

Crafting a Wider Strategy for Conflict Management in the Neighbourhood? A Comparative Perspective on the European Union's Civilian Missions in Georgia and Kosovo

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Abstract: *The European Union's wider neighbourhood hosts some of the world's main unresolved conflicts. As the EU developed its foreign and security policy, a blend of internal security and external stability concerns, as well as the reference to international legal and humanitarian norms, required it to try tackling (some of) these conflicts. Through both the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Stabilisation and Association Process the EU establishes contractual relations with its neighbours and tries to incentivise them for the adoption of economic and political reforms and legislative approximation to EU standards. Also, in some cases, the EU is providing support for conflict management through political dialogue, financial assistance or deployment of missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy. At its core, this paper is concerned with comparatively analysing the degree of integration between CSDP and the ENP and SAP frameworks respectively. The comparative case-study will therefore analyse CSDP missions undertaken in the Georgia/ Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Kosovo/Serbia cases, in order to identify common challenges across the two EU policy frameworks for its neighbourhood and to explore the perspectives for the emergence of an EU strategy of conflict management based on CSDP operations and various forms of engaging third countries.*

Keywords: *conflict management, Common Security and Defence Policy, Stabilisation and Association Process, European Neighbourhood Policy, Kosovo, Georgia*

Introduction

The European Union's (EU) "neighbourhood" hosts some of the world's main unresolved conflicts. In the Western Balkans² external intervention was attempted in two cases – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo – and outside powers imposed settlements underpinned

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² The term "Western Balkans" is used by the European Union and covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under UN Security Resolution 1244, Montenegro and Serbia. http://eeas.europa.eu/western_balkans/index_en.htm.

by internationally-controlled institutions. In the former Soviet space the conflicts became "frozen" after *de facto* secession, as in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh. In the Middle East the dominant conflict with recurring violent episodes remains the one between Israel and the Palestinians, with the international community constantly attempting mediation. As the EU developed its foreign and security policy, it became more or less involved in conflict management in each of these cases.

In 2003 the European Security Strategy defined the stabilisation of the EU's neighbourhood as a key priority, soon after the crisis management component of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)³ became operational. As CSDP operations need to relate to broader policy frameworks in order to be successful, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) could serve as possible examples. By deploying CSDP missions in the countries covered by ENP and SAP, the EU indicates both a significant political interest in each particular case and security concerns regarding the unresolved conflicts in its vicinity. Through both ENP and SAP the EU establishes contractual relations with its neighbours, which gives it the opportunity to provide the parties with incentives for negotiating peace. This paper will therefore compare the ENP (the Eastern dimension) and the SAP on the basis of how these macro-policy frameworks can integrate the more specific CSDP crisis management operations. The comparative case-study will analyse the EU involvement in conflict management in the Georgia/Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Kosovo/Serbia cases, with an emphasis on the CSDP missions it deployed. The objective is to identify common challenges across the two policy frameworks and to explore the perspectives for the emergence of an EU strategy for conflict management in the neighbourhood, based on CSDP operations and their link to existing frameworks for cooperation with third countries.

The literature concerning the EU's involvement in conflict management outside its borders has developed significantly in the last ten years. Some scholars analysed various case studies in order to identify the EU's "Europeanisation" approach to ethno-political/secessionist conflicts in its geographical proximity⁴. Others focused on the legal and policy aspects of the EU's performance in conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building⁵. A comparative approach was used to study the impact of EU contractual relations on conflict resolution in several cases from the neighbourhood⁶. A more recent strand of literature addressed the EU's motivations for involving in crisis management through CSDP⁷ or the strategies of non-involvement ("stealth intervention") in conflict resolution in the

³ For consistency reasons, I will use the term "Common Security and Defence Policy" (CSDP) throughout this paper, including when referring to the pre-Lisbon treaty European Security and Defence Policy (1999-2009).

⁴ B. Coppeters, M. Emerson, M. Huyseune, T. Koviridze, G. Noutcheva, N. Tocci and M. Vahl, *Europeanization and Conflict Resolution. Case Studies from the European Periphery*, Ghent, Academia Press, 2004.

⁵ V. Kronnenberger and J. Wouters (ed.), *The European Union and Conflict Prevention. Policy and Legal Aspects*, the Hague, T.M.C Asser Press, 2004; S. Blockmans (ed.), *The European Union and Crisis Management. Policy and Legal Aspects*, the Hague, T.M.C Asser Press, 2008; S. Blockmans, J. Wouters and T. Ruys, *The European Union and Peacebuilding. Policy and Legal Aspects*, the Hague, T.M.C Asser Press, 2010.

⁶ N. Tocci, *The EU and Conflict Resolution. Promoting Peace in the Backyard*, London and New York, Routledge, 2007.

⁷ B. Pohl, "But We Have to Do Something". The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations. PhD Thesis, Leiden University, 2012.

former Soviet space⁸. Also, scholars tried to identify the main elements which determine the EU's success – or lack thereof – as a “global conflict manager”, targeting various regions of the world⁹. But comparative perspectives on EU policy frameworks for the neighbourhood remain scarce, as the literature on EU in conflict management usually focuses on intra-region case-studies, individual ones or multiple case-studies emphasising the type of conflict (e.g. ethno-political) rather than the EU frameworks for dealing with them. The paper tries to address this gap, based on the belief that it is important to understand the commonalities and differences of EU policy frameworks for engaging its neighbours. Hence, this paper takes a horizontal and sectoral perspective, analysing ENP and SAP comparatively, as wider policy frameworks potentially creating linkages with CSDP missions.

The current events in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia brought the temptation to invoke comparisons with Kosovo and Georgia. It is true that in the current context a closer look at past successes, failures and unintended consequences in these two cases could indeed be useful for designing better responses to secessionist claims and state-building endeavours in Europe and around the world. However, careful attention has to be devoted to studying the particularities of each of them in order to ensure that comparisons between regions and cases are not forced and that generally debates in this regard are based on a thorough understanding of the facts and specific conflict contexts.

I. CSDP operations and conflict management by the European Union

The EU started to engage in conflict management as it began developing a common foreign policy, but it was more by necessity and less by choice. When the Maastricht Treaty was adopted in 1992, creating the European Union and its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the dissolution of former Yugoslavia was unfolding, soon to become an irreversible process. The failure of the EU's mediation attempts to keep the federation together and the following wars exposed the need for the EU to emphasise the “common” in the CFSP and to develop a capacity for effective crisis management¹⁰. The literature thus highlights the role that the wars in the Western Balkans played in developing the EU's security structures and especially CSDP¹¹.

But developing the Common Defence and Security Policy was only one instrument among the many developed by the EU in response to violent or “frozen” conflicts in its geographical proximity. Focusing predominantly on short-term crisis management, CSDP provided the EU with “an autonomous capacity of action”, translated into either military or civilian operations or a combination thereof, to be employed abroad. CSDP military operations seek to stabilize countries, reform their armed forces, ensure security during critical times (negotiation of peace accords, elections in post-conflict environments, etc.) or provide entry/exit strategies for more complex missions deployed within the UN framework. Civilian missions of training, monitoring, reforming, and assisting local police forces or law enforcement agencies envisage ensuring democratic standards in the targeted countries and making them more efficient in

⁸ N. Popescu, *Stealth Intervention. The EU and Post-Soviet Conflicts*, PhD Thesis, Central European University, 2009.

⁹ R. G. Whitman and S. Wolff (ed.), *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012.

¹⁰ R. Danreuther, R., *European Union Foreign and Security Policy. Towards a neighbourhood strategy*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 3.

¹¹ C. Bretherton and J. Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, 2nd edn., London, Routledge, 2006, p. 196.

fighting organised crime, corruption or terrorism. Also, monitoring missions help observe ceasefires and provide the conditions for stabilisation and confidence-building between former warring parties. They can all contribute to peace-building and state-building, based on the assumption that the transformation of conflict requires the prior establishment of the rule of law and effective governance structure¹². The EU thus tries to foster sustainable peace in third countries by supporting capacity building for local authorities through CSDP missions, alongside financial assistance and political dialogue undertaken through different legal frameworks.

Scholars who studied the EU's performance as a "global conflict manager" argued that conflict management by the EU generally refers to a "long-term engagement with a particular country or region, an engagement that, over time, will necessitate different conflict management policies, including military crisis management, development and humanitarian aid efforts, and mediation between conflict parties"¹³. This was best illustrated in the Western Balkans (especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM) and selectively in Africa (in DR Congo and Darfur, Sudan), while some countries like Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, which fall "somewhere between the cases with a clear accession perspective (Western Balkans) and those with clearly none (Africa and Middle East)" have witnessed a reluctant EU getting more and more engaged through comprehensive policies, including in conflict management¹⁴.

For the purpose of this article, conflict management is referred to as a generic term covering the entire range of "positive conflict handling", although some authors¹⁵ use it in a more limited way, as the settlement and containment of violent conflict. On the other hand, conflict resolution is a more comprehensive concept referring to the "efforts to address the underlying causes of conflict by finding common interests and overarching goals"¹⁶, by "fostering positive attitudes and generating trust through reconciliation initiatives, and building or strengthening the institutions and processes through which the parties interact peacefully"¹⁷. It is interesting to note that the terms "conflict management" and "conflict resolution" are rather common in the literature of Conflict Studies and almost absent from the lexicon of international organisations, which prefer to refer to "conflict prevention"/"preventive diplomacy", "peace-making" and "peace-building". The EU documents typically use the terms "conflict prevention" and „crisis management", while "conflict management" is rarely employed. This made some scholars claim that when performed by the EU, conflict management "subsumes these two sets of policies, but also covers a third, commonly referred to as conflict settlement or resolution, that is, policies aimed at finding a compromise between the parties that will allow them to address remaining and/or future disputes between them by political or judicial means, rather than by recourse to violence"¹⁸.

¹²Tocci, N., 'The EU as a peacebuilder: Actorness, potential and limits', in Blockmans, S., J. Wouters and T. Ruysted., *The European Union and Peacebuilding. Policy and Legal Aspects*, the Hague, T.M.C Asser Press, 2010, p. 60.

¹³R. G. Whitman and S. Wolff, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁴ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ O. Ramsbotham, T. Woodhouse and H. Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, p. 27.

¹⁶United States Institute of Peace (USIP), 'Peace Terms. Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding', Washington, 2011, p. 15, <http://glossary.usip.org/>.

¹⁷ibid.

¹⁸R. G. Whitman and S. Wolff, op. cit., p. 5.

The European Union is not the only international organisation involved in conflict management, but the advent of the CFSP enabled it to try maintaining stability and contributing to peace in its vicinity and beyond - from the Western Balkans to Indonesia. Its set of instruments is broad, but its record remains mixed. At the same time, through contractual relations or some form of cooperation with almost every country in the world, be it a in a bilateral or regional format, the EU is well positioned for engaging third countries in conflict management. But not all contractual relations are the same – some of them are equal partnerships, while others have an in-built asymmetry that places the EU in a position to make demands. Whatever the case might be, the EU usually enjoys enough political leverage to try to make its involvement in conflict management count.

II. EU policy frameworks for engaging the neighbours – SAP and ENP

The EU engages with third countries mainly by developing a web of contractual relations with institutional, political, economic and legal components which bring them closer to the EU framework¹⁹. The Stabilisation and Association Process for the Western Balkans, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for North Africa and the Middle East, the European Neighbourhood Policy for the neighbours in the South and East and more recently the Eastern Partnership for the latter, together with the enlargement process, are all illustrations of the EU's attempt to "shape" its neighbourhood and share (to different extents) the stability and prosperity within its borders. All these initiatives "make use of, and are embedded in- EU institutional, legal and policy frameworks"²⁰.

Enlargement has been the most successful tool in the EU's foreign policy toolbox used for stabilisation, helping the democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe and enhancing good neighbourly relations between the states emerging from communist rule. Today, the prospects of EU membership for the countries in the Western Balkans are expected to contribute in a similar way to solving the region's persistent ethno-political conflicts. These countries are involved in the Stabilisation and Association Process, initiated by the Commission in 1999 following the war in Kosovo. Through the SAP the EU "expresses its determination to take up the challenge and responsibility to contribute to the stability of the Western Balkans region"²¹. In other words, it commits on the long term to invest in post-conflict stabilisation, peace and security, as part of a "comprehensive approach" which also includes CSDP missions and operations²². Participation in the SAP is a two-phased process: during the first, the EU helps implementing a free trade area and support the states' convergence to EU standards; once political and economic stability and institutional capacity are positively assessed in a feasibility study, the Balkan countries sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, which becomes the contractual basis of the bilateral relation. The European perspective for the Western Balkan countries was unequivocally stated in 2003 by the Thessaloniki European Council, showing that "the Western Balkan countries will become

¹⁹N. Tocci, op. cit. (2007), p. 10.

²⁰ibid.

²¹ European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo', Brussels, 10 October 2012, p. 2, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/ks_feasibility_2012_en.pdf.

²² E. Prifti, 'Introduction: from stabilisation to integration', in Prifti, E. (ed.), *The European Future of the Western Balkans. Thessaloniki@10 (2003-2013)*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2013, p. 14, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Thessalonikiat10_01.pdf.

an integral part of the European Union once they meet the established criteria"²³. Hence, the SAP offers these countries "a structured path towards EU accession and substantial assistance for the promotion of democracy, institutional capacity and political dialogue"²⁴, which features political conditionality. Similar to the association process for the Central and Eastern European countries, but with its own specificities, the SAP underpins asymmetric relationships, through which the EU can grant incentives or apply punitive measures. The SAP has a significant dimension of regional cooperation as well, due to the complex issues that need to be addressed, like security, refugees and displaced persons, reconciliation, etc. But unlike the previous wave of enlargement, when cooperation among the Central and Eastern European states was "encouraged", the EU made regional cooperation a prerequisite for participating in the SAP²⁵.

An alternative to EU membership is the participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy, launched in 2004 for the Eastern and Southern neighbours in an attempt to "avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union"²⁶. Among the challenges that the EU tried addressing through the new initiative, the Commission highlighted "the negative effects of conflict on economic and political development", which could not be "over-estimated" and triggered the danger of spill over²⁷. Conflict and political division in the Mediterranean and unrecognised "statelets" that became magnets for organised crime in the Eastern neighbourhood were among the EU's concerns when launching the ENP, only to promise "greater EU political involvement in conflict prevention and crisis management" as an "incentive"²⁸ for neighbouring countries to participate in the initiative. Although conflict resolution *per se* was not among the initial objectives of this policy, its underlying logic is that by providing political association and deeper economic integration with the EU, together with increased mobility, the partner states are incentivised to contribute to ensuring stability, to commit to sharing EU values and to support regional cooperation. It is in this framework that conditionality and passive enforcement²⁹ can be used by the EU in order to change beliefs, behaviours and strategies of the conflict parties, rendering them more willing to negotiate for conflict settlement.

Based on bilateral agreements with individual countries, the ENP represented a qualitative improvement of the EU's relations with its neighbours, except for Russia, which preferred

²³Referring to the Copenhagen criteria and the implementation of the requirements of the SAP, especially regional cooperation.

²⁴ S. Marsh and W. Rees, *The European Union in the Security of Europe. From Cold War to Terror War*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 126.

²⁵*ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁶In view of the enlargement wave which took place in 2004 and 2007. European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament –Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours', Brussels, 11 March 2003, p. 14, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf.

²⁷*ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁸*ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁹ According to Nathalie Tocci, *op. cit.* (2007), p. 10, there are three main mechanisms through which the EU exerts its influence in the neighbourhood and tries to provide incentives in order for the conflict parties to alter their behaviour towards settlement and resolution. These are: conditionality (positive/negative), social learning and passive enforcement.

the framework of a strategic partnership³⁰. At the same time, by introducing cross-border cooperation programmes, the ENP tried to enhance regional cooperation, although this dimension is weaker than in the case of the SAP³¹. The application of differentiation and positive conditionality was meant to encourage competition between the ENP partners for EU aid and benefits, while also acknowledging the possibility of making progress at their own speed³². But as the competition between the Eastern and Southern neighbours and between the EU member states which share borders with them became fiercer, the ENP was complemented by more targeted regional cooperation initiatives such as the Eastern Partnership (since 2009), the Union for the Mediterranean (re-launched in 2008) and the Black Sea Synergy (since 2008). What is fundamentally at stake in the ENP is “the EU’s ability to develop an external policy complementary to enlargement that is effective in promoting transformation and reform”³³. Participating in the ENP is thus a long-term commitment, but because the end state is rather elusive, the conditionality is somewhat “diluted” and obtaining progress is slow and sometimes difficult.

Having emerged as an atypical international organization founded on reconciliation between former enemies, the EU aimed to create a “peace community” legitimising its political and economic model of liberal democracy. Its enlargement was considered a very successful foreign policy tool, but the EU cannot expand everywhere. Notoriously presented as “an economic giant and political dwarf”³⁴, the EU is currently perceived more as a “club” which uses conditionality, political influence and economic incentives in order to stabilise its neighbourhood, sometimes together with civilian missions and military operations deployed through CSDP. However, the absence of real “military teeth”, the use of “double standards” in reacting to conflicts around the world and the lack of coherence between EU policies account for the EU’s mixed record in conflict management.

III. The comparative case-study: linking CSDP operations to stabilisation through the ENP and SAP

The selected case-studies are Serbia/Kosovo and Georgia/Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EU engages these countries through two frameworks – the SAP and the ENP respectively – and it has deployed civilian CSDP missions in both cases. The essential question to be discussed is thus to what extent can common challenges be identified across the two different EU policy frameworks – SAP and ENP – in the context of the Union performing conflict management in its neighbourhood? In answering this question, the present study aims to highlight some lessons learned by the EU when deploying CSDP civilian missions in post-conflict settings and attempting to craft a wider conflict management strategy for its neighbourhood.

Crisis management and stabilisation through CSDP represent an essential EU tool in targeting ethno-political conflicts in the vicinity, but the Union does not always employ its entire “toolbox”. The EU becomes deeply involved in conflict management in some cases,

³⁰ S. Marsh and W. Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy’, Brussels, 5 December 2007, p. 2, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_774_en.pdf.

³⁴ F. Cameron, *An Introduction to European Foreign Policy*, London, Routledge, 2007, p. 173.

while in others it only addresses their potential implications for European security. As one observer remarked, "EU policies and approaches toward conflicts have been geographically wide but institutionally shallow, with the exception of the Balkans"³⁵. The next section will present the historical background of the selected case-studies and analyse the EU involvement through CSDP, highlight common challenges across SAP and ENP and explore the potential for an emerging wider conflict management strategy for its neighbourhood.

III.1. Background of the conflicts and EU involvement in conflict management

III.1.1. Serbia/Kosovo

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia emerged at the end of the Second World War as an "edifice dedicated to the doctrine of brotherhood and unity"³⁶, in which ethnic conflict belonged to the past. Five of the constituent republics were dominated by a certain ethnic group (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia), while the sixth had a strong multiethnic character (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The two territories officially subordinated to Serbia but inhabited by a majority of non-Serbs – Kosovo and Vojvodina – became the beneficiaries of a delicate constitutional balance introduced by Tito in 1974, which granted them a broad autonomous status³⁷. In the context of emerging nationalism and post-communist transition, Slobodan Milosevic revoked Kosovo's autonomy in 1989 during his accession to power in Belgrade. Later on, as SFR Yugoslavia was disintegrating, the Badinter Arbitration Commission refused to accept Kosovo's request for consideration as an independent state. A "Parallel Government" structure was thus formed by Ibrahim Rugova, who promoted peaceful resistance in an attempt to elicit international attention. The Kosovo issue was again sidelined in 1995 at the Dayton negotiations ending the war in Bosnia, mainly due to Milosevic's pivotal role in the peace process. Disillusioned with Rugova's peaceful resistance movement, and confronted with increasing repression from Belgrade, the Kosovo Albanian population started resorting to violent means. Serbian policy thereafter helped streamline a factious and disorganised armed struggle into a deeply rooted and almost universal popular movement for national liberation led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK). By 1998, the Serbian forces had succeeded in breaking the UCK resistance. However, the choice by Milosevic to employ "tactical ethnic cleansing"³⁸ not only further radicalised the Kosovo Albanians, but it also united the international community against him, facilitating three UN Security Council Resolutions and ultimately the 78-day NATO bombardment. Finally, the UNSC Resolution 1244/1999 confirmed that Serbia had to withdraw from Kosovo, the latter being placed under UN administration. UNMIK was designed to help develop institutions of self-government in Kosovo that would progressively assume the functions of public authorities during an interim period of three years, at the end of which final status negotiations would be held³⁹. The UN started to prepare the final status process in 2005, under the leadership of the Finnish diplomat Martti Ahtisaari⁴⁰.

³⁵ N. Popescu, op. cit., p. 116.

³⁶ M. Weller, 'The failure of prevention – Kosovo', in S. Wolffand C. Yakinthou (ed.), *Conflict Management in Divided Societies. Theories and Practice*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 218.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 219.

³⁸ The term denotes "deliberate, organized, and usually violent expulsion of people from an area on the basis of their perceived ethnic, communal, sectarian, or religious identity". United States Institute of Peace, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁹ M. Weller, op. cit., p. 227.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 228.

In the meantime, Kosovo was included on the Thessaloniki Agenda (2003) which confirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries and in the Stabilisation and Association Process, as “the overall framework for the European course of the Western Balkan countries, all the way to their accession”⁴¹. It is in this context that the EU established the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo as defined by UNSC Resolution 1244/1999, with a separate plan for addressing the priorities regarding Kosovo, which were complementary to the ones set by the “Standards for Kosovo” endorsed by the UN Security Council⁴². Both the main and complementary priorities envisaged ensuring “a stable future for a secure, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo”⁴³. The European Partnership was revised in 2006⁴⁴ and again in 2008, after the introduction of the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) as the renewed framework for providing financial assistance to pre-accession countries⁴⁵.

In February 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared independence, recognised by the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France among others, while Russia reacted in anger and joined Serbia in a vocal opposition to the move, considered illegal⁴⁶. Five member states⁴⁷ of the EU refused to recognize Kosovo’s self-proclaimed independence. Nevertheless, in December the same year, the EU launched the integrated rule of law mission EULEX as part of the efforts to stabilise Kosovo, and gave it an executive mandate enabling it to perform functions of police, customs and judicial systems. In 2010, following Serbia’s request through the UN General Assembly, the International Court of Justice delivered a non-binding advisory opinion according to which Kosovo’s declaration of independence was not adopted in violation of general international law⁴⁸. The five non-recognizing states within the EU maintained their stance, and EULEX continued its work based on a “status neutral” approach. In 2012 EULEX was reconfigured and its personnel downsized by 25%, in order to “reflect increasing capacities of the Kosovo authorities”⁴⁹. At the same time, the

⁴¹ Council of the European Union, Council Regulation (EC) No. 533/2004 of 22 March 2004 on the establishments of European partnerships in the framework of the stabilisation and association process, in *Official Journal of the European Union* L86, 24.03.2004, p. 1, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32004R0533&from=EN>.

⁴² Council of the European Union, Council decision of 14 June 2004 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 (2004/520/EC), in *Official Journal of the European Union* L227, 26.06.2004, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004D0520:EN:HTML>.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ A distinct European Partnership with Montenegro was adopted in 2007, following its peaceful secession from Serbia.

⁴⁵ Council of the European Union, Council decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing decision 2006/56/EC (2008/513/EC), in *Official Journal of the European Union* L80, 19.03.2008, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008D0213&from=EN>.

⁴⁶ L. Harding, ‘Kosovo breakaway illegal, says Putin’, *The Guardian*, 15 February 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/feb/15/russia.kosovo>.

⁴⁷ The five member states are: Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Cyprus and Greece.

⁴⁸ International Court of Justice, ‘Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in respect of Kosovo’, Advisory Opinion of 22 July 2010, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/141/15987.pdf>.

⁴⁹ European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo’, Brussels, 10 October 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/ks_feasibility_2012_en.pdf.

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS), convinced the parties to participate in negotiations in view of normalising the relations between Pristina and Belgrade. Final status aside, the talks had to concentrate on “practical coexistence” of Serbia and Kosovo. In April 2013 a groundbreaking agreement was obtained, establishing a power-sharing arrangement in the Serbian-dominated Northern Kosovo (Mitrovica) run by authorities supported by Belgrade after 2008. This was the result of both the EU's diplomatic efforts and the two capitals' interest in advancing their relationship with the EU – to obtain candidate status and to get closer to signing a Stabilisation and Association Agreement respectively⁵⁰. Under the Stabilisation and Association agreement – which is yet to be signed⁵¹ – Kosovo has to meet certain obligations regarding the rule of law, the judiciary, public administration, electoral reform and the Assembly, human and fundamental rights, protection of minorities, trade and internal market issues⁵². With EULEX helping Kosovo improve its performance with the first two, CSDP effectively becomes an instrument for attaining SAP goals. In fact, the Commission showed that “if an association agreement were concluded, this EU mission would, within its remit, support the Kosovo authorities in the implementation of such an agreement”⁵³. At the same time, by tackling serious and organized crime, together with fighting corruption and entrenching the rule of law, EULEX enhances the link between CSDP (the civilian component) and the external dimension of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, which share the objective of “protecting the EU's safe internal space from an «unsafe» external environment”⁵⁴.

According to the EEAS, EULEX “forms part of a broader effort undertaken by the EU to promote peace and stability in the Western Balkans and to support the Kosovo authorities as they undertake necessary reforms, in line with their and the regions overall European perspective. EULEX skills and expertise are also being used to support the key objectives in the visa liberalisation process, the Stabilization and Association Process Dialogue and the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue”⁵⁵. Despite positive developments over the past years, the area of justice still requires international assistance, so EULEX retains an executive capacity, which enables it to investigate and prosecute serious crimes or those involving high-ranking officials. The main challenges for EULEX Kosovo in the current phasing-out stage⁵⁶ are not

⁵⁰ Lehne, S., ‘Serbia-Kosovo Deal Should Boost the EU's Western Balkans Policy’, Carnegie Europe, 13 April 2013, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2013/04/23/serbia-kosovo-agreement-should-reenergize-eu-s-western-balkans-policy/g0q8>.

⁵¹ It was initialed in July 2014.

⁵² European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document ‘Kosovo 2013 Progress Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-2014’, Brussels, 16 October 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/ks_rapport_2013.pdf.

⁵³ European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo’, Brussels, 10 October 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/ks_feasibility_2012_en.pdf.

⁵⁴ Mounier, G., ‘European Police Missions: From Security Sector Reform to Externalization of Internal Security Beyond the Borders’, *ETC HUMSEC Journal*, no. 1, 2007, p. 48, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=110394&lng=en>.

⁵⁵ Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), EULEX Kosovo EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo Factsheet, February 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eulex-kosovo/pdf/factsheet_eulex_kosovo_en.pdf.

⁵⁶ EULEX's mandate was extended until 14 June 2014 and then again until 14 June 2016. <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/en/info/whatisEulex.php>.

only to transfer responsibility to the Kosovo authorities, but also to facilitate the transfer of capacity-building activities to the projects financed by IPA, a transition which sometimes causes friction between the EEAS and the Commission⁵⁷.

To sum up, with EULEX Kosovo, the EU took a step further from police reform, as previously undertaken in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively, to “tackling the entire spectrum of rule-of-law activities, which offers a better formula for ensuring the sustainability of good governance reforms”⁵⁸. The EU’s involvement in solving the Serbia/Kosovo conflict stemmed more from its sense of responsibility for the region and the “coming of age” of CFSP/CSDP after a slow start in the 1990s than from local demand, but there were no real alternatives to it. While the United States still enjoy great political leverage in Kosovo and maintain a significant level of troops in KFOR on the ground, the EU has become the main guarantor of Kosovo’s future. By engaging deeply in Kosovo through generous financial assistance, SAP, a CSDP mission and mediation by the HR and by also granting a European perspective to Kosovo under Resolution 1244/1999, the EU effectively provided the international community with an exit strategy from this last Balkan “hot spot”.

III.1.2. Georgia/Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union on April 9, 1991. The newly independent republic comprised Georgia with the capital in Tbilisi, the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia. The international community recognised the new independent state within the borders of the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. Soon after that, a series of nationalist measures⁵⁹ taken by the transition regime of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia together with the emergence of local nationalism alienated both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, who fought secession wars with Georgia in the ‘90s⁶⁰. The cease-fire agreements signed in Sochi (1992) and Moscow (1994) ended the wars with South Ossetia and Abkhazia respectively, in the aftermath of which Georgia lost control of large parts of both territories. Both agreements provided for the deployment of peacekeeping forces (mainly Russian) in the former war theatres and international missions (UN in Abkhazia and the CSCE/OSCE in South Ossetia) to facilitate the peace processes. The EU established relations with Georgia in 1992, after it became an independent state, and signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1996, institutionalising political dialogue and establishing economic cooperation. For the next few years however the EU’s interest in Georgia was minimal.

With the election of Mikhail Saakasvili as President of Georgia in 2003, the country started enjoying massive support from the EU (for reconstruction and rule of law) and the United States (which provided military advisers and armament deals). However, the South

⁵⁷Interview with EU official, European External Action Service, 6 October 2014, Brussels.

⁵⁸I. Ioannides, ‘EU peace support operations in the Western Balkans since 2003’, in Prifti, E.(ed.), *The European Future of the Western Balkans. Thessaloniki@10 (2003-2013)*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2013, p. 63, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Thessalonikiat10_01.pdf.

⁵⁹Imposing of Georgian as the unique language throughout the country and restraining autonomy for the non-Georgian entities.

⁶⁰Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia Report, volume I, 2009, p. 13, <http://www.ceig.ch/Report.html>.

Caucasus was not included in the Commission's initial Communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy, but it was later mentioned in the European Security Strategy as a region where the EU "should take a stronger and more active interest"⁶¹. As a consequence, the EU appointed a Special Representative for the South Caucasus for the first time⁶². The EUSR's mandate regarding conflict resolution in Georgia was limited to supporting the activity of the UN and OSCE and the existing conflict resolution mechanisms, with no autonomous EU involvement⁶³. In June 2004 the South Caucasus was finally included in the newly launched European Neighbourhood Policy and soon after EU deployed EUJUST Themis to Georgia its first ever rule of law ESDP mission, which was also the first in the post-Soviet space. EUJUST Themis was designed "to assist local authorities in developing an overarching criminal justice reform strategy based on the principle of local ownership"⁶⁴. While Georgia was not necessarily in crisis – despite the post-revolutionary tension – the mission was sent in the CSDP framework in order to raise the political profile of the EU, ensure effective control over the mission and implement quick-impact measures, as its mandate was only for a year⁶⁵. A reform strategy was adopted by the Georgian authorities in July 2005, thus indicating that the mission fulfilled its objective, but it did not lead to a more assertive EU policy in this area⁶⁶. The framework for bilateral relations remained a rather technical one, but due to the first ENP Action Plan and the amending of the EUSR's mandate the EU began contributing more to conflict management in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, based on the principle of maintaining Georgia's territorial integrity⁶⁷. Conflict resolution was the sixth among the priorities in the Action Plan, and it did not envisage "clear steps toward greater EU contribution" in this field⁶⁸. But in 2006 the EU became the biggest international donor to the breakaway regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia, except Russia⁶⁹. At this point, the EU's policy towards conflict resolution was focused on developing Georgia in order to make it more attractive for the people in the two separatist provinces; after 2008, the EU targeted the secessionist entities themselves, relying on economic incentives and investments in their rehabilitation⁷⁰.

In the first half of 2008 there was an increase in violent incidents both in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The war started on the night of 7 to 8 August when Georgia launched an artillery attack on South Ossetia. Twenty-four hours later the 54th Russian Army stationing in North Ossetia intervened in order to counteract the Georgian attack. It thus became a combined inter-state and intra-state armed conflict, opposing Georgian and Russian forces at one level of confrontation, as well as South Ossetians together with Abkhaz fighters and the Georgian

⁶¹ Council of the European Union, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World' - European Security Strategy. Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 8, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

⁶² N. Popescu, op. cit. p. 179.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 184.

⁶⁴ Kurowska, X., 'EUJUST Themis (Georgia)', in G. Grevi, D. Helly and D. Keohane (ed.), *European Security and Defence Policy. The First 10 Years (1999-2009)*, Paris, the EU Institute for Security Studies, 2009, p. 205.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 204.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶⁷ Whitman, R. G. and S. Wolff, 'The limits of conflict management in the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia', in Whitman, R. G. and S. Wolff (ed.), *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager*, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 96.

⁶⁸ N. Popescu, op. cit., p. 196.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 176.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 165.

army at another⁷¹. The Russian troops advanced on the Georgian territory and stopped the offensive as a result of a cease-fire mediated by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy. Tbilisi denounced a Russian “aggression”, while Moscow called it a “peace enforcement operation”, but the EU refrained from labelling⁷². On August 26 Moscow recognised the independence of the separatist regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Condemning the move, the EU insisted that conflict resolution in Georgia had to be based on the respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU’s support for conflict resolution efforts translated into an enhanced personnel and financial contribution to the OSCE mission in South Ossetia and the sending of a fact-finding mission to prepare future CSDP involvement; the EU also decided to appoint a Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia and to suspend the negotiations for a new Partnership Agreement with Russia until the latter withdrew its troops to the lines prior to August 7⁷³.

On October 1 a 200-strong European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM Georgia) was deployed in theatre, with the mandate to monitor the *entire* territory of Georgia – including Abkhazia and South Ossetia – and undertake stabilisation, normalisation, confidence-building and information tasks⁷⁴. The mission has been hailed as “the EU’s first active intervention in a serious armed conflict”⁷⁵ and prolonged several times since then. In the meantime, Russia vetoed the continuation of OSCE and UN missions in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. EUMM Georgia is currently tasked also with running the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms for Georgia’s both conflicts⁷⁶.

Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili hoped that the EU would undertake a military mission with a robust mandate and commit to help significantly with the resolution of the conflict⁷⁷. As the EU deployed a civilian mission, Tbilisi had to accept less than it had hoped for and decided to cooperate closely with EUMM. Having recognised the independence of the two separatist regions, Moscow tried to impose it on the EU, especially by claiming that EUMM had to ask permission from Tskhinvali and Sukhumi in order to patrol on their administrative borders within Georgia (and *de facto* secession borders). As a consequence of the EU’s refusal, EUMM cannot fully implement its mandate. There are voices claiming that due to the lack of EUMM’s access to the separatist side of the administrative boundary, the current *status quo* is actually consolidated on the ground⁷⁸. The EUMM’s main contribution is thus to deter potential violent incidents or the resuming of hostilities, while a peace process

⁷¹ Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia Report, p. 10.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷³ Council of the European Union, ‘Council Joint Action 2008/736/CFSP on the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, EUMM Georgia (as amended by Joint Action 2008/759/CFSP of 25 September 2008)’, in *EU Security and Defence Core Documents 2008*, volume IX, compiled by Catherine Glière, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2009, pp. 300-301.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 302.

⁷⁵ Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia Report, p. 2.

⁷⁶ O. Ditych, ‘EU Security Policy in the South Caucasus. The Need to Move from Hydra to Hercules’, SWP Working paper no. 05, 2011, p. 8, <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/EU%20Security%20Policy%20in%20the%20South%20Caucasus.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Fischer, S., ‘The European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM)’, in G. Grevi, D. Helly and D. Keohane (ed.), *European Security and Defence Policy. The First 10 years 1999-2009*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2009, p. 387.

⁷⁸ O. Ditych, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

undertaken with international mediation addresses the unresolved issues. The Geneva International Discussions co-chaired by the UN, the OSCE and the EU⁷⁹ started in October 2008 in order to negotiate the status of the breakaway regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Although representatives from South Ossetia and Abkhazia take part in the Geneva talks regarding their future status, neither the EU nor the international community has the intention to provide recognition to the separatist authorities.

Launched in April 2009, in the aftermath of the August war, the Eastern Partnership involving Georgia alongside Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine was meant to provide them a privileged relation with the EU, thus stressing the renewed importance of the region. In June 2014 the EU and Georgia signed an "unprecedented" Association Agreement deepening their economic and political ties and started the visa liberalisation dialogue, thus trying to firmly anchor Tbilisi on the path of reforms and bring the country closer to the EU. This is the culmination, so far, of engaging Georgia (and other Eastern neighbours like Ukraine and Republic of Moldova) through the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership.

III.2. Lessons learned and remaining challenges

The main lessons learned by the EU from conflict management in the three conflicts belong to two categories – lessons for the EU as a political organisation and for doing conflict management respectively. One lesson is that of internal cohesion – when the member states act together, the EU can obtain positive results. This was the case in August 2008, when the member states rallied around the French Presidency of Council in its mediation efforts and agreed unanimously on sending EUMM on the ground, which became the fastest deployed CSDP mission ever. As unity waned later on, the EU was not capable to react to developments such as Russia's failure to withdraw from Georgian territory by the deadline set in the Implementation Agreement or its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence. In fact, the member states' different attitudes towards Russia were the main reason why the EU was reluctant to engage earlier and more consistently in managing the conflicts in Georgia.

On the other hand, the complexity of the EU as an organisation can lead to some interesting compromises. This is the case with EU involvement in the Serbia/Kosovo conflict. The EU supported the political dialogue initiated by the High Representative with the two parties, which delivered promising results. At the same time, despite the lack of unity within the EU regarding the recognition of Kosovo's independence, EULEX Kosovo is actually helping with state-building there.

An interesting shortcoming of EU policy in ethno-political conflict management could be the undertaking of what was labelled as "apolitical peace-building"⁸⁰, meaning the funding of peace-building projects aimed at reforming the socio-economic, institutional and cognitive

⁷⁹The EU Special Representative for South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia co-chairs the negotiations for the EU side. After a short co-existence of a EUSR for the South Caucasus with a EUSR for the Crisis in Georgia, the two posts merged in 2011.

⁸⁰Merlingen, M. and R. Ostraukaité, 'EU peacebuilding in Georgia: Limits and achievements', in Blockmans, S., J. Wouters and T. Ruys (ed.), *The European Union and Peacebuilding. Policy and Legal Aspects*, the Hague, T.M.C Asser Press, 2010, p. 291.

conditions of the frozen conflicts, but with no political conditionality. Although this helps with gradual bottom-up conflict transformation, it cannot substitute for “tackling conflicts head-on at the highest political level”⁸¹. This approach is favoured through the ENP and Commission diplomacy and includes the limited mandates of EU Special Representatives too. While technical cooperation with the Commission provides access to funds and expertise that can be used for altering the context and actors’ behaviour or interests in ethno-political conflicts, the deployment of CSDP missions sends a much stronger message. But even these operations – especially if their mandate is limited to technical aspects – cannot make a real impact on conflict management unless there is strong political backing. CSDP crisis management usually entails short-term missions deployed to contain violence or to help create the context for conflict settlement and peace-building through monitoring cease-fires, upholding the rule of law, reforming the security sector, etc. However, in some contexts, these operations remain in theatre up to ten years, establishing linkages with other EU policies. For example, it has been argued that “the CSDP missions have been instrumental in the development of the Western Balkans, increasingly moving the region from stabilisation and security (linked to the war legacies) to an agenda focused on the countries accession process. Indeed, the operations were deployed in support of the long-term EU membership perspective offered by the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) which constitutes the general framework of cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans countries”⁸².

The selected cases show that political dialogue between the EU and the third country where the Union attempts conflict management is the real asset. But its use is limited in the case of those entities that the EU does not recognise as parties to conflicts and partners to negotiation respectively. In the context of multi-layered, ethno-political and/or secessionist conflicts, the EU needs to establish modalities for engaging with non-recognised actors (such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia) or actors whose status is yet to be determined (Kosovo to a certain extent) in order not to lose the opportunity for democratisation or making a contribution to conflict resolution. Engagement does not equate recognition of statehood or independence⁸³, but it enables the EU to participate in conflict resolution efforts and support positive developments on the ground (democratisation, good governance, free and fair elections, change of leadership bringing more moderate actors to the forefront, etc). Abkhazia and South Ossetia were never included in the ENP, so in both cases there is no direct exposure to EU policies, thus no possibility for social learning and no incentives to change⁸⁴. In time, this can lead to the entrenchment of their positions and the strengthening

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 292.

⁸² Ioannides, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁸³ Even concluding an international agreement with such an entity does not constitute recognition. This was made clear in the case of Kosovo, for example. According to the Communication from the Commission on the Feasibility Study of concluding a SAA with Kosovo, “The possibility for the Union to conclude international agreements is not limited to generally recognised independent states or international organisations. Such agreements can be concluded with any entity with regard to which the other Contracting Party accepts that it can enter into an agreement that will be governed by public international law” European Commission, ‘Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Union and Kosovo’, Brussels, 10 October 2012, p. 3, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/ks_feasibility_2012_en.pdf.

⁸⁴ N. Tocci, *op. cit.*, (2007), p. 141.

of the links to their protector⁸⁵ – Russia. The Non-Recognition and Engagement Policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia, adopted by the EU in December 2009 represents an initiative which partially responds to this challenge, by “opening a political and legal space in which the EU can interact with the separatist regions without compromising its adherence to Georgia’s territorial integrity”⁸⁶. Adapted to other conflicts in the neighbourhood, it could transform into a framework for enhancing conflict resolution through the ENP, especially if associated with other instruments⁸⁷.

Within the EU, member states that do not officially recognise various entities resulting from conflicts can abstain from derailing the Union’s efforts to contribute to those respective actors’ evolution towards democratic entities (the final status of which is to be decided by negotiations). This was the case with Spain, for example, which does not recognise Kosovo’s independence, but refrained from vetoing the launch of EULEX Kosovo in 2008, as long as it did not have to contribute personnel to the mission⁸⁸. Nevertheless, the five EU member states not recognising Kosovo’s independence opposed the negotiation of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo which would have made them sign it and thus recognise Kosovo statehood, and the SAA will be signed as an only-EU agreement, between the Commission and Kosovo⁸⁹. This was possible because the Lisbon Treaty provided the EU with legal personality, but the SAA had to contain explicit provisions that its signing did not entail recognition of Kosovo’s independence.

All in all, in the Serbia/ Kosovo case the EU managed to equate the “power of the purse” with political leverage by complementing generous financial assistance with effective mediation efforts, but the overall political clout could be occasionally undermined by the lack of unity among member states. In the Georgia/Abkhazia and South Ossetia case, while being co-chairman of the Geneva International Talks and the only actor providing an international presence on the ground, the EU has not proven capable of making Russia join the resolution efforts in a constructive way or of outdoing Moscow’s influence.

Conclusion

The EU has a complex set of tools for undertaking conflict management in its neighbourhood. These are diplomatic tools (political dialogue, EU delegations worldwide and EU Special Representatives), civilian and military CSDP missions, financial instruments for external assistance and technical mechanisms for early warning and conflict assessment, together with a diplomatic service meant to coordinate their use in a targeted manner in each specific case. The enlargement in Central and South-Eastern Europe provided the EU some useful lessons to apply when dealing with the countries in the Western Balkans and

⁸⁵ibid.

⁸⁶ Fischer, S., ‘The EU’s non-recognition and engagement policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia’, Seminar Report, 1-2 December, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2010, p. 1, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/NREP_report.pdf.

⁸⁷ibid.

⁸⁸ P. J. Kuijper, ‘Preface’ to Blockmans, S. (ed.), *The European Union and Crisis Management: Policy and Legal Aspects*, the Hague, TMC- Asser Press, 2008, p. vi.

⁸⁹ UK Parliament, House of Commons – European Scrutiny Committee, ‘Joint Report on Kosovo’s progress in addressing issues set out in the Council Conclusions of December 2012 in view of a possible decision on the opening of negotiations on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement’, 30 July 2013, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmeuleg/83-xii/8327.htm>.

Eastern Europe, which benefit from participating in various EU policy frameworks. While very different, the countries covered by ENP and SAP have similar needs: peace, stability, prosperity and good governance. From this perspective, the EU could offer them many things: trade preferential treatment, energy integration, increased mobility for their citizens, as well as support for conflict resolution, economic development, democratisation and state-building. The existing contractual relations are an indication of the EU's and Member States' political interest in a certain country or region, and the deployment of CSDP missions could serve as a confirmation of that interest and provide the opportunity to strengthen ties with the host country. Also, when deploying CSDP missions to deal with post-conflict legacies of instability and state fragility, the EU should look for the best ways to link them to other instruments it uses there so as to ensure that the established linkages consolidate the results achieved through its conflict management efforts and provide it later with a successful exit strategy.

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