How does the European Union Contribute to Peace?: A Comparative Discussion[*]

Avrupa Birliği Barışa Nasıl Katkı Sağlıyor?: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Tartışma

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) has a variety of mechanisms for contributing to the peaceful resolution of disputes. In this article, I leave traditional tools such as diplomacy, or peacekeeping aside and identify the mechanisms it uses for the accession countries. I argue that the European Union uses four mechanisms of conditionalities, direct imposition, connecting, and legitimizing to contribute to the peaceful resolution of disputes. By discussing the effectiveness of these four mechanisms based on case studies in the Western Balkans and Turkey, I argue that although the European Union may achieve more rapid and concrete results with conditionalities, direct imposition, and to a lesser degree with legitimizing; a long-lasting contribution to the peace can only be secured through connecting. However, connecting mechanism is the most difficult to implement and also to measure, as it involves long-term transformation.

Keywords: The European Union, peace, disputes, Western Balkans, Turkey.

Öz

Avrupa Birliği uyuşmazlıkların barışçıl yollarla çözümüne katkı sunmak için çeşitli yöntemler kullanmaktadır. Bu makalede, diplomasi ya da barış gücü gibi geleneksel yöntemleri bir kenara bırakarak, aday ülkeler için kullandığı yöntemleri tanımlayacağım. Avrupa Birliği'nin uyuşmazlıkların barışçıl yöntemlerle çözümü için koşulluluk, doğrudan empoze etme, bağ kurma ve meşrulaştırma olmak üzere dört yöntem kullandığını öne sürmekteyim. Batı Balkanlar ve Türkiye vakaları temelinde bu dört yöntemin etkinliğini tartışarak, Avrupa Birliği'nin koşulluluk, doğrudan empoze etme ve bir dereceye kadar meşrulaştırma ile daha hızlı ve somut sonuçlar elde etme potansiyeli olmasına rağmen, barışa daha kalıcı katkıyı ancak bağ kurma yöntemi ile sağlayabileceğini savunuyorum. Fakat, bağ kurma yöntemi uzun süreli bir dönüşümü içerdiği için aynı zamanda uygulaması ve ölçmesi de en zor yöntemdir.

Keywords: Avrupa Birliği, barış, uyuşmazlıklar, Batı Balkanlar, Türkiye.

Introduction

On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman famously explained the reasons for founding a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) "The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible" (European Union, 1950). Decades later, it became clear that the European integration process commenced with the establishment of the ECSC had been successful enough to prevent any wars among its participating states. As the power and competences of the EU increased over time, it has found itself in a position to develop and implement policies regarding the conflicts of its members, potential members, neighbors, or even states far away.

The policies that the EU develops to contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the impact of those policies have shown a great variety depending on various factors. However, it is fair to claim that the EU is strongest during the accession process although its impact is not always positive. The policies of the EU may contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the candidate and potential candidate states but also they may cause negative consequences or no consequences at all.

In this article, I try the answer the question of how the EU contributes to the peaceful settlement of disputes. In order to answer this question, I compare the cases of the Western Balkan states and Turkey. In addition to the comparative case studies, I use two datasets based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with individuals who have been involved in conflict resolution as practitioners, activists, politicians, consultants, or donors. The first dataset is collected between 2018 and 2020 through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 40 individuals who have been involved in conflict resolution with regards to Turkey's conflicts with Greece, Armenia, Cyprus, and Kurds. The second dataset is collected between 2021 and 2022, after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, through 12 semi-structured interviews and two focus groups with individuals who have been involved in conflict resolution between Armenia and Turkey.

I argue that the EU uses conditionalities, direct imposition, connecting, and legitimizing during the accession to contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes. While the EU may achieve more rapid and concrete results with conditionalities, direct imposition, and to a lesser degree with legitimizing; a long-lasting contribution to the peace can only be secured through connecting. However, connecting mechanism is the most difficult to implement and also to measure, as it involves long-term transformation.

In the first part of the article, I discuss how conflict resolution became a part of the enlargement process of the EU. Following that, I explain each mechanism and discuss their effectiveness based on case studies.

How did the conflict resolution become a part of the accession process?

The EU may have contributed to the conflict resolution among its members by its mere existence (the most fundamental example is between France and Germany) but it was not necessarily under its competence to involve in the conflicts of its members or candidates during its first decades. The conflict resolution entered in the agenda of the EU in the 1980s because of the conflicts of the new members as the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland, Greece, and Spain. However, conflict resolution before the accession was not an obligation for any of them, and the EU had a very limited role initially.

Following the accession of the UK, the European Community (EC) initiated policies for the Northern Ireland conflict. In fact, according to Hayward and Murphy (2012), the EU "learned" the conflict resolution with Northern Ireland. It was also an advantage to have both the UK and Ireland as members (Hayward & Murphy, 2012). The first community program developed in 1994 was called the "Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Countries of Ireland" (PEACE) with a budget of £240 million, whose priorities were employment creation; urban and regional regeneration; cross-border development; social inclusion and investment and industrial development (Teague, 1996). Despite the EU's ambiguous role in the actual resolution (Hayward, 2007; Hayward and Murphy, 2012, 2018; McGarry, 2006; Teague, 1996), it is possible to observe how the EU has been taking those policies as blueprints for its consequent conflict resolution initiatives. Although the EU's role in Basque case was not found as consistent as the Northern Irish case, its contribution to the cross-

border cooperation was acknowledged (Bourne, 2003; Mccall & Itçaina, 2018).

Similarly, conflict resolution with Turkey was not set as a precondition for the accession of Greece despite the contrary warnings by the Commission at the time. Yet, there were instances during the pre-accession period when the EC prevented further escalation (Rumelili, 2008). According to Rumelili, Greek accession to the EC created asymmetries between Greece and Turkey, therefore the EC even had a "conflict-enhancing" impact until the late 1990s rather than resolving (2008: 125). After granting candidacy status to Turkey in 1999, the EU initiated cross-border programs to support civil societies and acquired more influence for the resolution. However, fluctuating dynamics of Turkey-EU relations continue to reflect upon the EU's impact on conflict resolution in this case.

In the following periods, as the number of the applicant states has increased, the conflict resolution in the pre-accession period became an important factor. The major showcase for the EU's conflict resolution capacity was the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) enlargement. The conflict resolution was seen as one of the legitimacy sources of the enlargement. In the Agenda 2000, it is stated that "enlargement should not mean importing border conflicts" and continues that the applicants should make every effort to resolve their border conflicts before accession (European Commission, 1997: 59). If they cannot, they should be ready to apply to the International Court of Justice (European Commission, 1997). Although this emphasis enabled the EU to involve more in the disputes and conflicts of the candidates, it was not implemented firmly. For example, it was not an accession precondition for Estonia and Latvia to sign border agreements with Russia as the EU considered Russia responsible for the lack of progress (Joenniemi, 2008). A Commission official adds:

"Well, Estonia had a bilateral dispute with Russia, and the same for some of the Balts. But it was not like the same type of situation where it is an internationalized conflict where you have the UN mediation process, you have a split country where there is a real international problem in terms of recognition of some of these entities. That was not the case. You have a bilateral border dispute with Russia and Estonia and Latvia." (Interview 1, 2018).

Despite long-lasting debates within the EU, and attempts by the EU for the resolution of the Cyprus conflict, the Republic of Cyprus was accepted to the EU without a concrete solution. However, it seems that the EU trusted Annan Plan to be approved by both sides before the accession. The UN-sponsored resolution plan was accepted by the Turkish Cypriots with 65% and rejected by the Greek Cypriots with 75% in a referendum in April 2004. The enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen stated "I personally feel that I have been cheated by the government of the Republic of Cyprus" (EUObserver, 2004). After the failure of the unification of the island and the difficulties it brought to the EU, the EU has been more demanding about conflict resolution. This point was also repeated in my interviews in Brussels. A Commission official stated:

"By the way, on the basis of this problematic experience [Cyprus], the Commission is now putting in the context of the Western Balkans very clear conditions that they have to solve the bilateral disputes before ever thinking about joining the EU. We pressure Kosovars and Serbians precisely to avoid the situation where this unresolved international dispute would be imported into the European Union because it creates a lot of deadlocks." (Interview 1, 2018).

Overall, the entire enlargement process is becoming more demanding after the CEECs enlargement (See also Braniff, 2011; İçener & Phinnemore, 2015). The reasons can be summarized as the enlargement fatigue of the EU because of the challenges derived from the domestic politics of the member states as well as problems originating from the recent members, candidate, and potential candidate states as can be seen from the quotation below:

"Things are not as easy as they were in the previous big enlargement in the 1990s or the early 2000s. I think one of the reasons is enlargement is more sensitive within the EU. The large enlargements of the 2000s in a sense made the EU less united. It has created more internal difficulties as we can see with the issues of actions against Hungary or Poland or the verification mechanisms with Romania and Bulgaria, also with Brexit. This has led the EU to be much more prudent or cautious in the enlargement. In this sense, it is reflected also in the enlargement strategy of the Commission now which puts more

focus on what we call the fundamental pillars of the enlargement which are the rule of law, fundamental rights, economic governance, public administration reform and to measure the state of play where the countries are in their relations to preparation for enlargement rather than just progress that has been made every year… We are much more careful about measuring where each country stands in its preparation to avoid the pitfalls that we are facing now with Hungary or Poland which are backtracking on some of their previous commitments on issues like rule of law or fundamental rights. We are taking it much more seriously than in the past." (Interview 1, 2018)

As a result, peaceful resolution of conflicts gained more importance for the EU and it has been more active for the Western Balkan states. While the EU may not involve in every single case, it sees it as an obligation to involve in conflict resolution for the states that are on the accession track. On the other hand, recent geopolitical developments at the Eastern borders of the EU forced it to take unexpected steps. The EU responded to the membership application of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia by granting candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova and a membership perspective to Georgia after the Russia-Ukraine War despite their ongoing conflicts. Considering how the EU classified these states as "neighborhood states" a not long time ago, it is a curious question how credible the EU's membership perspective is under these circumstances. Here is how a Commission official compared Ukraine and Turkey in 2018:

"So, the Commission's position is reflecting what the Council is saying: we have to treat Turkey as a candidate country and we have to work on this basis. And not treat Turkey as a different third country like Ukraine for example or Morocco. They are important neighbors of the EU but they are in a different category in terms of engagement, the types of instruments and policies that we are promoting, and the kind of dialogue we have with these countries." (Interview 1, 2018).

Nevertheless, with these recent steps, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Moldova are candidates; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Georgia are potential candidates for the European Union.

It is important to underline that the EU's involvement does not always lead to positive outcomes. Sometimes it does not make a change and sometimes it may contribute to the escalation of the conflicts or creation of the new conflicts (see Cooley, 2019; Christou, 2010; Diez et. al., 2008). In the next part, I discuss four mechanisms that the EU uses to contribute to peaceful resolution of conflicts for its candidates and potential candidates.

Which methods does the EU use for conflict resolution?

Diez and Cooley (2011) and Cooley (2013) identify two strands of the EU's involvement in conflict resolution. The first strand is using traditional foreign policy tools such as peacekeeping missions, diplomacy, or sanctions and the second one is offering accession and association. In this article, I focus on accession and discuss four mechanisms that the EU uses in conflict resolution; conditionalities, direct imposition, legitimizing, and connecting. In the next part, I will discuss each of them based on case studies.

Conditionalities

The use of conditionalities is a fundamental aspect of the EU accession policy. Schimmelfennig, Engert, and Knobel (2003: 496) argue that the EU often uses reinforcement by reward rather than punishment, through which the EU seeks to change the behavior of the accession states by rewarding pro-social and punishing anti-social behavior. As emphasized by Coppieters et. al. (2004), Tocci (2008), Diez, Albert, and Stetter (2008); it is possible for the EU to have a positive impact on conflict resolution through conditionalities.

For example, in 2001, the EU was actively involved in the negotiation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in Macedonia and supported its implementation by the deployment of an ESDP mission of EUFOR Concordia in 2003 and police missions of EUPOL Proxima and EUPAT in addition to the aid programs (See Ilievski and Taleski, 2009). More recently, Macedonia agreed to ratify the Prespa Agreement in 2019 with Greece to end the name dispute and change its official name to "North Macedonia". Greece had been protesting the use of the official name of the "Republic of Macedonia" since Macedonia gained its independence from Yugoslavia in 1992. For that reason, Macedonia used "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" when it joined the UN in 1993. Macedonia was granted candidacy status in

2005 and the European Commission continuously gave recommendations to open accession negotiations since 2009. Yet, the decision to open accession negotiations was given by the European Council in 2020, only after the end of the name dispute. The membership to NATO and EU was a major incentive for Macedonia to compromise on this issue.

It is not pronounced as a precondition for Serbia to recognize Kosovo (in the end there are EU member states who do not recognize Kosovo) to be an EU member, however, it is expected from Serbia to engage in a dialogue with Kosovo to resolve their bilateral disputes. In 2013, the EU contributed to the signing of the Brussels Agreement between Serbia and Kosovo for further dialogue and reconciliation among themselves. However, no clear results have been achieved yet. More direct results were achieved about the cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) though. The EU put the conditionality of full cooperation with the ICTY for the accession of Serbia and Croatia. When Croatia could not, the opening of accession negotiations were suspended in 2005. Only after the full cooperation of Croatia with the ICTY, the relations were resumed (Braniff, 2011). Similarly, when Serbia failed to fully cooperate with the ICTY, particularly for the arrest of General Ratko Mladić between 2005 and 2007, its relations with the EU were stalled (Braniff, 2011).

As seen by the ongoing disputes between Serbia and Kosovo, or delayed progress with North Macedonia, the existence of conditionalities does not always directly lead to conflict resolution. Tocci argues that the effectiveness of conditionalities depends on the value of the benefits that the EU offers and the credibility of the EU's obligations (Tocci, 2008). Similarly, Diez, Albert, and Stetter underline the short-term and highly limited impact of the EU when there is no membership prospect or the membership is secured (2008: 226). These arguments confirm what is well-known in the conditionalities literature; the EU is most powerful during the accession process but loses its power if the membership prospect is not credible or after the accession (See Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004, 2020; Schimmelfennig, Engert & Knobel 2003).

Direct Imposition

Noutcheva (2012) argues that most of the conceptualization about the conditionalities was done with regards to the CEECs enlargement and through considering the Western Balkans, she underlines another mechanism other than conditionalities, which is "direct imposition". According to Noutcheva (2012), if the domestic legitimacy of the conditionalities is low and the cost of compliance is higher than the benefits, it may lead to non-compliance. In that case, especially in the cases where the states have limited sovereignty, the EU uses its coercive power. If its coercive power is strong, it may lead to imposed compliance. If its coercive power is weak, it may lead to fake compliance and/or reversed compliance.

Two important examples are Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The Dayton Agreement was signed after the Yugoslav wars was imposed on Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the newly established state is highly ineffective and prone to new conflicts between Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. While the EU was not very active during the war, afterwards it became one of the main actors. The Peace Implementation Council was established after the Dayton Agreement which consists of several countries and international organizations. It had a High Representative to foresee the civilian aspects of peacekeeping and peace implementation. In 1997, at the Bonn meeting, the Peace and Implementation Council gave large competences to the High Representative. Between 2002 and 2011, the High Representative also served as the Special Representative of the EU to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2004, the EU deployed EUFOR Althea to replace NATO for peacekeeping, and the European Union Police Mission between 2002 and 2012. While Bosnia and Herzegovina is a potential candidate, its accession is largely conditional on its ability to reform the political system that was imposed by the Dayton Agreement. Knaus and Martin explain the coercive powers that the external actors used in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

"In Bosnia and Herzegovina, outsiders do more than participate in shaping the political agenda – something that has become the norm throughout Eastern Europe, as governments aspire to join the European Union. In BiH, outsiders actually *set* that agenda, *impose* it, and *punish with sanctions* those who refuse to implement it. At the center of this system is the OHR, which can interpret its own mandate and so has essentially unlimited legal powers. It can dismiss presidents, prime ministers, judges, and mayors without having

to submit its decisions for review by any independent appeals body. It can veto candidates for ministerial positions without needing publicly to present any evidence for its stance. It can impose legislation and create new institutions without having to estimate the cost to Bosnian taxpayers. In fact, the OHR is not accountable to any elected institution at all. It answers to a biennial gathering of foreign ministers, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), which it chairs and whose report it normally drafts." (Knaus & Martin, 2003: 61).

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008 and is still not recognized by five of the EU member states (Cyprus Republic, Greece, Spain, Slovakia, Romania) in addition to Serbia. To foresee the status issues an International Steering Group (ISG) was established, consisting of 25 members. The ISG established an International Civilian Office and its representative the International Civilian Representative, which were mandated to monitor the implementation of the Comprehensive Settlement Proposal by the UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. The International Civilian Representative also acted as the EU Special Representative for Kosovo until 2012. The Comprehensive Settlement Proposal was integrated into the constitution of Kosovo after its independence. The EU launched the European Union's Rule of Law (EULEX) mission in 2008. It is technical and advisory but it also has executive powers in police, justice, and customs. Moreover, as mentioned above, the EU forces Serbia and Kosovo to engage in a dialogue to resolve their issues as Serbia is a candidate country. It is unlikely for any of them to be members without solving the recognition issue.

Therefore, direct imposition is another mechanism that the EU uses by exerting direct power to protectorates and semi-protectorates. The EU had the power of imposing its policies in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina directly because of the weak sovereignty of these countries and the extraordinary mandate of the EU. The accession process, by its nature, is asymmetrical but this mechanism is the one with the deepest power imbalances. Both Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina are considered potential candidates but they are both post-conflict states with statehood problems prone to further conflicts. Either of them cannot be considered as candidate without solving their statehood problems and conflicts. Because of the post-conflict situation and weak statehood, the EU had direct powers

in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, that it does not enjoy in any other candidate or potential candidate state.

Connecting

The EU connects not only governments and officials but also civil societies of the conflicting sides. In 1954, Allport (1954) developed the highly influential "contact theory", arguing that through direct intergroup contact, it is possible to reduce racial prejudice in the United States (Pettigrew, 1998). However, for this method to be successful, four conditions are necessary: "equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law, or custom" (Pettigrew 1998: 66). The support that the EU provides for civil society dialogues since its involvement with the Northern Ireland conflict are based on the contact theory and aimed to increase the connection among the societies (Hayward 2007). Following the Northern Ireland case, the EU has been developing similar programs to connect conflicting sides.

An example of that is the "Civil Society Development Program" supported by the EU in 2002. Through its components of "Local Civic Initiatives" and "Turkish-Greek Civic Dialogue", the Civil Society Development Program supported the cooperation of civil societies in Turkey and Greece until 2005. Moreover, further funds were provided by the EU through the Interreg III Programme and pre-accession funding to Turkey for cross-border cooperation between Turkey and Greece between 2004 and 2006. Another example is the "Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process" that the EU launched between Armenia and Turkey under the Instrument for Stability. The programme consisted of four stages between 2014 and 2021 with one of them supported by the Swedish Foreign Ministry. While the program is managed and implemented by eight civil society organizations from Armenia and Turkey, each phase also has smaller sub-grant schemes to distribute to other civil society actors. The officials at the European Commission believe the contribution of these programs:

"I think one of the main instruments that we've used, and it's not only in the case of Turkey but in many other areas, is what we call the cross-border cooperation program, which is a way to promote good neighborly relations on the very concrete and local scale. And by favoring economic

development, people-to-people contacts, border facilitation, and border crossing facilitation. All these ways of promoting at the local level, at the grassroots level engagement, understanding and if possible, reconciliation, we've done that quite a lot in many of the regions in all the enlargement countries or the new enlargement countries." (Interview 1, 2018).

"I believe that project that you mentioned [Turkey-Armenia normalization] is indeed one that's had quite some clear results on bringing different groups together and making dialogue possible, which otherwise would not be possible. And I think that's what we find important. It increased dialogue between the different nationalities, between the different groups, let's say. And that's what that's a good example and how we can contribute to a peace settlement." (Interview 2, 2018).

"It's important to say that when in this project we will always be with authorities, we tried to put them all together around the table. You know this is not hidden interventions or operations. We work with civil society organizations. We work with many actors involved in this local and regional social life. So this includes authorities from both sides, from municipalities and villages. So it's like an integrated approach and based on soft, let's say, policies or soft activities from culture mainly, and see where we can interact to promote good relationships and stabilization of, normalization of communities." (Interview 3, 2018).

The connecting mechanism involves socialization or social learning, which entails the internalization of new norms and the development of new identities as a result of interactions among the wider societies (Checkel, 2001; Börzel & Risse, 2003; Radaelli, 2003; Coppieters et. al. 2004; Tocci, 2008). Both Turkey-Greece and Turkey-Armenia programs mentioned above were praised by their coordinators and participants for providing precious opportunities to connect with the other side (Interview 4, 2019; Interview 5, 2019; Interview 6, 2019; Interview 8, 2019; Interview 22, 2020; Interview 25, 2020) as can also be seen from the quotations below:

"It went pretty well in terms of me getting to know, discover a whole new world. You know really opened my eyes to Turkey and the political social context" (Interview 5, 2019).

"I think it made an important difference. Earlier, two societies were entirely apart [Armenia and Turkey] and believed everything that they were being told about the other side. But now it is different. There are people from two sides who are in contact. They tell things, stories about their experiences. There is visibility. This is the first difference. Secondly, there is a change in the bureaucracies. Some official institutions who had zero contact ten years ago, now have contact. There is more contact at both levels" (Interview 6, 2019).

"I hope we could make a difference. At that time, we were so young. We thought that we were doing this thing and everything would change tomorrow. But actually, after the Kayafest [Greek-Turkish festival], if you look at the documentary and booklet, you can see that a lot of participants from Turkey and Greece stated how their opinions were changed after these programs. I do not know if it is a widespread change, but still, it was something" (Interview 22, 2020).

"This program made me more open to the news coming from Greece. I won a scholarship to learn Greek in Greece. It changed my doctoral dissertation topic. It changed how I perceive the world" (Interview 25, 2020).

It is rather well-established that the success of these programs varied based on domestic politics, intra-EU politics, or securitization of the conflict (see Diez & Hayward 2008; Diez et. al., 2008). So, it is not surprising that these programs were also criticized for their limited outreach and bureaucratic structures (Interview 5, 2019; Interview 6, 2019; Interview 8, 2019; Interview 11, 2019). The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War particularly had a profound impact on the Turkey-Armenia Program through the cancellation of some projects or hesitance to participate in the existing ones (Focus Group 1; 2021; Focus Group 2; 2021). Therefore, as aiming to transform the larger society, the success of this mechanism is rather more complex, long-term, and for those reasons, difficult to measure (Hayward, 2007; Braniff, 2011).

Legitimizing

While discussing the EU's impact on border conflicts, Diez, Albert, and Stetter describe "enabling impact". Accordingly, the EU's enabling impact occurs when actors within conflict societies refer to the EU to justify their

actions in terms of conflict resolution. The actors can well be from the government or civil society (Diez et. al., 2008: 27). Hayward and Wiener (2008) argue the EU legitimized cross-border cooperation and became an inspiration and model for multilevel cooperation in the Northern Ireland conflict. Rumelili (2008) argues granting the candidacy status to Turkey in 1999 enabled Greece to pursue a different foreign policy by empowering the moderates in both countries and legitimizing the efforts of rapprochement. An interviewee offered a similar view:

"If we went as the foundation, no university from Turkey would accept us. But when we said it was an EU program, we had more positive results" (Interview 8, 2019).

Similarly, the support that was given by the Turkish government for the acceptance of the Annan Plan for the resolution of the Cyprus conflict can be considered another example when the EU was used as a reference point. On the other hand, when the relations with the EU deteriorate, discursive reference to the EU becomes a liability rather than a legitimizing aspect. Kaliber (2016) argues unlike the previous decades, the EU lost its normative value for the solution of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey for the relevant NGOs for example.

Conclusion

The European Union started to develop policies for conflict resolution. In addition to the traditional policies, it uses a variety of methods, particularly during the accession process. The first one of them is conditionalities. Conditionalities work best when there is a credible membership prospect or the cost of compliance is low. Through conditionalities, the EU may contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The name dispute between Greece and North Macedonia, and the full cooperation of Croatia and Serbia with the ICTY are examples of how conditionalities contribute positively. However, the lack of progress in the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo shows the limits of conditionalities. The second mechanism is direct imposition. In states where there is limited sovereignty like Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, the EU uses its direct coercive powers to implement its policies. The third mechanism is legitimizing. This is a more indirect mechanism than conditionalities and direct imposition. With this mechanism, domestic actors use the EU as a reference point

to legitimize otherwise unpopular policies or actions. The fourth mechanism is connecting. The EU has been initiating programs to support civil societies for cooperation since its involvement with the Northern Ireland conflict. While the first three mechanisms may produce more rapid and concrete results according to circumstances, the results of the connecting mechanism are hard to measure. As connecting aims bring and transform wider societies in conflicting states, it is a long-term but more enduring mechanism.

Considering the EU's more demanding approach to accession and particularly to conflict resolution since the CEECs accession, it would be interesting to observe how the EU will plan to use these mechanisms for the cases of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.

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List of Interviews and Focus Groups

Number	Position	Date
Interview 1	Head of Unit, The European Commission	2018
Interview 2	Programme Officer, The European Commission	2018
Interview 3	Programme Officer, The European Commission	2018
Interview 4	Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 5	Project Manager, International NGO	2019
Interview 6	Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 7	Project Manager, International NGO	2019
Interview 8	Former Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 9	Founder and Director, International NGO; Academic	2019
Interview 10	Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 11	Former Project Manager, NGO/Academic	2019
Interview 12	Former Project Manager, NGO/Academic	2019
Interview 13	Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 14	Project Manager, International NGO	2019
Interview 15	Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 16	Founder and Director, NGO	2019
Interview 17	Founder and Director, NGO/Academic	2019
Interview 18	Participant	2019
Interview 19	Founder and Project Manager, NGO/Academic	2019
Interview 20	Founder and Project Manager, NGO/Academic	2019
Interview 21	Project Manager, NGO	2019
Interview 22	Former Project Coordinator, NGO/Academic	2020
Interview 23	Journalist and Former Political Advisor	2020
Interview 24	Participant	2020
Interview 25	Participant	2020
Interview 26	Honorary Diplomat	2020
Interview 27	Former Project Manager, NGO	2020
Interview 28	Project Manager, NGO	2020
Interview 29	Participant	2020
Interview 30	Founder of an initiative	2020
Interview 31	Participant/Coordinator	2020
Interview 32	Politician	2020
Interview 33	Coordinator, International NGO	2020
Interview 34	Founder of an initiative/Academic	2020
Interview 35	Journalist	2020
Interview 36	Researcher, NGO/Academic	2020
Interview 37	Head, NGO/Academic	2020
Interview 38	Journalist	2020
Interview 39	Politician/formerly Project Manager	2020
Interview 40	Policy Advisor at the European Parliamant	2020
Interview 41	Project Coordinator/Academic	2021
Interview 42	Founder of an initiative /Academic	2021

Interview 43	Facilitator/Academic	2021
Interview 44	Participant/Academic	2021
Interview 45	Participant/Academic	2021
Interview 46	Project Coordinator, NGO	2021
Interview 47	Director, NGO	2021
Interview 48	Politician	2021
Interview 49	Academic	2021
Interview 50	Project Coordinator, NGO	2021
Interview 51	Project Coordinator, NGO	2021
Interview 52	Founder of an initiative /Academic	2022
Focus Group 1	NGO workers	2021
Focus Group 2	Academics	2021