Former Spanish Foreign Minister and former Senior Vice President to the World Bank, Ana Palacio, believes that the European Union has the influence to secure a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Taking into account the many threats the Jewish state now faces, from the revolution in Egypt, to the civil war raging in Syria and the prospect of a nuclear Iran in the not too distant future, she believes that European intervention and even integration with Israel itself could be a possible solution to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Although the European Commission's recent ruling prohibiting the application of future agreements with Israel to territories beyond the 'Green Line' has caused consternation in the Israeli government, there are those who think that this proves the EU possesses the necessary influence to bring about a peace agreement in the region. An additional strengthening of economic ties with Israel, and even membership of the EU itself, could be offered to help 'sweeten the deal' with the Palestinian Authority...

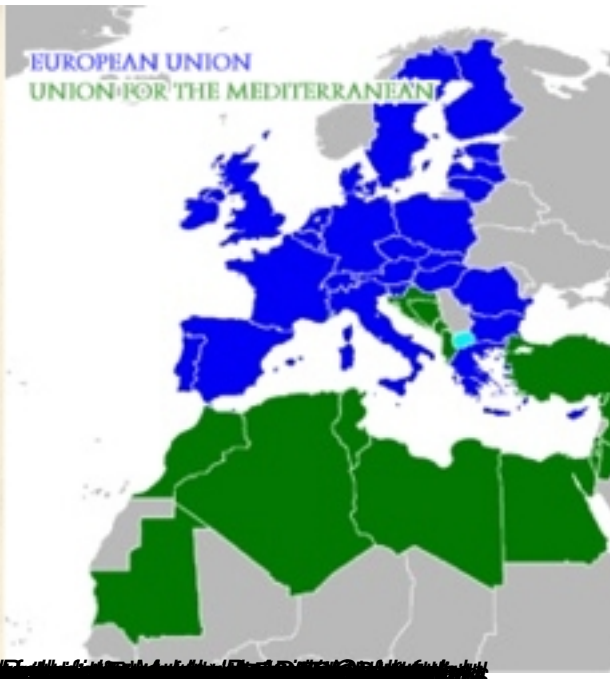
Quote: *"The easiest option would be conditional liberalization of trade in services within the existing framework of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. But the challenging strategic environment and legacy of failed negotiations call for a more daring approach: The EU should take the initiative in persuading its partners in the European Economic Area to offer Israel membership, conditional on the completion of a peace agreement. Beyond deepening the EU's internal market, such a move would serve as a powerful symbol of the value and potential of the EU-Israel relationship, opening the way to further integration in the future.*

This is not the first time such an idea has been put forward. Back in 2008, two professors sugg ested that the admission of both the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority into the European Union could help resolve the Middle East conflict. Richard N. Rosecrance, a professor belonging to the Belfer Centre at Harvard Kennedy School, and Ehud Eiran, who served in the Prime Minister's office in Israel, suggested that membership of the European Union could guarantee Israeli security and legitimacy while offering Palestinian refugees the right of return to their lands thanks to Europe's open-borders policy. The EU would also benefit from the deal, expanding its sphere of influence in the Middle East and north Africa, and contributing to the political stability of the region.

Quote: *"In fact, the dual identity of a supranational entity comprised of peaceful national states holds the answer for both sides' most profound concerns. For Israelis, EU membership offers physical security and permanent legitimacy. For Palestinians, membership means a territorial settlement, including a return, of sorts, of their lands through the new joint European source of security and authority over them. Such an arrangement also holds significant benefits for Europe. It would contribute to political stability on its eastern and southern flank. If successful, it might even open a path for EU members to certain North African states, thus limiting the frustrations of millions of would-be immigrants to leave their instable region and go to Europe.*

As I said recently, Israel and the Palestinian Authority are already members of the Union for the Mediterranean
, which was proposed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2008. The Union for the Mediterranean is an offshoot of the EuroMed peace conference, which aspires to create a framework of agreements between the European Union and its Mediterranean neighbours to help promote peace and prosperity on Europe's borders. Its membership is comprised of the 28 states in the European Union and 15 additional countries bordering the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Due to the ongoing political turmoil in the Middle East, the Union for the Mediterranean has not been able to make much progress of late, but it is definitely worth keeping an eye on in relation to Biblical prophecy. There was much fanfare at its inception, with references made to a 'renaissance' of the old Roman Empire. As the French President stated at the time,
“Within every man and woman who lives on the shores of the Mediterranean sleeps the memory, nostalgia, for the unity lost 15 centuries ago.”
Indeed if you look at a map of the old Roman Empire compared to the regions covered by the new 'Union for the Mediterranean', you will see quite a similarity.





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