The Eu as a Global Actor Addressing the Challenge of Contested States

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Abstract

The E.U.'s role as an international player began to upgrade alongside the effort to coordinate its external action by adopting a common foreign and security policy (CFSP). As a result, the E.U. has developed a wide range of activities that extended from "the traditional field of external trade to democracy promotion and cooperation in various policy areas falling under its legislative competence" (Lavenex & Schmimmelfenning, 2009: p. 791). After the end of the Cold War, the European Union addressed the challenges arising from the emergence of post-conflict states, a considerable number of which were in its neighborhood. Peacebuilding and state-building interventions were necessary for the post-conflict transition and socioeconomic rehabilitation of these fragile states with contested sovereignty. The EU supported countries with contested statehood both in consolidating peace and building a modern state with political and economic means. Moreover, the EU has adjusted its interventions to the realities and conditions prevailing in each country. Since the impact of the E.U.'s integrated intervention on contested states remains a research concern, the present dissertation aims to address whether the E.U., as a global power, has the mechanisms and appropriate political skills to face up to the challenges presented in countries with contested statehood.

Keywords

EU Actorness, Contested States, EU Policies & Policy Tools

1. Introduction

Over the years and through wars, states' borders changed dramatically, and new countries emerged. Some of these countries retained their independence, while others were annexed to stronger states. As a general rule, the International

Community faces the creation of new states as a potential challenge to the world order, especially when it comes to areas with particular geopolitical interests. The notion of contested statehood encompasses the lack of international recognition and the states' capacity to exercise control over the whole or part of their territory. Some internationally contested sovereignty states are located in the broader EU neighborhood and emerged from Yugoslavia's breakup and the USSR's dissolution. The research aimed to examine how differentiated and efficient the EU's approach concerns the contested statehood's challenges.

The EU is a powerful economic global actor and seems to assemble and combine in a unique way the characteristics of civilian, normative, military, and political power. As a civilian power, the EU adopts the identity of peace-maker. As a normative power, the EU attempts to project its own "normalness," as expressed in rules and standards "in order to influence political processes in its border regions and beyond" (Lucarelli & Manners, 2006, cited in Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 865). As a military power, the EU is self-limited in defense and protection, as well as in conflict management and resolution in its neighborhood. In the continuous geopolitical power and influence exercise, the EU appears as a moderate force, using dialogue and cooperation in conflict resolution and crisis management. In this context, as a political power, the EU undertakes mediation and provides economic & technical assistance. Looking at aspects of the EU's role as a global actor, questions have arisen about how the EU addresses the challenges of a particular issue, the problematic sovereignty of contested states, and the possibility of joining the international system.

The EU intervention in conflict resolution varies and is full of contradictions, sometimes giving the impression that coherence and strategic vision are missing. Although the EU has declared a clear determination to contribute to conflict resolution in its neighborhood, in some conflicts, the EU chooses to intervene and in others, keeps its distance. Even when the EU intervenes, in some cases, it takes a leading role and in other cases, holds a moderate attitude. A reasonable explanation could have been that the EU aims to avoid confrontation with big global players such as Russia and the US when they intervene to influence the conflict dynamics through first mediation and by giving support to their "protégé" party. Nevertheless, the EU's relative inability to participate in the balance of power logic could be considered a "comparative advantage" (Tocci, 2007: p. 177), since the EU mediation, finally, is thought to be more unbiased and welcomed.

The EU opts for preventive action. Therefore, the EU involvement in foreign affairs pertains to a mix of policies and instruments aimed at peace-building, crisis management, conflict prevention, and development aid; they create prerequisites for closer cooperation and possible integration into the EU, subject to conditions (European Commission, 2003: p. 1). The EU is involved in conflicts through humanitarian concerns, geopolitics, commitment to the alliance, and external pressings and expectations for action. However, the EU avoids undertaking military action in its neighborhood, although some EU member states

participate in military campaigns around the world.

The EU's very nature offers a marked potential to contribute to conflict resolution, yet it also implies the actual conduct of the EU in this field (Tocci, 2007: p. 176). Hence, "the literature on the EU peace support agenda is dominated by peace-building frameworks which focus on the importance of remaking security structures, building state institutions, liberalizing the economy, promoting civil society and the rule of law (Blockmans et al., 2010)" (Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 864). The Lisbon Treaty has produced new dynamics of interaction among crisis management actors in the framework of the EU institutions, in particular within the European External Action Service (EEAS). Arguably, the EU disposes of better than any other mechanism and the requisite political skills to address the challenges in its neighborhood.

2. The Concept of Contested Statehood

The construction of national political space and national politics is a historically specific and contested phenomenon. Nevertheless, the right of a national group to self-determination and autonomy cannot be challenged. As a general rule, the international community confronts the creation of new states with distrust and caution, perceiving them as a potential challenge to the international order, especially in those cases with increased geopolitical interest.

Statehood and sovereignty are currently a "hot button" topic in the legal arena since the State's notion is challenged in the globalized world (Taylor, 2014: p. 745). Indeed, many characters fight for roles on the world stage, and the nature of the roles to play is currently evolving so quickly that observers can hardly follow the changes. There is a dominant dipole, those who believe that the concept of State and the border should be overcome and those who think that the concept of State cannot be abolished (Taylor, 2014: p. 748).

Based on the traditional state-centric model of international law, as defined by article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933)[1], a state as a person of international law should have the following four qualifications: "(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states." In the Montevideo Convention, there is no reference to sovereignty. However, it is not possible to discuss statehood without considering the notion of sovereignty (Geldenhuys, 2009: p.14).

"Sovereignty refers to the political structures projecting power within and beyond boundaries, while legalistically the state is the sovereign source of political authority, establishing internal and external prerogatives" (Nissen & Hansen, 2008: p. 201; Closson, 2011: p. 59). However, the recognition of an entity as a sovereign state is mostly based on political criteria. This view is confirmed because the requirements to recognize a sovereign state have changed according to the historical context.

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[1]Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. Retrieved from https://www.jus.uio.no.

Given the changing context for recognition and its political nature, the international system's credibility in assigning sovereignty to an entity is called into question. Closson (2011: p. 61) reiterates the opinion of Bahcheli et al. (2004: p. 12) that in some cases, the recognition is granted or maintained despite the State's actual conditions. In other cases, the recognition is withheld even though the realities on the ground support the principle of territorial integrity.

In the current literature, there is a variety of terms to describe the entities existing in the margin of the international system, such as "de facto" (Pegg, 1998; Caspersen & Stansfield, 2011), unrecognized, "contested" (Geldenhuys, 2009), "pseudo-states" (Kolossov & O'Loughlin, 1999) or "quasi-states," "whose sovereignty suffers from incomplete international legitimacy" (Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012: p. 748). Geldenhuys (2009: p. 26) argues that all of the above alternative terms refer to entities that should be called states because they are almost all characterized by state features and organization. "Contested states" is the most inclusive term, emphasizing the contrast to recognized states. According to Geldenhuys (2009: p. 27), differences express how the concept of recognition differs in the international system. Mainly "unrecognized" are those states for which there is no recognition. The term "de facto state" used by Pegg (1998: p. 24)[2] implies that there is no de jure recognition for these states.[3] The term "quasi-state" refers mainly to states that lack legal statehood. "Pseudo states" derogatory suggests that the polities concerned are fake or unauthentic creations instead of "genuine states." Moreover, the term "states-within-states" refers to national subunits with no aspirations for sovereign statehood. Finally, "nations without states" are defined as communities fighting for either autonomy or secession and statehood as an expression of self-determination.

Given that unrecognized states have emerged due to unlawful acts under international law such as aggression, occupation, and racial discrimination, they may not be admitted to the community of recognized states (Geldenhuys, 2009: p: 29). These entities assert independence and the right to self-determination. Some of them have achieved a degree of autonomy, but "they lack all the attributes of a fully-fledged state" (Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012: p. 748). As concerns the level of recognition by the international community, the unrecognized or contested states are classified as follows (Caspersen & Stansfield, 2011: p. 3):

- They have achieved de facto independence, including territorial control, and have maintained this control for at least two years. As a result, the authorities of the unrecognized states or contested states control almost the entire area they claim to, including the capital and key cities. Still, the extent of their control is likely to vary over time.

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[2]Pegg, S; Bahcheli et al. (eds.); Lynch, D., 2004. Engaging *Eurasia's Separatist States:* Unresolved *Conflicts and De Facto States* United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC.

[3]The de facto states "seek the international recognition and new themselves as capable of recognition meeting the obligation of sovereign statehood. They are, however, unable to secure widespread juridical recognition and therefore function outside the boundaries of international legitimacy" (Pegg, 1998: p. 24).

- They have not gained international recognition, although some states have recognized them.
- They have demonstrated an aspiration for complete de jure independence

There are, indeed, significant factors pulling in what produce the ambiguity and instability of unrecognized statehood. Most of these entities are very concerned with their international images, and the appearance of "an ethically exclusive, militarized entity is not what they are hoping to convey" (Caspersen, 2011: p. 85).

"In some ways, unrecognized states are predisposed to fractionalization and collapse, but in other respects, they are actually in a good position to avoid dangerous infighting and succeed in state-building" (Caspersen, 2011: p. 76).

Unrecognized states tend to be small, their chance of international recognition is often remote, and the exogenous and endogenous pressures are intense. Nevertheless, lack of external sovereignty does not necessarily equate to disorder; neither statehood nor identities are fixed. On the contrary, in–between entities are trying to carve out a niche in an international system predicated on external sovereignty (Caspersen & Stansfield, 2011: p. 6). "The ecology of unrecognized states in the international system is greatly influenced by variables of (1) strategic importance and (2) resource importance" (Harvey & Stansfield, 2011: p. 23).

Indeed, the argument that most new states formed over the past thirty years have been the byproduct of fragmentation and broader processes of territorial revision in the international system rather than secession (Hechter, 1992: pp. 279-283) remains persuasive. Moreover, the dynamic of dependence on an external patron (exhibited in many cases) strengthens the governments of unrecognized states. It gives essential support, dramatically increasing the de facto independent territory's survival chances.

Does this mean we are witnessing a new form of statehood, or are these entities better understood as states—in waiting? (Caspersen & Stansfield, 2011: p. 6). Their demand for separateness expresses the current reality and is not the chimera of some ethereal secessionists.

Stefan Krasner introduced the concept of "problematic sovereignty" in the debate on statehood and highlighted both external and internal contestation sources. Krasner considers that the term sovereignty can identify the following four different attributes: a) Westphalian sovereignty, which refers to the autonomy of domestic governing structures, b) internal sovereignty, which refers to the ability of the governing authority to exercise effective control over the territory, c) interdependence, which refers to the capacity of the government to control trans-border activities and d) international legal sovereignty, which refers to the international legal recognition. When some elements of these attributes are lacking or are limited alone or in combination with others, then the entities suffer problematic sovereignty (Krasner, 2001: pp. 6-12; Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012: p. 74).

Since the creation of the modern state system, what has distinguished today's

unrecognized states from their historical forebears is that the recognized states of the contemporary today system appear more reluctant than ever to admit new members (Anderson, 2011: p. 183). The capacity for part recognition (recognition by one or more central governments) without international legal consensus on statuses, such as in the cases of Taiwan, Kosovo, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia, gives unrecognized states a self-installed geopolitical (and geo-economic) importance in the international system. This strategic location and the presence of resources reinforce their importance.

Some states that fall short of virtually all performative-based criteria of internal legitimacy retain their international recognition or "judicial statehood" as equal sovereigns (external legitimacy). These "quasi-states" possess only "negative sovereignty" (Jackson, 1987: p. 529). For Jackson and Pegg argued that both the quasi and the unrecognized State derive their existence from the outcome of the decolonization process (Chorev, 2011: p. 30). The same effect as decolonization process had the dramatic reshuffling of borders after the liberalization of Central and Eastern Europe countries and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. On their surface, wholesale legitimacy and foreign interference protection were granted to territories that lacked the essential attributes articulated by Montevideo. Their legitimacy, in other words, was not derived from their ability to govern effectively but instead from a perceived just outcome of a struggle against foreign domination.

"Conversely, many entities that could provide these basic requirements for statehood, but otherwise losers in the dramatic cartographic reshuffling of the post-colonial period, were deprived of recognition as sovereign states because of the normative bias against further discrimination dismemberment of existing borders" (Chorev, 2011: p. 30). The emergence of countries with contested statehood is not only a result of secession. Several other international law violations, such as foreign aggression and occupation, racial discrimination, and denial of self-determination, have led to secessionist tendencies and the emergence of countries with contested statehood (Geldenhuys, 2009).[4] Despite the fact that the number of states has almost quadrupled in the last two centuries, "international opinion and Great Power support for self-determination and new states' establishment has lessened" (Rosecrance & Stein, 2006: ,p: 4-5; Chorev, 2011: p. 31). "The lack of self-sufficiency is a critical attribute that puts a brake on creating new states" (Mulaj, 2008: p. 41). Milliken and Krause (2002: p. 755) point out: "From the outset, the modern state represented an *ideal* of sovereign territoriality to which rulers aspired, but they seldom achieved." Unrecognized states are bound to depend on the international system for support and recognition of any sort that may enable their states' survival and evolution from non-state to State. The asymmetry hinted at above, therefore, has to do with the fact that the success or failure of unrecognized states does not necessarily depend on their

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[4]Contested States In World Politics—Pdf Free Download. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://epdf.tips/contested-states-in-world-politics.html.

practical actions, but rather it depends on the international society—particularly the actions or inactions of its member states, in selective or collective for (Mulaj, 2011: p. 42). Despite theoretical challenges to the notion of sovereignty, recognition as a state by entities appears to reinforce sovereignty as the primary and political order. Bartelson (2006) argues that it makes normative problems intrinsically hard to settle. It is an impasse; he predicts that it will be a significant challenge for legal and political theory in the future.

3. The Emergence of Contested States in the Challenging Political Environment of the Post-Cold War Era

After the end of colonialism, especially during the Cold War, the Western bilateral assistance to the newly constituted independent states was linked primarily to geostrategic imperatives. Corrupted and brutal dictatorships were often supported directly "to buttress a potential ally in the Cold War" (Helman & Ratner, 1992: p. 4). Hameiri (2010: p. 66) states that "with the demise of the communist bloc, the post-Cold War interventions were rationalized in progressive liberal notions of radical humanitarianism and protecting human rights." Although, since the end of the Cold War, the intrastate conflicts dramatically increased (Wallensteen & Sollenberg, 2001: p. 632), the interventions aimed primarily to enforce and secure the peace. The U.N. peacekeeping reform had a decisive impact on the E.U.'s engagement in post-conflict situations (Grevi, 2009: p. 19); the E.U. emphasized state-building interventions. However, peacebuilding had to involve considerable economic and political reforms. In this sense, peacebuilding is a specific kind of social engineering based on assumptions about how best to establish durable domestic peace (Grevi, 2009: p. 56). The E.U.'s motivation for supporting peace processes abroad was primarily related to stabilizing surrounding regions and mitigating threats to internal security (European Commission, 2003: p. 10).

Following the recent enlargements of the E.U., the countries of eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus have become closer neighbors, and their security, stability, and prosperity are affecting the E.U. Member States. In this context, closer cooperation between the E.U. and its partners from Eastern Europe—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine—has become a vital element of the E.U.'s foreign policy (Hameiri, 2010: p. 86). Brinkerhoff (2005: p. 12) underlines that intervening in the states "where the social and institutional fabric has been shredded, and violence has erupted, call for a combination of the general and the situation-specific." Furthermore, Brinkerhoff (2005: p. 13) underlines that every State has different characteristics and fails for its reasons. And Hameiri (2010: pp. 86-87) argues, as Fukuyama (2005) and Rotberg (2004) had previously stated, that "the best way to avoid worst-case scenarios is to build effective states." Therefore, besides CSDP missions and other conventional peacebuilding measures (disarmament, demobilization, post-conflict monitoring), the E.U. approach emphasizes strategies, practices, and instruments mainly aimed at institution reconstruction and economic reforms to modernize

the functioning of the State and improve the standard of living of citizens (EUNPACK 2016; Zupančič & Pejič, 2018: p. 13).

From the late 1990s on prevailed, the view, that a prerequisite to successful developments is the receiving State's governmental structures' efficient functioning (Hameiri, 2010: p. 73). Because the inefficient use of international assistance was due to domestic poor domestic governance, the emphasis was on state-building. Simultaneously, "the rule of expertise developed as a new logic of management policy. According to the rule, good management decisions do not arise politically in a compromise between competing interests. Still, they are instead technically formulated based on experts' and consultants' contributions (Furedi, 2009; Hilgartner, 2000: p. 146; Hameiri, 2010: p. 80). Jayasuriya (2001) highlighted another dimension, pointing out that to have stability in a state, there must be commitment and compliance with policies that ensure the confidence of international markets (Jayasuriya, 2001: p. 101; Hameiri, 2010: p. 82).

The liberal democratic expansion characterized the first phase of the post-Cold War. However, during the second phase, the interest in policymaking internationally and domestically has focused on managing risks, such as transnational terrorism, environmental degradation, refugee outflows, illegal drug trafficking, and other so-called "debounded" risks (Hameiri, 2010: p. 66).

Moreover, interpreting a state's failure is to seek the link between security and development (Duffield, 2003, cited in Hameiri, 2010: p. 77). What has changed was that development and security were addressed primarily as technical issues after that. Contrary, in the past, technical assistance was provided on political grounds and was mainly aimed at financially supporting third countries' friendly political leaders (Duffield, 2003: p. 202, cited in Hameiri, 2010: p. 77). Moreover, the very existence of a state is historically associated with recurrent social and political conflicts between powerful alliances of interest on access to power and resources (Hameiri, 2010: p. 11). Indeed, the most crucial dimension of modern state-building programs is how they affect the relationship between the rulers and the people and groups' formation. Therefore, state-building is a highly challenging task in all unrecognized states, but the task is nearly impossible for many of these entities (Caspersen, 2009: p. 75).

The modern state-building programs try, if not always successfully, to transform the states that intervene "from within" and reform their governance architecture. This intervention aims to create what Harrison (2004) called "governance states", and Mkandwire (1999: p. 97) "choiceless democracies," where political choices for domestic political leaders are delimited (Hameiri, 2010: p. 13). Robert Rotberg directly linked legitimacy to state performance. National states fail when domestic violence prevails, and their inhabitants lose the positive political goods. Thus, their governments lose their legitimacy, and more and more citizens do not trust the State (Rotberg, 2004: p. 1; Hameiri, 2010: p. 19).

Moreover, Robert Rotberg (2004: p. 304) claims that to rescue states from

failure and collapse, there must be a stable political will and the necessary resources. However, Hameiri (2010: p. 21) reiterates that the international will to intervene is missing for capacity-building before states have reached a critical point. A smaller group of authors persistently argue that interventions cannot build state capacity in and of themselves (Chandler, 2006; Pugh, 2005; Suhrke, 2007; Hameiri, 2010). "No other political organization can advance the political agency of people as well as the truly sovereign state, because it provides a framework for political accountability" (Hameiri, 2010: p. 29).

The E.U. has enhanced its role in conflict management and peacebuilding and developed its approach. Visoka and Doyle (2016: p. 862) point out that the E.U. uses "neo-functional peace" to resolve prolonged disputes by de-structuring the very political issues into technical significance for reaching mutually acceptable agreements. Hameiri (2010: p. 86) argues that "technocracy" in the context of neo-functional peace does not "depoliticize" matters but at least temporarily helps to frame and render the concepts in a way that facilitates the mitigation of hostilities and creates the conditions for building cooperation. The neo-liberal peace has played a key role in normalizing political relations and reconciling some outstanding disputes between Kosovo and Serbia (Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 863).

Policymakers and practitioners believe that interventions restore sovereignty to failed states. Some underline individual rights over traditional sovereignty and prefer popular forms of sovereignty. Some link sovereignty to capacity and support the temporary suspension of independence and the establishment of international administrations to help develop local capabilities (e.g., Meierhenrich, 2004).

Contrary to the rule of sovereign equality that prevailed after the War, some prominent realists/rational school political scientists argued that sovereignty has always been dependent on the ability of governments to rule the State (Krasner, 2004; Keohane, 2003; Hameiri, 2010: pp. 29-30). Chandler (2005, cited in Hameiri, 2010: p. 22) and other scientists argue that state-building interventions cannot build real state capacity because they set limits to domestic politics. From this perspective, the State will become legitimate and deliver political goods such as security and development only when the assumed condition of natural power balance is reached. Fabry (2008) argues that "it is a foreign acknowledgment that gives the community the standing of a sovereign state in international relations and law." (quoted in Owtram, 2011: p. 130). A qualitative aspect recognition by a Great Power in proximity counts more than the recognition by a less powerful distant State (Owtram, 2011: p. 131).

In the book "The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy" (Hill, 2003: p. 3; Owtram, 2011: p. 134), Hill provides a broader definition of foreign policy and engages with the notion of foreign politics of unrecognized states. In particular, Hill points out that "where sovereignty is denied or the capacity to exercise it severely impeded, foreign policy becomes extremely difficult but not impossible. Ultimately foreign policy rests on the effectiveness of the State at home and abroad, which is a matter of political sociology than law" (Hill, 2003: p. 31; Ow-

tram, 2011: p. 134).

Hill (2003: p. 40) and Owtram (2011: p. 133) realize that although the notion of State is linked to foreign policy, other actors generate activities resembling foreign policies. In the context of this broader approach, defining who represents whom in international relations, it could be understood that the unrecognized states can elaborate and conduct independent external strategies, even if the lack of standard representation or the dependence on external supports impede their implementation.

In search of a balanced approach and not only for humanitarian reasons, but it also appears necessary for state-based actors to provide sufficient incentives to engage with unrecognized states. Comprehensive dialogue with the unrecognized states could undoubtedly contribute to mending and strengthening lost confidence and reducing antagonistic behavior.

However, the theoretical discussion continues as to how peacebuilding and state-building are linked and interact, what comes first and what is to follow, how to combine peacebuilding and state-building, and how the prevailing conditions in the economy and society domestically and internationally influence the E.U. approach. In this perspective, the Global E.U. Strategy launched in June 2016 by the current E.U. High Representative Federica Mogherini has adopted a more realistic approach to the strategy implemented by the former High Representative Baroness Catherine Ashton. Specifically, while the E.U. initially focused on strengthening the democratic institutions, fighting corruption, and supporting civil society, the current approach focuses on stabilizing and building the State. Accordingly, it gives less emphasis to the democratic aspects of governance (EUNPACK, 2016: p. 17; Zupančič & Pejič, 2018: p. 14).

4. The E.U. External Policies and Policy Tools

Many countries with contested statehood are located in the E.U. near abroad. Papadimitriou and Petrov (2012: p. 749) point out that the contested states have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Internationally recognized state authority suffers ineffective control over its territory (or parts of it) due to its complete disconnection with the local population or an ongoing conflict (such as Georgia, Abkhazia & South Ossetia).
- Not universally recognized state authority suffers ineffective control over a part of its territory (such as Kosovo, North Kosovo).
- The facto governing authority has self-declared independence, but it is recognized only by its patron state and few other states (such as Abkhazia and Georgia in Georgia).
- The state apparatus is fragile in the non-contested areas (such as Kosovo and North Kosovo).

How the E.U. has addressed crises associated with contested statehood differentiates accordingly to the nature of the conflict, the bilateral relations between the E.U. and the country involved (Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012: p. 749) and

the geopolitical interest. The E.U. toolkit includes measures of an economic and structural nature such as humanitarian aid, technical assistance, macro-financial assistance, diplomatic activities for conflict resolution or mediation, and provision of aid through mainstream E.U. programs associated with major policy initiatives (Instrument of Pre-Accession, European Neighborhood Policy and Partnership Instrument). The E.U. also employs political means such as a promise or engagement for E.U. membership, the deployment of an ESDP civilian or military mission to address aspects of the civilian crisis management, or "the direct exercise of executive powers by the E.U. in the contested territory as part of an international settlement for the conflict resolution" (Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012: p. 750). What characterizes the E.U. is that, alongside its actions regarding the governing authorities in each country with contested statehood, it pursues contact and engagement with the separatist entities. Apart from significant funding available for reforms and rehabilitation, the E.U. aims to create enabling conditions to resolve conflicts (Wolff, 2011: p. 151). In this context, the E.U. the last twenty years has preferred to open dialogue and engage with no recognized states instead of ignoring and letting them be isolated (Herrberg, 2011: p. 172). Thus, lack of recognition can be a powerful force for change, and some notable developments took place in the years of "no war, no peace" (Table 1).

4.1. Policies

Developments in Central and Eastern Europe have been an excellent opportunity to raise the European Union's role as an international player. The Enlargement itself was considered beneficial because the E.U. could achieve key foreign

Table 1. The contested states in the E.U.'s neighborhood.

Contested State	Birth date	Origin	Patron State	Original (veto) state	Recognition
Abkhazia	1999	Secession	Russia	Georgia	Peer & patron
South Ossetia (Alania)	1992	Secession	Russia	Georgia	Peer & patron
Nagorno Karabakh (Republic of Artsakh)	1992	Self-proclaimed Independence	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Peer
Transdniestrian Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic	1991	Secession	Russia	Moldova	Peer
Republika Srpska	1991	Secession	Serbia	Bosnia	Peer & patron
Tetovo Valley	1990	a	Albania	Northern Macedonia	Peer
Kosovo	1991	Self-proclaimed independence	Kosovo	Serbia	Partial
Palestine	1988	Self-proclaimed independence		Israel (veto)	Titular
Northern Cyprus	1983	Aggression, occupation & secession	Turkey	Republic of Cyprus	Patron

ªAlthough the Ohrid Agreement which was signed in 2001 to preserve the integrity of Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia the secessionist tendency is maintained. **Source:** Geldenhuys, 2009: p. 242; Papadimitriou & Petrov, 2012: p. 750.

policy objectives, including security, stability, promotion of democratization, and socioeconomic development in transition countries. The E.U.'s ability to develop a new foreign policy was based on two substantial factors: the desire of European elites to repeat the success of enlargement methodologies and, secondly, to address the threat to European stability and prosperity, as already identified by the first European Security Strategy. However, the enormous work for the E.U. to absorb the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has logically been perceived as a dangerous mission without assured success. In practice, each round of Enlargement has challenged the Member States to exert influence and elaborate mechanisms of influence, in principle, as conditions for integrating themselves and then as conditions for joining the internal market and acquiring the member state's status.

During 90's, the E.U. provided a list of criteria for accession (the Copenhagen Criteria 1990s), extended all the requirements of membership, firmly and decisively drew target limits, and established an enhanced and very penetrating system adoption assistance and compliance management. During this process, the E.U. was able to turn the effect of "passive" to "active," deliberately applying conditionality and socialization techniques, particularly with the launch of AGENDA 2000 (1997)[5].

Some theorists have dealt with the effectiveness of the E.U.'s influence mechanisms. Two illustrative models were developed considering policies and policy tools implemented by the E.U. and international organizations (Enlargement, state-building, peacebuilding). The models define the different logic with which the E.U. and international organizations are trying to transpose their own rules to third countries.

The model of external incentives created by Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier (2011) refers to the dynamics created by the imposition of conditions (conditionality). In this model, based on bargaining power, the main determining factor of compliance is the cost-benefit calculation from the target country. Given that domestic decision-makers have 'reasonable consequences,' the balance of costs and benefits depends on a) the size and speed at which the E.U. rewards; b) the credibility of threats and promises; c) the nature of the E.U. implementing rules and d) the level of domestic expenditure needed to adopt the E.U. rules.

The alternative approach is the social learning (lesson drawing) model. Unlike the conditionality model, the domestic decision-makers logic meets the logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen, 1989, cited in Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2011: p. 665) rather than material incentives (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2011: p. 665). According to this logic, the actors choose the most appropriate or legiti-

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[5]Agenda 2000: The goal of coordinated efforts of all the EU Institutions was set at the Madrid European Council in December 1995.To achieve this goal the European Commission presented the Communication "Agenda 2000: For a Stronger and Wider Europe" in April 1997. On 18 March 1998, the European Commission presented a package of legislative proposals on the various issues set in the Communication. After intensive negotiations, the Berlin European Council adopted about twenty regulations and the financial perspectives 2000-2006 for the implementation of this important reform.

mate way of action based on the identities, values, and rules that they have adopted.

The interaction of political and scientific communities, better information, convincing arguments, and a narrative facilitated internalization processes. Regarding the familiarization with the rules of the "by lesson drawing" model, it is unnecessary to incentivize non-member states to adopt E.U. rules. The most general proposal of the "lesson drawing" model is that a state adopts E.U. rules if it looks forward to resolving the domestic problem by these rules (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2011: pp. 667-668).

In 2000, however, European political elites saw Enlargement as a success story and a proven effective instrument for implementing a foreign policy whose methodologies could be adapted and reused. However, along with Enlargement's great success, there was a fear that the E.U. absorption power had reached its break-even point and that the whole endeavor of European integration was at risk of dismantling. In other words, the E.U. risked being hit by its success and encountered an existential dilemma, could continue to expand, risk fragmentation, lose the internal market and efficiency, or leave the most successful foreign policy tool at risk of instability at its borders. The attempt to resolve the dilemma by duplicating enlargement methodologies without engaging the prospect of joining new members is the core of the incentives. This principle forms the foundation of the European Neighborhood Policy.

The European Neighborhood Policy, adopted in March 2003, presented the institutionalized E.U. response to the countries that would become the new borders after Enlargement. The European Neighborhood Policy's overall objective is to prevent new dividing lines between the E.U. and its neighbors. To this end, it shares the benefits of Enlargement with neighboring countries by strengthening stability, security and prosperity (Communication from the Commission European Neighborhood Policy Strategy Paper, COM (2004) 373 final).

The ENP was supposed to provide a framework for E.U. relations with these states without offering the perspective of accession. The primary goals were "to reduce poverty and create an area of shared prosperity and values based on deeper economic integration, intensified political and cultural relations, enhanced cross-border cooperation and shared responsibility for conflict prevention."

Popescu argues that "the ENP was neither foreign policy nor an enlargement policy. It was, in fact, a mix of domestic policy instruments, foreign policy, and enlargement pratiques" (2006, p. 2). The Neighborhood Policy's main idea was to achieve the closest possible degree of economic integration between the E.U. and its neighbors. In this context, the E.U. promotes regulatory objectives such as protecting human rights, democratization, and prosperity and supports good governance in the neighborhood. In return for reforms, the E.U. offers the prospect of deeper economic integration and increased political dialogue. "The ENP was something of a philosophical quest for the E.U. It seeks to answer how to support the transformation of its neighbors in line with E.U. standards, while not offering membership" (Popescu, 2006: p. 2).

Neighborhood policy aimed to achieve common interests, but above all, in building common values and, therefore, in creating a more integrated relationship with the European Union. Indeed, the neighborhood is the primary field for promoting European values, mainly when pursuing a future membership. For agreements between the E.U. and neighbors to be credible, they must be adhered to by both parties. When the agreements' implementation highlights significant difficulties that were not initially considered, the E.U. must often come back with new commitments.

4.2. Policy Tools

The E.U. intervenes with high and low policy tools. High-policy tools include diplomacy, political cooperation, contractual relations and agreements, public order and security, economic aid, justice, and the institutional framework. Low-policy tools include developing trade relations, economic development, regulatory factors in agricultural matters, industrial relations, culture, social welfare, education, and research.

4.2.1. Contractual Relations

As part of its foreign policy, the E.U. concludes contractual agreements with various countries and associations. These agreements cover cooperation on a wide range of issues (such as trade, economy, energy, transport, human rights) and commit the Contracting Parties to the proper implementation and achievement of commonly agreed qualitative and quantitative objectives. The adoption of conditions and preconditions ensures the consistent application of the agreement. In this context, the EU, depending on the agreements' content requires compliance with economic and political conditions (the so-called conditionality).

The legal form and the E.U.'s contracts evolved from simple agreements that concerned a specific topic to framework agreements that support integrated interventions. Since there is a kind of osmosis between E.U. policies, it is common for successful practices to be transferred to other fields. Consequently, it is reasonable to find that the regional approach that emerged in regional policy has been transplanted to the enlargement countries and has been adapted to prepare candidates and potential candidates. Accordingly, the conditionality, from a policy instrument used in the agreements with third countries, has upgraded to the central pillar of E.U. enlargement governance and a successful E.U. foreign policy tool (Steunenberg & Dimitrova, 2007: p. 2). With a view to future enlargements and the prospect of Central and Eastern Europe's countries' accession,[6] there has been a general mobilization on developing a strategy and policies for preparing for the upcoming accession of new members. Copenhagen's European Council (21 & 22 June 1993) has established a new horizontally applied conditionality by setting criteria for a country's suitability to join the European Union. Namely, the Copenhagen criteria dictate that a democratically elected government

[6]Elite Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe… (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00323269508402348.

should govern a candidate country, respect human rights, have a well-organized economy, and fully accept the E.U.'s obligations and objectives. At the suggestion of French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur (June 1993), a diplomatic effort was launched at the European Council of Brussels on 10 & 11 December 1993, leading to the conclusion of a Stability Pact for Europe[7]. It was a significant initiative moderated by the European Union in the spirit of "preventive diplomacy" and was welcomed by countries former members of the Warsaw Pact, Russia included. The first conference on a Stability Pact focusing on Central & Eastern Europe countries was held in Paris (May 1994) with the participation of all countries with "an interest in stabilizing Europe by their defense and countries having association agreements with the Union. The Stability Pact, consisting of a political declaration, agreements, and arrangements, was adopted by the last conference held in Paris on 20 & 21 March 1995. The Stability Pact reflected the common and continuous effort of the 52 signatories parties "to prevent and end the threats of tension and crisis, and to create in a sustainable way an area of good neighborliness and cooperation in Europe" (Déclaration politique adoptée à issue de la conférence finale sure le Pacte de stabilité en Europe et liste des accords et arrangements de Bon voisinage et de coopération (Paris, 20 et 21 mars 1995, point 8)).

The Cannes European Council of 26 & 27 June 1995 called on all parties to implement the agreements and arrangements adopted in Paris and instructed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to invite the countries concerned to work for the practical improvement of good neighborly relations in Europe (European Council Conclusions of Cannes 26 & 27/5/1995, p.3).

Friis & Murphy (1999: p. 211) claim that the E.U. leadership's subsidiary course (path dependency) led to the model of the Stability Pact's contribution to Central & Eastern Europe. The Cologne European Council (3 & 4 June 1999) welcomed the preparation at the initiative of the European Union of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, intending to establish and reinforce peace and security. The creation was formally decided at the Ministerial Meeting in Cologne on 10 June 1999.

In 1999, the European Council of Cologne Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe introduced the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). As the pre-accession strategy, the Stabilization and Association Process established a formal framework for cooperation designed to gradually incorporate third countries into the European regional governance system using conditionality and socialization methodologies. Furthermore, the Stabilization and Association Process sought to establish preexisting agreements rather than start from scratch.

More broadly, as the Europe Agreements with the Countries Eastern Europe (CEE), the Stabilization and Association agreements based on Article 310 of the E.U. Treaty have been similar in many respects to the earlier Europe Agreements in both form and content. Similarity concerns creating committees for structured dialogue at the political and bureaucratic level and progressive legal

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[7]Conclusions of the European Council of Brussels, December 1993, SN 373/93.

alignment with the acquis areas. However, the Stabilization and Association Agreements vary from the Europe Agreements that emphasize stability through regional cooperation and respect for international law, particularly in compliance with the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia. Therefore, the summit in Thessaloniki decided to strengthen SAP further, taking over the accession process elements, such as Stabilization and Association Agreements, autonomous trade measures, pre-accession assistance, regional cooperation, and good neighborly relations. In this sense, the E.U. moved in the direction of the model "hub and spoke" (Gligorov, 2004: p. 8).

4.2.2. Financing Structural Reforms and State-Building in Candidate and Neighboring Countries

Over the past decades, the study of European governance has increasingly recognized the importance of institutional coordination (Antonopoulos & Bachtler, 2014: p .186). For example, Sadurski (2010: p. 9) reviewed the progress of E.U. influence mechanisms, indicating that these rules and policies are designed to strengthen the E.U. to influence neighboring non-member countries' governance following the E.U.'s values on democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and market economy. In addition, the European Commission emphasized the need to take a genuinely long-term and integrated approach, to address all aspects[8] of structural stability in countries at risk (European Commission, COM (2001) 211 final, p. 4).

In this context, the E.U. grants pre-accession assistance to the candidate and potential candidate countries and assists neighboring counties.

The pre-accession assistance aims to adapt and upgrade the candidate and potential candidate countries' national administrations to implement the acquis Communautaire (Council Regulation (E.U.) 1085/2006 of the European, Article 9). The Pre-accession assistance has evolved in line with the candidate countries' needs and specificities in each E.U. enlargement and the Community budget, and the general conditions prevailing in the European Institutions. We passed on Central and Eastern Europe programs starting with the small programs for pre-accession assistance to the Mediterranean countries in the 1980s (Mediterranean integrated Programs, Horse Quota Programs Enlargement) (PHARE, TACIS, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS). Moreover, since 2007, there has been only one integrated program, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), that assists the candidate and potential candidate countries. The IPA covers the candidate countries (Croatia, Macedonia, Turkey) and the potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, including Kosovo). The IPA has a political approach "sure measure" that imitates the E.U.'s policy approach to the Member States through the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. It is worth mentioning that the European Commission, in duly justified cases, may decide to extend the eligibility of programs

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[8]Department of Defense Directive—Esd.whs.mil, https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/520047E.pdf (accessed April 08, 2019).

and measures of the Structural Funds. The extension ensures the coherence and effectiveness of E.U. funding or strengthens regional cooperation in territories and regions of countries not otherwise eligible for funding. In these cases, the programs or measures to be implemented are global, regional, or cross-border (Regulation (E.U.) 231/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council, Article 9).

The candidate and potential countries should attend the European system before becoming full members. Moreover, the application of Community rules by third countries not participating in producing the institutional framework is unilateral alignment. The mechanisms by which social practices are displayed outside E.U. territorial limits and transferred to the neighboring country systems remain a central issue in the negotiations for membership and a more comprehensive E.U. strategy on regional commitment. Even these large-scale processes, export laws, and adoption started recently studied, and the literature has not developed satisfactorily. While the E.U. has extended its legal alignment policies, policy conditionality, and socialization processes in the Balkans and the wider European region, the Europeanization study mainly focused on the CEE countries and not on other candidates for full member countries.

The European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) was established with the EC 1638/2006 Regulation to support the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)'s strategic goals, notably developing close relations with neighboring partner countries founded on E.U. values. In addition, the ENP aimed to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the E.U. borders by supporting structural reforms in neighboring countries. The European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) was replaced in 2013 by the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The structural reforms included political, economic reforms, and social reforms. ENPI for the programming period 2007-2013 and ENI for the programming period 2014-2020 look forward to familiarizing the neighboring partner countries with the community rules and standards and strengthening regional cooperation with the partner countries through participation in Community programs. Although, in 2008, the E.U. set up the Neighborhood Investment Facility (NIF) to finance significant infrastructure projects in the countries eligible for ENPI/ENI, the assistance packages to the countries were tiny to their needs. Because of the lack of adequate funding to deal with the multiple crises that have erupted in these countries, after the ENP review in 2015, the E.U. landed in reality and turned to issues of priority such as conflict prevention, border protection, economic stabilization, and safe mobility (Blockmans, 2015).

4.2.3. Humanitarian Aid

Article 1 of the Council Regulation 1257/1996 provided that the E.U. would provide non-discriminatory humanitarian aid and protection to third-country nationals, particularly to the most vulnerable citizens of developing countries. They have been the victims of natural disasters and human violence (wars, conflicts). The E.U. has provided humanitarian aid since 1992 in over 140 countries. How-

ever, its annual budget for such operations is limited to under €1 bn, and it helps some 120 million people every year (European Commission, ECHO)[9].

Humanitarian aid is channeled through over 200 partner organizations and agencies on the ground, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, Red Cross societies, and U.N. agencies. This emergency aid is offered regardless of people's race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality, or political affiliation

4.2.4. Technical Assistance

The Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the European Commission (TAIEX)[10] was created to support public administrations in approaching, implementing, and enforcing E.U. legislation and facilitating the exchange of E.U. best practices. TAIEX provides appropriate expertise to address issues diligently in three ways: seminars, expert missions, and study visits.

The TAIEX mandate covers Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo; the Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus; Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine.[11]

4.2.5. Macro-Financial Assistance

The E.U. offers macro-financial assistance (MFA) to member countries with problems with their balance of payments and are geographically, economically, and politically close to the E.U. In this context, macro-financial assistance is given to candidates and potential candidate countries bordering on the E.U. and covered by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and, under certain conditions, other third countries. MFA takes the form of medium/long-term loans or grants or a combination thereof and is only available in countries benefiting from a program of disbursements from the International Monetary Fund.

MFA is a purely emergency measure and does not provide regular financial support for economic and social development. Other E.U. funding instruments (the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, the European Neighborhood Instrument, and the European Regional Development Fund). A prerequisite for granting MFA is respect for human rights and "effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system and the rule of law." MFA is also dependent on the satisfactory implementation of IMF program reforms. MFA programs are decided based on the E.U.'s normal legislative process.

4.2.6. CSDP Missions

The conceptualization of the U.N. peacebuilding framework influenced the

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[9]Humanitarian & Emergency Response—European External... (n.d.). Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/2279/Humanitarian%2.
[10]Taiex-regio Multicountry Workshop on State Aid Map In... (n.d.). Retrieved from http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/-/taiex-regio-multicountry-workshop-on-state-.
[11]Taiex-European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement... (n.d.). Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taiex_en.

CSDP. At the same time, this partnership served as a doorway for the E.U. to contribute with its CSDP to the U.N. peace efforts (Kmec, 2013: p. 15). The U.N. recognized the E.U.'s fundamental value to international peace and security through its own CSDP. Some agreements at the decision-making and policy-making levels provide synchronization of post-conflict management activities and post-conflict measures. However, Gowan observed that the E.U. limits itself to small CSDP missions, while the U.N. is putting far greater numbers of personnel in conflicts. He also found that the E.U.'s ambitions in peace operations "are limited by economic pressures and intervention fatigue" (Gowan, 2012 cited in Kmec, 2013: p. 13).

However, the E.U. shifted the focus of ESDP from what was initially intended military capacity to more soft power-based conflict prevention and peacebuilding tasks (Kmec, 2013: p. 8). The E.U. participates in a limited number of peacebuilding activities, keeping the same basic structure in various missions and operations. The limited focus suggests that the E.U. follows its interests rather than commonly agreed objectives. As an officer at the EEAS highlighted, in CSDP's terminology, the capacity building in post-conflict reconstruction involves security sector reform, training, mentoring, advising, economic development, and social issues. That is what is meant by the general term comprehensive approach. "This understanding of the role of the E.U. in peacebuilding in a very focused and limited capacity has been commonly accepted across the various units of the CSDP structure" (Kmec, 2013: p. 13). Moreover, the development of the CSDP created a more autonomous sphere for the E.U. and its policymakers to engage in post-conflict situations.

The first CSDP missions began simultaneously with the adoption of the European Security Strategy in 2003. The European Security Strategy aspires to create a strategic E.U. culture for timely, rapid, and, where necessary, active intervention, but it is somewhat contradictory to find out which approaches are of the utmost importance to achieve this goal (Hughes, 2010: p. 1). As a result, most CSDP operations and missions are not peace enforcement operations or peacekeeping missions (except EU NAVFOR ATLANTA). Instead, most CSDP missions and operations have been of a peacebuilding character, with some also carrying peacekeeping and peacekeeping tasks.

4.2.7. Diplomatic Activities

Even before establishing the European External Affairs Service, the E.U. Institutions have sent Senior European diplomats as European Union Special Representatives (EUSR) or as Special Envoys in regions and countries where conflicts are progressing. The EUSR is mandated to promote the E.U.'s policies and interests in these "troubled regions and countries and play an active role in efforts to consolidate peace, stability and the rule of law."[12] European Special Representatives run alongside ambassadors who exercise bilateral diplomacy without

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[12]Eu Special Representatives—European External Action Service. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/3606/EU%20Special%2

being involved in their work. Special Envoys usually have their headquarters in another country, and from there, they intervene on the issues they have entrusted. European Special Representatives and Envoys usually handle sensitive issues and are directly exposed to public opinion reactions and those who oppose their mission.

Javier Solana was the first High Representative in 1999 and maintained this post for ten years (up to 2009). As former Chief of NATO Secretary-General, Solana had successfully dealt with thorny issues such as the negotiations on the Dayton Agreement, the negotiations in Rambouillet, the Kosovo War, and Serbia bombings. Solana's experience and competence gave the High E.U. Representative role a new boost and content. During Solana's term, the European Union gained prestige as a political power. The USA recognized the E.U. as an equal part in the negotiations on peace and political issues in Europe and worldwide. As Solana mentions in his political testimony (2009)[13]:

> Europe has become a global player whose voice has been heard on every continent in ten years. We have developed a foreign policy with crisis-management structures and tools to underpin it. As a result, the European Union is working hard worldwide to make a difference in people's lives where its missions are deployed.

Since 2009, the High Representative's role has been significantly expanded by undertaking the International Community to coordinate international mediation to resolve disputes. Nonetheless, the way power is exercised, and its influence depends on the dynamism and authority of the person who holds the office.

Baroness Catherine Ashton, a member of Barroso's European Commission, was nominated a Javier Solana successor. It merits mentioning her most successful intervention as High E.U. Representative for the settlement of the crisis with Iran over its nuclear program. In this term, Mrs. Ashton, together with the Foreign Ministers and Political Directors of the E3 + 3 (China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States), met from 20-24 November 2013 in Geneva and reached a landmark agreement on a joint plan of action towards a long comprehensive solution (Joint Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton and the Iran Foreign Minister Zarif on 24 November 2013). In November 2014, Federica Mogherini became the new High Representative in Jean-Claude Junker's new Commission. A diplomatic success during its term was the signature of the Brussels Agreement.

The Kosovo-Serbia dialogue represented an essential test for E.U. diplomacy and its capacities for regional conflict resolution (European External Action Service, 2014). In this regard, the E.U.'s integration perspective for Kosovo has been the driving force for Kosovo and Serbia to engage in dialogue (Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 868). From the beginning of the discussions, it became clear that the E.U. was based exclusively on constructive dialogue and cooperation since the

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[13]Solana, J. Mon testament politique, le Soir, 10/12/2009.

E.U.'s objective was to bring closer to Pristina and Belgrade. Moreover, the organization of the dialogue on a step-by-step process and the transition from the more straightforward issues to more complicated allowed gaining trust from both sides and the impression that they can also check the outcome of the discussions. Actually, "the gradual process of negotiation on particular technical issues had a spillover effect to other, more sensitive political discussions" (Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 863).

Moreover, the balanced concessions on both sides agreed under the Brussels Agreement enabled Serbia's government to justify to its people its engagement in the dialogue as a means of ensuring the collective rights of Serbs in Kosovo (Government of Serbia, 2015 cited in Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 868). Indeed, although subject to both needs and practicalities, the Kosovo and Serbia approach was the direct result of E.U. influence and mediation. Although the Brussels Agreement was considered a milestone for a new era in Kosovo, the creeping mistrust and interethnic competition did not allow such progress. Nevertheless, the E.U. approach to tackling the crisis between Serbia and Kosovo proved to be more effective than others used in the past (Visoka & Doyle, 2016: p. 874).

During the Russia-Georgia war, the E.U. and the U.S. partners were actively involved in conflict resolution. The role of the E.U. in negotiating the cease-fire agreement between Russia and Georgia in 2008 has demonstrated the E.U.'s ability to address a global issue (Fean, 2009: p. 5).

5. Conclusion

How the E.U. pursues to address challenges related to contested states has evolved over the years and varies significantly depending on the conflict, the bilateral relations, and the geopolitical context. Nonetheless, geopolitics and the power game set prerequisites and limitations.

The EU is a significant humanitarian aid donor, but using diplomacy and specific financial tools supports the development effort and pursues the conflict's resolution. The E.U. has gained a reputation as a calm force that avoids aggression, provides financial support, and mediates to bridge differences.

In search of a balanced approach and not only for humanitarian reasons, it also appears necessary for state-based actors to provide sufficient incentives to engage with contested states. In this context, the E.U. the last twenty years, has preferred to open dialogue and engage with contested states instead of ignoring and letting them be isolated.

Particularly for countries with contested sovereignty to be linked or join the E.U., it would be an essential guarantee for their international community's recognition and a way to solve political problems. While the E.U., as a normative power, defends its standards, sets criteria, and defines conditionalities, it does not pursue to impose its own rule. The E.U. is much more in favor of an empathetic approach. It works closely with associated or candidate state authorities to trace an alternative path that eventually leads to social, economic, and political

development.

The E.U. has created a panoply of political institutions, giving it the potential to substantially prevent the explosion of conflict and manage the consequences of collision events. The E.U. has developed the best way to address uncertainties and complexities of current security challenges by adopting a range of institutional tools (Schweiss & Jebb, 2006: p. 101). As a result, the E.U. is considered a unifying factor for the neighborhood that may reform society, politics, economics, and the rule of law, guaranteeing peace, freedom, and prosperity. The E.U. also supports countries far outside its developing area with similar programs. These programs, which reflect the E.U. approach to building a modern state administration and the rule of law, use all available E.U. policy tools and achieve the same effect as those implemented in the member states (Schweiss & Jebb, 2006: p. 115). For the E.U.'s neighbors, associates, and potential candidates, the possibility to become members represents a "must-have." Therefore, they are disposed to work hard to get it.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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