggest, for the EU to learn from its partners as much as it seeks to support them, and in doing so, to transform itself into a more effective, more legitimate, and more responsive force for positive change that would not just support a very troubled region but also allow the EU to align with its own stated values.