

# Where Europe Fails

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While Israel marks 59 years of independence, the European Union is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Both emerged in the shadow of the Shoah and the Second World War - Israel as the sovereign homeland of the Jewish people, Europe as a democratic and peaceful region pledged never again to return to its violent past.

In reviewing the past five decades, Europe can also take pride in numerous accomplishments. From the original six members of the European Coal and Steel Community, and then seven in the Common Market, the EU now includes 27 members, stretching from Britain and Ireland to Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. The principles of democracy are well-established, as the elections in France illustrated, and within the boundaries of Europe, war between the members is unthinkable. Economically, the expanded European market has become a superpower, competing and providing alternatives to the United States in almost every sphere.

BUT IN OTHER areas, the European record is less successful. When the EU attempts to go beyond its boundaries and deal with international conflicts and threats, the single voice is replaced by a cacophony of myths and slogans.

A few European leaders have begun to acknowledge the need for defense against security threats, but most have ruled out military action to prevent a revolutionary Iranian regime from obtaining nuclear weapons. In Gaza, the small European contribution to security at the Rafah crossing has turned into a farce, again illustrating the dangers of responding to hard security issues with "soft power."

Within the boundaries of Europe the rhetoric of multiculturalism and integration are still dominant, while an extreme version of political correctness prevents any serious analysis of reality. Rejecting their own violent history, Europeans project peaceful "post-nationalist" objectives on the rest of the world. But for outsiders, this society remains a distinctly European and generally Christian culture.

The calendar celebrates Christmas and Easter, Sunday is the official day of rest, and in many countries there is a dominant and often official church. The debates over the

European constitution and admission of Turkey include references to "Christian heritage" and values, and in the just-concluded French election campaign Nicolas Sarkozy pledged to preserve French culture and warned that anyone who rejects this core requirement has no place in France.

WHILE THESE examples illustrate the desire of the majority population to maintain its identity, Europeans pretend that they are multicultural, and that there are no barriers to the integration of minorities. The failure of this formula in the case of the millions of alienated Muslim and Arab immigrants is conveniently attributed to economic and other forms of discrimination, which can be corrected. Terrorism and other forms of violence are blamed on anger triggered by the manipulated images of Israeli "war crimes" and "the occupation," reinforcing the still-potent dimensions of European anti-Semitism. The real causes - the myth of multiculturalism and the refusal of many Muslims to accept de-facto minority status - are buried deep within Europe's political correctness. When a few intellectuals such as the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut dare to examine these slogans, they are silenced and ridiculed.

Europe's avoidance of reality is exacerbated by another myth: belief in the moral and political power of "civil society." Over 2 billion Euros of taxpayer funds are allocated annually to hundreds of self-selected and unelected ideologues who control government-funded "non-governmental organizations."

Under a facade of promoting "human rights" and "justice," many NGOs promote radical ideologies that attack Israel and the United States and justify violence, including increasing attacks against Jews.

In order for European democracy to successfully respond to these difficult challenges, it will have to curb the manipulative power of individuals and organizations who are not held accountable for their actions in a democratic framework.

WHILE ISRAEL is outside the formal European political framework, the influence of events and policies made in Paris, Brussels, London, Stockholm and elsewhere is strongly felt. Avoiding their own problems, Europeans preach the merits of multiculturalism and soft power, and warn of the perils from "nationalist Zionism," while denigrating Israeli democracy and shared cultural foundations. As a result, the

level of mutual distrust and lack of confidence between Israel and Europe is greater than ever.

Similarly, in their enthusiasm for "civil society," European governments also provide the funding for Israeli NGOs that claim to promote peace, democracy and human rights, but often justify the demonization of Israel. In this way, Europe sponsors the rhetoric of multiculturalism that is used by Adallah and Mossawa to campaign for the dissolution of Israel.

Although Israel is not free of blame for the tension in the relationship, European responses have gone far beyond constructive criticism, and the intense political correctness has blocked an honest dialogue.

When Europe begins to heal itself by rejecting the dominant myths and dealing realistically with its own problems, relations with Israel will also improve, to the benefit of both countries.

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