Nino Tsilosani[1]

THE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TOWARDS THE STATES OF EASTERN PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

Abstract

As a global actor in a contemporary international system, EU is interested in conflict resolution and democracy promotion in the neighbouring regions. In order to provide insight on what are the reasons behind EU's approach and external policies towards eastern neighbourhood one might argue that, European Union involvement in the Post-soviet state is closely connected to the relations with Russia. Looking at the cases of frozen conflicts in Georgia, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine, it is apparent, that EU would rather use constructive engagement as a tool for partnership, rather than comprehensive sanctions. Most importantly, the EU does not have holistic approach when it comes to eastern partnership countries and its involvement is influenced by three main factors: EU-Russia Relations, EU's interests in the particular state and EU internal tensions. Furthermore, complicated nature of the EU-Russia relations, which then translates itself into EU's involvement in the frozen conflicts, can be explained in light of constructivist theory.

Looking at the previous studies, this research aims to contribute to the academic literature in three ways. First, in contrast to the majority of the studies, it shifts the focus from the effectiveness of policies towards the nature of the EU itself. Secondly, it takes a dual approach towards reasoning behind the EU's effectiveness, and measures both, internal and external tensions, and correlation of the two. And lastly, it draws conclusions on the EU's role by comparing cases with different degrees of involvement and severity, rather than similarities.

Keywords: *European Union, EU-Russia Relations, Frozen Conflicts, Constructivism, Constructive Engagement.*

Introduction

Since its inception, the European Union has undergone complex reforms and changes, making it an important, global actor in the international system. Following the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has the same foreign policy instruments as the functional states. The real problem for the EU was that it could not use the existing, effective tools properly. With emphasis on soft power, preference for legal aid, and eagerness for multilateral diplomacy, the EU has had trouble adjusting to a contemporary world that is increasingly ruled by power politics (Lehne, 2017, p. 3), furthermore its policy in the post-Soviet region is the extension of EU favoring use of diplomatic instruments.

Interested in conflict resolution and democracy promotion in the neighbouring regions, the EU is actively involved in crisis management. The main source of power for the EU lies in its attractiveness premised on the promise of economic growth and development. At the same time in the post-Soviet space, Russia fuelled through its military

---
[1] Nino Tsilosani was a MA student of the interdisciplinary Master Programme in European Studies at the Institute for European Studies of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. This paper is a part of the Master Thesis defended in her fourth semester at the Institute for European Studies of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. E-mail: ntsilosani@yahoo.com

presence a series of frozen conflicts (Nitou, 2016). Moreover, it also displayed its military strength on a series of occasions. In fact, Russia's war with Georgia and annexation of Crimea were signs that Moscow was aiming to regain its former great power status and that, its leadership had developed hegemonic intentions in the post-Soviet region (Cornell & Starr, 2009).

It is worth noting, that while EU's relation with Russia play ultimate role in policy-making, it is assisted by factors such as EU's interest in the region and internal tensions. Because those three very rarely match, EU fails to provide holistic approach to partnership countries. For the purpose of this paper it should be clarified, that holistic approach refers to "Whenever elements of any kind combine, by virtue of this combination they give rise to new phenomena. One is therefore forced to conceive of these phenomena as residing, not in the elements, but in the entity formed by the union of these elements" (List, Spiekermann. 2013)

Another important point would be how EU engages with these states, which is a great representation of its approach to states that Russia views as its sphere of influence. Since EU is mainly a normative power, which "*in its ideal or purest form, is ideational rather than material or physical,*" which means that its use comprises of normative rationalization rather than the use of material and in case of international politics, military strength (Manners, 2009). The notion of the EU as a normative power has gone far beyond the academia. It has been taken up by policymakers across the EU and is on a regular basis part of the political discourse of EU member states (Bickerton, 2011). It pursues its goal in the region by constructive engagement - Main idea behind this type of foreign policy-making is achievement of various degree of integration in a certain field by bilateral agreements. Besides, contractual agreements are means to foster a long-term and structural change both – within and between third countries. This is EU's way of preventing conflicts and resolving existing ones. (Tocci, 2007) Constructive engagement itself is narrower policy exercising EU's normative power. For example, Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were means to foster long-term structural change. Constructive engagement is largely dependent on EU's current internal tensions and mainly is somewhere between its political interest and its state of affairs with Russia. EU prefers to reward states rather than put capable sanctions on Russia, with exception of Ukraine.

It is utmost important to note three main factors in order to examine reasoning behind EU's activities and policies in the post-Soviet region, these are as follows: EU-Russia Relations, EU's interests in the particular state and EU internal tensions (mainly Russia's bilateral relations with member states). Interests of the EU as a whole and interests of member states do not always align, but in order to form a specific approach one might argue, that it is the combination of the three. We will later see that absence of the one variable from this formula can result in little to no action When all these factors are met it results in unsteady approach from EU's side, treating conflicts with very similar tensions in different ways.

European Union's involvement in the Post-soviet states is closely connected to the relations with Russia. On the one hand, the EU fails to challenge Russia in the region, because it remains only a normative power, but on the other hand, its constructive engagement proved successful in some states. **There is no holistic approach on EU's side and it varies according to its interest in specific state, internal tension and external factors.**

1.   Post-Soviet States and frozen conflicts

In 1991, it became clear to the Soviet Union that Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan would soon gain independence, which could change the political structure of the region and strengthen Western power, prompting Gorbachev to launch devastating reforms in those countries.

In the Georgian region of Abkhazia, the local government received an order from Moscow to start propaganda about the sovereignty of Abkhazia(Lynch, Why Georgia Matters, 2006). Abkhazian elites were already fearful of rising nationalism in Georgia and signed so called "Lykhny Declaration", calling upon creation of separate Republic of Abkhazia. Additionally, Abkhazian leaders maintained strongly pro-USSR approach in contrast to Georgian strive towards independence. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, this stance became position of the independence from Georgia (Lynch, Why Georgia Matters, 2006). To speed up the conflict, Russian special services formed Abkhaz-trained detachments and supplied the Russian military with weapons. Nevertheless, Russia has been involved in the negotiations for a long time, although the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/ Tskhinvali region has resulted in the loss of the right to play the role of mediator. 94% of the population of Abkhazia holds a Russian passport, speaks Russian and the national currency is the Russian ruble. The case is more compli-

cated in the case of South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region, as it depends entirely on Russia and openly discusses the issue of integration with it.

One might wonder why Russia has spent so many resources to help the separatist states: First, because instability makes Georgia less attractive to Western partners, especially NATO. It should also be noted that the secession of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region does not allow Georgia to cooperate with the countries of the North Caucasus. Such an action is beneficial for Russia, as it prevents Georgia from becoming the leader of the anti-Russian Caucasian coalition and avoids separatism by creating a strong image on its own state. Russian establishment prefers to control the volatile South Caucasus rather than watching the stable region from afar (Gvalia, Siroky, Lebanidze, & Iashvili, 2013).

As for **Armenia and Azerbaijan**, ethnic tensions in the region became apparent after the parliament of the **Nagorno-Karabakh** Autonomous Republic on February 20, 1988, endorsed the region's unification with the Armenian SSR. The collapse of the Soviet Union further increased the interest of the Armenian separatist movement. After a small-scale war in 1991, this conflict escalated in late 1992, and developed into a full-scale war. An estimated 25,000 people lost their lives and over a million Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Muslim Kurds, and others permanently lost their homes. By the second half of the 1980s, the USSR was already on the verge of collapse, and the chances of its government regaining control by military force were slowly waning. This case was also distinctive, since this was the only scenario where direct rule from Moscow was established in 1988–1989 as a solution to the problem (Broers, 2015, p. 556).

In view of all this, Russia's interest in further escalating and freezing the existing conflict was enormous, as in this case Russia would be able to maintain its role as a major player and negotiator. This was a Russian strategy - the participants in the NK conflict came under their own influence, as well as in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/ South Ossetia. Maintaining the *status quo* in the current conflict is conditioned by another important interest of Russia - the energy resources of Azerbaijan. Following in the footsteps of American investment in the Caspian Basin, Russian energy and economic policies toward Azerbaijan have also intensified. It is obvious that Moscow is trying to strengthen ties with Azerbaijan through its position in the strategic sectors of the economy.

The Transnistria conflict arose in 1989-90 during the post-Soviet transformation processes. Until 1988, "Transnistria" was neither a political unit nor a contemporary term in the Soviet Union. During Soviet rule, Transnistria was populated by partly a Russian-speaking elite and party by Romanian-speaking agricultural population. By the time, Moldovanisation on all levels of leadership left the Russian-speaking elites fearing for their posts. It was ultimately the Moldovan declaration of sovereignty in 1990, which declared all property on the territory of the MSSR to be owned by the republic, and the emerging rejection of a new Union Treaty by the Moldovan leadership, which triggered the Russian-speaking autonomy/secession (Büscher, 2016, p. 25). There are clear signs that high-ranking KGB representatives and soviet ministers supported separatists. Russian Support became even more obvious when 14th army was positioned around Transnistrian city of Tiraspol (Büscher, 2016). Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Transnistrian leadership seized control of the remaining left bank, Chişinău's attempts to regain control failed all throughout 1992 during the military clashes. Status of the "Transnistrian Moldovian Republic" remained unclear for years.

Energy and trade are important interests for Moldova, which is entirely dependent on Russian hydrocarbons. In 2014 Moldovan officials complained of intense Russian pressure over the proposal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU at the Vilnius summit in November 2014. However, as in Georgia, there is a 'frozen conflict' that sharply reduces Moldova's freedom to pursue its chosen policies, since Russia supports the Transnistrians financially and by issuing Russian passports (Smith & Harari, 2014).

When we discuss **Ukraine** we must remember, that after the Ukrainian government decided not to sign a planned Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement with the European Union in November 2013 demonstrations began in Kiev. The 'Euromaidan' demonstrations became more aggressive in early 2014 and in February. On 22 February 2014, Viktor Yanukovych disappeared from Ukraine and a new government was installed by the Ukrainian parliament. Later in February, anonymous military figures, thought to be Russian workforce, surrounded the airports in Crimea, a majority-Russian peninsula in Ukraine and the Crimean autonomous assembly was taken over by pro-Russian forces (Smith & Harari, 2014, p. 2). On 26 February, President Putin ordered military trainings involving 38,000 troops near the border of the Ukraine. Russia supplied support of $3 billion in the form of a Russian purchase to Ukrainian government bonds at the end of 2013. In the meantime,

fully military equipped troops appeared in Crimea's main public buildings and airports, increasing fear of Russian military intervention (Smith & Harari, 2014).

On 1 March, the Russian Duma (parliament) approved a request by President Vladimir Putin to use Russian forces in Ukraine. Russian forces took control of Ukrainian military sites in Crimea, including in Belbek, Balaclava and Kerch. Large pro-Russian demonstrations were held across eastern Ukraine including in Kharkiv, the second biggest city. The UN Security Council was also called to an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis (Smith & Harari, 2014). On 16 March the Crimean referendum returned an overwhelming vote in favour of independence. The Crimean authorities requested then asked to join the Russian Federation. Ukrainian armed forces in Crimea were surrounded by pro-Russian forces early in the crisis. Military forces took control of the autonomous parliament on 27 February. Initially, a referendum on union with Russia was set for 30 March but on 6 March, the new regional government passed a resolution proclaiming union with the Russian Federation and bringing the referendum forward (Smith & Harari, 2014).

We can conclude that almost forgotten post-Soviet frozen conflicts were quickly rediscovered by the Western politics in August 2008. The Russian tanks that "liberated" South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region and invaded Georgia showed two things. First, the fact that the frozen conflicts of the Post-Soviet region continue to represent a serious threat to regional stability. Secondly, the Kremlin establishment decided to upgrade its long-lasting instrument of such conflicts in order to prevent what interprets as illegitimate external invasion in its sphere of influence (Tudoroiu, 2012, p. 135).

2. EU external relations

EU policy in the South Caucasus region has been a typical example of its approach to foreign policy. Beginning with the early 1990s, the EU used traditional instruments to provide aid, financial grants, technical assistance, and other means of support proportionally and equally to the South Caucasian states. The EU's approach to the post-Soviet countries (With the exception of the Baltic States) has been similar across this period (Gogolashvili, 2009).

Georgia's relations with the European Union began in 1991-92, after the collapse of the Soviet Union after Georgia became an independent state. A major milestone for Georgia was establishment of the Eastern Partnership Initiative, which aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union, its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (Eastern Partnership, 2019).

In 2014 Georgia signed Association Agreement with the EU, which was an unprecedented instrument for a country, especially as it contained the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, after which the EU became Georgia's largest trading partner since it was signed. Previously considered a bureaucratic instrument of the European Union, the Association Agreement has become a geopolitical hot-button issue (Fix, 2014). Subsequently, another major achievement for Georgia was reached in 2017, when Visa Liberalisation Agreement was signed with the EU, which many politicians used as a variable for measuring Georgia's future prospects. Many scholars view these as a "reward" from the EU for Georgia's unbreakable political course regarding European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Undoubtedly, the war in Georgia changed the rate of EU activity toward the region, and especially towards Georgia. The EU's engagement in the resolution process may extend at least as long as the EU mission is allowed inside the disputed Georgian territories. The EU moderated Geneva talks between conflicting parties, which have started late fall 2008 and continued during winter 2009 still have not brought tangible results. The "West" and EU in particular did not "punish" Russia for the aggression against Georgia, it even decided on continuation of talks on Partnership and Cooperation Agreement after Russia's withdrawing from undisputed Georgian territories (Presidency of the EU, 2009).

The EU has long maintained relations with Georgia within the regional South Caucasian context. Georgia has often tried to persuade the EU to take a more individualized approach, but the principal framework for past relations, the PCA did not facilitate the implementation of policies different from those regarding other South Caucasus states, in spite of Georgia's progress or stronger "aspirations" (Gogolashvili, 2009, p. 121).

Europe's approach to Ukraine has long been flawed. The 2003 European Security Strategy called for a stable and democratic neighbourhood, nonetheless it had nothing to say about issues of conflict. Discussion about Russia focused on closer relations. This was amplified in 2009 by the Eastern Partnership, a programme designed to

deepen relations with neighbours in the east. Both the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership avoided the question of potential enlargement to the countries of this region. Instead, the EU offered 'association' (MacFarlane & Menon, 2014).

During the accession negotiations, several new member states like Estonia, Lithuania and Poland had already expressed their wish to contribute to a strengthening of relations with Kiev. Once Poland's own future in the Euro-Atlantic institutions became clearer, Warsaw emerged as Ukraine's key advocate and tried to influence the EU's Eastern Policy through several policy papers. Judged against the historical record, the 'Orange Revolution' seemed to be a catalytic event in EU-Ukraine relations (Roth, 2007). It removed the gap between Kiev's declared adherence to European values and political reality in Ukraine (Vahl, 2004). Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement entered into force on 1 September 2017, which was a step towards EU membership (Petrov, Van Der Loo, & Van Elsuwege, 2015).

EU has been a major player in Ukraine's crisis as well. The European Council strongly condemned the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation in 2014. The EU has adopted a strict non-recognition policy with regard to the illegal annexation of Crimea (have been extended several times since then and are still in place) (EEAS, EU-Ukraine relations - factsheet, 2020), Diplomatic restrictions against Russia were first imposed at a meeting of EU leaders on 6 March 2014. The first package of significant economic sanctions targeting cooperation and exchanges with Russia was announced on 29 July 2014. A reinforced package of economic sanctions was announced in September 2014. At the same time, the EU directly participated in negotiating the Geneva Joint Statement of 17 April 2014 (EEAS, EU-Ukraine relations - factsheet, 2020).

In 1991/1992, the European Community started negotiations with **Moldova** on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in 1994 and ratified later in 1998 (European Commission 1994). Moldova expressed an interest in EU membership in 1996. The Commission determined that Moldova was not ready to start negotiations. Instead, it was offered a place in the European Neighbourhood Policy (Niemann & De Wekker, 2010). Additionally, Moldovian government hoped that a firm rapprochement with the EU would help a settlement of the Transnistrian separatism issue (Całus & Kosienkowski, 2018, p. 11). The country's greatest successes was the signing of an Association Agreement (including the DCFTA) in 2014 and the liberalisation of the visa regime.

From the perspective of Brussels, involvement in Moldova was mostly aimed at providing stability beyond the new EU borders, especially in the context of Transnistria. Pro-European Moldova was expected to become a more transparent and reliable partner. Moldova's integration with the EU was particularly important to two EU member states: Romania and Germany. For Romania, this was a chance to repair mutual relations that took a hit during the Soviet era. From German perspective, it would be a helpful tool to implement German foreign policy by improving EU's border security and control of the migration via resolution of the Transnistrian conflict (Całus & Kosienkowski, 2018, p. 12). However, after strongly pro-European party was defeated in 2014 the dynamics slowed down drastically.

As for Transnistrian conflict, The EU participates as an observer in the 5+2 negotiation process on the settlement of the conflict. It continues to support a peaceful settlement based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for Transnistria (EEAS, 2020).

The EU cooperates with **Armenia** in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its eastern project - the Eastern Partnership. In the context of Armenia, an interesting factor is how the EU is perceived in Armenia: either they see EU as an actor, which has an interest in creating a buffer zone in the South Caucasus and stable and predictable neighbours, which might mean greater efforts in conflict resolution efforts or more reserved policies of stabilisation. Democracy and transparency were portrayed as a long-term process, but not one with clear short-term implications. Thus, European integration has been stated at the highest level as the most important long-term direction of Armenia's foreign policy (Freire & Simão, 2007) .

Azerbaijan is a strategic energy partner for the EU and plays a crucial role in bringing Caspian energy resources to the EU market. In 2018, the EU and Azerbaijan approved joint Partnership Priorities(European Commission, 2020). The EU was one of the first international donors in Azerbaijan. Positive impact from this early cooperation has been possible in areas where there was mutual interest. As one Azerbaijani official has put it, *"the new oil routes helped Azerbaijan to be recognised as part of the European family"* (Simão, 2012).

Energy revenues have become the other major issue in Azerbaijani foreign policy, after the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The contribution of the ENP has been limited by the lack of interest of Azerbaijani authorities in EU's financial assistance. Azerbaijan is today an important energy supplier and transit country for EU markets, increasing its strategic advantage over the EU. Azerbaijan has privileged stability over democracy. EU is very limited in promoting conditionality reform in this country. Another problem in the Azerbaijan is the perception that the EU. The EU's inconsistent approach to Karabakh, most notoriously, the reluctance to openly support Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, as it has done with Georgia, Moldova, has been a major source of distress in bilateral relations. The power of attraction of the European model is limited by the perception that the European states favour Armenian positions (Simão, 2012).

EU relations with the *de facto* NK leaders have been severed due to it is the policy of non-recognition (Lynch, 2004). The lack of communication and the curtailing of all forms of cooperation with Azerbaijan have pushed Karabakh even further towards Armenian control and dependence. EU's lack of engagement with the NKR should be assessed against the backdrop of its limited but increasing interaction with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian/Tskhinvali region authorities. The EU's approach to the protracted conflicts in Georgia, prior to the war in 2008, was based on the notion that, by promoting Georgia's development and supporting rehabilitation, the EU was not only improving the living conditions of the IDPs, but it was also promoting peace-building. This, however, was not extended to Karabakh; a position that has undermined the potential role the EU might play in this territory (Simão, 2012).

Relations between the European Union and Russia have had their ups and downs over the course of the last few decades. In order to have a better grasp of these dynamics, we have to look back and understand the nature of bilateral interactions and the setup of the institutional framework established between the two entities. When discussing institutional developments between the EU and Russia, one must always keep in mind that the engagement framework for both of the actors has been shaped not only by the legacy and traditions of interaction between the then-European Community and the Soviet Union, but also by the broader and constantly evolving post-Cold War order at both the global and EU levels. In some ways, the overall relationship (at least in the early stages of the EU and Russia's interactions) might be characterized as the European Union's attempts to place Russia into highly institutionalized, post-sovereign arrangements that fit into the unipolar Europe built upon the EU's liberal norms and values, and Russia's constant and progressing responses to that project (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016).

To understand the evolution of the relations between the two actors, its helpful to look at taxonomy suggested by *Forsberg and Haukkala*, which proposes to look at EU-Russia interactions through six phases in time that roughly coincide with the presidential terms in Russia: the "optimism" phase (shaped by the aftermath of the Cold War environment, lasting from 1992-1994), the "time of troubles" phase (characterized by much more strained relations, lasting from 1994-2000), the "Putin promise" phase (a time of a potential reset in EU-Russia relations caused by the election of new president in Russia, lasting from 2000-2004), the "mutual disappointment" phase (characterized by unrealized possibilities and misunderstanding, lasting from 2004-2008), the "partnership for modernisations" phase (influenced by Medvedev's agenda for innovation and modernisation inside Russia) and the final phase "rupture of relations" (starting with Putin's 2012 presidential term) (Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016). Overall, it is worth mentioning that Russia has always been uneasy in dealing with the EU as a supranational entity and has traditionally preferred to relate to the member states bilaterally, as part of a broader strategy of "divide and rule".

The EU-Russia relations may remain intact as long as Russia agrees to play by the rules, but since it recurrently rejects provisions of the international law, the EU faces problems in reaching its external political objectives. Such problems have been evident in EU policy toward Russia, which before the Putin era showed great interest in finding common political ground, and in becoming a credible partner for the EU (Gogolashvili, 2009, p. 95).

To conclude, South Caucasus in itself has three fundamentally different countries in regards to their policies towards Europe. Whereas Georgia aims to assimilate with the EU and the transatlantic organization as deeply and as fast as possible, Armenia still remain dependant on Russia in regards to its economy, security and energy. It is also a member of the Eurasian Economic Union and, at the same time, has signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the EU. Azerbaijan on the other hand, has no interest to integrate with the European Union or with Russia in that matter, and follows a debating policy between the two actors. Baku has an interest in the development of energy and economic relations with the EU but does not show interest in a membership perspective. These three countries have their own approaches in dealing with the EU and Russia and are in three different stages in their process of the integration. All three have fundamental security challenges, Georgia

with two territories (Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region) occupied by Russia, and Armenia and Azerbaijan in their conflict over Nagorno Karabakh. Russia also plays a vital role in mentioned conflict as the security guarantor for Armenia and provider of weapons for both states.

Lately, increased European Union interest in its eastern "neighbourhood" has been viewed as a possible solution of the Transnistrian frozen conflict. The fall of the communist authoritarian regime of Chişinău and the internal crisis of the Smirnov regime in Tiraspol also adapted the conditions of the conflict. Still, the European involvement in Moldova's conflict is perceived by the Kremlin as a disturbance in its own politics. Additionally, the 2008 war in South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region illustrated Russia's return to the early 1990s policy of instrumentalizing the post-Soviet frozen conflicts (Tudoroiu, 2012).

In 2014, Moscow's annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas supplied the international community with an abrupt reminder of the unresolved conflicts lingering in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. However, Germany and its EU partners have been too preoccupied with the crisis over Ukraine to take appropriate notice of dynamic developments in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region and Nagorno-Karabakh (Fischer, 2016).

3.   EU Internal tensions

At the national level, member states have to deal with the existing dynamics of bilateral relations and traditions of engagement that they hold with a respective state. This statement is particularly relevant when we are looking at relations with Russia, which has been seen as a particularly sensitive and divisive subject for the EU and its member states. In their famous 2007 work "A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations", scholars Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu tried to categorise member states based on their approach to Russia and devised the following categories: The "Trojan Horses" - Cyprus and Greece, often defend Russian interests in the EU system, and are willing to veto common EU positions, the "Strategic Partners" (France, Germany, Italy and Spain) cherish a special relationship with Russia, the "Friendly Pragmatics" (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia) maintain a close relationship with Russia and tend to put their business interests above political goals, the "Frosty Pragmatists" (Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the UK) focus on business interests but are less afraid to criticize Russia on human rights issues, and the "New Cold Warriors" (Lithuania and Poland) who have overtly hostile relationships with Moscow and are willing to use their veto powers to block EU negotiations with Russia (Popescu & Leonard, 2007). Of course, these categories are over generalisations and might often be misleading since national positions tend to change and differ from the established image as well as depend on the issues at stake and ongoing developments in the political landscape.

EU policy-making regarding of Russia has always been considered the push and pull game of member states. Firstly, because difference between domestic priorities and power results in the internal disputes amongst nation states. Additionally, largest members such as Germany and France have the most influence on the aforementioned relationship, but they do not share the common history that Central and East European states have. Conditions on bilateral relationship with Russia play key role in developing specific issues (Schmidt-Felzmann, 2014, p. 4).

In 2008 Russia adopted "Russian Foreign Policy doctrine", in which it specified Germany, France and Italy as resources for advancing Russian interests, later Spain, Greece and Finland were added to the cooperation list. Evidently, these are the states that have on occasion prevented or slowed development of EU's policies on difficult issues, advocating for less strict approach. Former member state UK has an unsteady relationship, going from having primary importance to condemning Russia's involvement in its internal affairs, which is viewed as primary reason for lack of UK's involvement in the diplomatic efforts when it came to Ukraine. Another state refraining from being string on this issue was the Netherlands, due to its dependence on economic and energy sources (Schmidt-Felzmann, 2014, p. 6). Many Scholars blame Germany, France, Italy and Greece for the EU's inability towards more strict approach.

4.   EU resolutions, policies and response mechanisms towards conflicts

The Treaty on European Union states, that EU aims to promote peace, prevent conflict and strengthen international security. This makes it apparent, that EU intends to engage in long-term solutions in order to prevent conflicts (Thapa, 2015). EU took an important step forward at becoming a serious security actor by establishment of Common

Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999 (Helmerich, 2007). Just under the framework of ESDP, the EU has carried out more than 27 missions since 2003. The Alliance government has sent missions from traditional military peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, and training with the Afghan and Iraqi police (Grevi, Helly, & Koehane, 2009) .

The EU possesses a variety of policy instruments for conflict management, including Joint Statements, Joint Actions, Common Strategies, Common Positions, EU Special Representatives, economic sanctions, ESDP civilian, police and military operations, and support for civil society and other democratization projects. Policies like the ENP or the new Eastern Partnership, additionally, allow the EU to use the principle of conditionality, "where EU candidate countries must prove their respect for democracy and the rule of law to be eligible for EU membership. The Commission administers their accession processes following the principle of conditionality" **(Glüpker, 2013)** in its conflict management efforts (Whitman & Wolff, 2010).

Alongside these instruments, the EU promotes conflict resolution standards through "constructive engagement". This is a tool, which uses different forms of cooperation, usually defined by agreements with third countries (Thapa, 2015). For example, Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were means to foster long-term structural change.

On November 10, 2009, Council of European Union adopted Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities, which set basis for EU engagement in the area of mediation and dialogue, as well as develop concrete steps on enhancing the Union's capacity. This joint concept by Council and the Parliament provided basis for EU's engagement in this area (Council of European Union, 2009). European Parliament resolution of 2019 on building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation is quite important yet a very vague document. In all fairness, it does provide specific action such as training of mediators and establishment of new initiatives for peace and democracy, but those actions are solely internal (European Parliament, 2019).

In 2019, European Parliament even adopted a resolution on the state of EU-Russia political relations, which reaffirmed mentioned support and even gave a promise of serious sanctions. Resolution also reaffirmed EU's concern regarding Russian involvement in Transnistria, South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region, Abkhazia, Donbas and Nagorno Karabakh – *"that constitute serious impediments to the development and stability of the neighbouring countries concerned, undermine their independence and limit their free sovereign choices''*. It is curious, that illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea is the most mentioned and condemned out of above-mentioned conflicts in the given document (European Parliament, 2019). It's worth noting that issue of the Crimea was mentioned almost by every participant of the debate, but Georgia and Moldova were only pointed out by one MP, who stressed that she prefers to have good relations with the Russia, but Putin's aggression has gotten large–scale not just towards Ukraine, but also towards EU's eastern partners - Moldova and Georgia and is directed towards the European Union.

European Parliament in its Resolution of 14 June 2018 on Georgian occupied territories 10 years after the Russian invasion highlighted that the Russian Federation continues its illegal occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (European Parliament, 2018). On 15 January 2015 European Parliament adopted resolution on the situation in Ukraine (2014/2965(RSP)), where it strongly condemned the escalation of violence against peaceful citizens, journalists, students, civil society activists, opposition politicians and clergy. The very first point of the resolution the fact of illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia (European Parliament, 2014).

We can clearly see EU does not have a holistic approach when it comes to post-Soviet states. Concerning Russia, it refrains from using strong and demanding language, whilst calling upon need for the change of approach. As for Georgia, EU rewards its commitments by reaffirming its support on the paper, but the resolutions provide little to no on the ground effects. The Ukraine was an obvious example of the clash of the EU's interests and its reluctance to go against Russia, when capable sanctions were imposed in regards to Crimean conflict. Lack of on the paper discussions regarding Russian involvement in Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria showed, that lack of willingness and unstable path towards democratisations gravely affected considerations in the EU when it came to these states.

5.   Assessment of EU's engagement in Conflict Resolution

EU's engagement in the neighbouring conflict and its policy is the reflection of its ongoing struggle, since the Union wishes to increase its influence without using main tool at its disposal – membership perspective. On the other hand, effectiveness of this tool depends on the aspirations of the conflicting state itself, in cases of Moldova and Georgia the EU is expected to provide higher price than it chooses to provide (Kamov, 2006). Nevertheless, willingness of these states did increase EU's actorness in the conflicts. In case of Moldova closeness with EU's borders played major role as well.

The EU could be said to have a normative impact in the South Caucasus in its promotion of conflict resolution in the region. Clearly, the EU fosters this principle because of the history of the organization, particularly the continuing peace built by member states through cooperation. The peaceful settlement of disputes is a well-established principle of international law that the EU broadly supports in its foreign policy objectives. Conflict resolution appears as an EU objective in ENP policy documents in particular. In 2006, the European Commission admitted, *"The ENP has achieved little in supporting the resolution of frozen or open conflicts in the region"* and called for a more active role. The South Caucasus, as already mentioned, suffers from three unresolved conflicts that have a negative outcome on political and economic stability. The EU recognizes that their resolution is important in building sustainable peace in Europe and its neighborhood. Nevertheless, this awareness had very little outcome in terms of proactive initiatives until the real full-scale violence in South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region in the summer of 2008 (Stewart, 2011, p. 73).

Situation in the Caucasus in not so simple. On the one hand, Georgia's willingness and commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration serves a great role, but EU clearly is hesitant to act in the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. On the other hand we have Armenia and Azerbaijan who are reluctant when it comes to the European course, but the approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remain similar, in which EU is once again a mediator (Kamov, 2006). EU's involvement in Karabakh is limited to supporting mediation of the Minsk Group and there is no direct involvement. (Paul, 2018, p. 71) This shows that EU is comfortable in providing aid and engagement in a settlement, but refrains from sanctions and hard policy tools. At the same time, we have situation in Ukraine, when EU's security had much greater threats, which explains its vast reaction and capable policies.

In relation to the conflicts, the EU has been unable to overcome different preferences of the MS on how to deal with Russia and remains fundamentally divided between a more Russia-friendly camp (composed of those, like France and Germany, which prioritize bilateral relations with Russia over a common EU approach) and a more Russia-sceptic camp (including primarily Poland, Sweden and the Baltic states) which prefer a much tougher policy. This divide within the EU means a repetition of a well-known EU pattern of no or insufficient action until a crisis has fully escalated, rather than the pursuit of a well-conceived, strategic and properly resourced proactive foreign policy (Whitman & Wolff, 2010). European Union's involvement in the Post-Soviet states is directly connected to its political struggle with Russia. Challenging Russia in a real, hands-on way would be something EU has never done, and it is doubtful that it wants to find out.

It is most noteworthy, that partner states interests and strivings play lesser role, since it is apparent that taking this element out of the context leads to very little alteration. In all fairness, Georgia's pro-European course did play important part in its achievements, and Armenia's pro-Russian vector did influence lack of proactive partnership, but on the contrary we have Moldova, which compared to Georgia has been arguably unsteady on its path to democratisation, and Azerbaijan, which puts very little to no effort in its cooperation, but degree of engagement in these conflicts are not that significantly different, they are still unresolved and still pose threat to a regional security.

6.   Constructivist view of EU-Russia Relations

Both Russia and the EU are somewhat new to being a global actor and both are in the process of forming their foreign identities, but in rather different directions. In conjunction with these similarities are the key differences between the foreign policy approaches and the political nature of these two. Russia is often depicted as an international actor whose behavior matches well to the theoretical expectations of realist theory, whereas the EU is frequently depicted as a post-modernist actor. To show this factor is the context in which the two actors function: the European political landscape in which they are acting changed fundamentally in 1991 and continues to evolve.

A constructivist approach draws attention to the impulsive interaction of the EU and Russia, and the evolving nature of the relationship.

For Russia, the search for an international role has to do with the search for both domestic and international identity in the post-Soviet period. The EU's foreign policy identity is also in formation. The overall weakness of European identity (in contrast to national identities) combined with the complexity of the EU's decision-making structures makes a coordinated foreign policy approach tricky. The Union has moved forward in establishing a clearer foreign policy identity only in the relatively recent past, in 1993 with the initiation of the CFSP in the Maastricht Treaty. The formation of the EU's External Action Service and of the position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy under the Lisbon Treaty are directed at pushing this process forward, but the degree to which the EU will be able to project itself as an international actor, or even as an effective regional player, is still unclear. "The EU's inability to form a unified position on a variety of important foreign issues (for example, the Iraq war, the Kosovo Question) are all evidence of the unstable approach in terms of the EU's self-conception as a foreign policy force. The capability–expectations gap in this arena is in part a function of the unclear expectations that the EU and its members have of the commitment that should be placed behind this effort" (DeBardeleben, 2012).

Constructivism promises to offer significant insights into the irregular nature of EU–Russian relations in the post-cold war era. Firstly, because the identity of both actors are still in formation, and the relationship is unfolding in a dynamic international context, the construction of at least meaning of the relationship could have a transformative element in the relationship. Second, one of the key issues that feed misunderstandings is the dispute over norms and interests in the relationship. "Russia's normative preferences are often masked in the language of interests and EU interests are often masked in the language of norms" (DeBardeleben, 2012). A constructivist analysis can help to untangle these ambiguities. Third, rules of interaction are confusing, partly because of the contrasts in governance structures between the two actors. This stems from the fact that EU's multilevel policymaking and governance leaves a lot of room for ambiguity and vagueness, which from the Russian point of view is often used as an advantage to directly negotiate with the member states.

Conclusion

In the Union of 27 states, it is very difficult to reach common position in cases where national interests and domestic pressures are involved. The very different historical and current relationships of individual EU member states with Russia, shaped by diverse social, political and economic links, has complicated the process of making and implementing effective decisions when it comes to conflict management in the eastern partnership states. This in turn divides the EU between member states with dominant pro-Russian and anti-Russian sentiment.

The EU has a further obstacle when it comes to promoting norms of conflict resolutions in the Eastern Neighborhood: the presence of a powerful neighboring state with fundamentally different view about not only democracy, but also regional order. EU norms compete directly with that of Russia's in the Post-Soviet states, particularly in the *de facto* states, since the Russian Federation has been a firm supporter of the *de facto* states since the hostilities began.

The EU acts normatively in its relations with the Post-Soviet states, but has a limited normative impact in regards to norms including to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The absence of the enlargement perspective for these states, especially in the South Caucasus limits the EU's normative influence.

Significantly, The EU's 'domestic' attractiveness and its value system have been continuously losing support in some of the partnership states. Most of the EaP countries have realized they will not be able to apply for membership. EU membership requires many high level standards to be satisfied. Furthermore, EU membership has to be agreed upon by all member states, and some are opposed to having EaP countries in the EU. Most of these concerns come from states heavily influenced or threatened by Russian policies.

EU policy-making regarding of Russia has always been considered the push and pull game of member states. As previously shown the states that are declared as strategic partners by Russia such as Germany, France, Italy and Greece tend to push more soft policies, seeing no need to entice its energy and economic partner. On the other hand, we have Finland, Hungary and former member the UK and the Netherlands, who refrain from being pro-Rus-

sian, but want almost no involvement in the policies that strongly oppose Russia. Unfortunately, only smaller states like Lithuania, Latvia and Poland are the ones that suggest measures that are more drastic.

The political establishment in Russia is seriously paranoid regarding further EU enlargements. Control of the South Caucasus has always been a priority for Russian policy (Riegel & Bohumil, 2018). The backbone of the Russia has always been military and economic power, which was the main guarantee of its success, especially when it came to ethnic and separatist conflicts. Russia has justified military assistance to the conflicting countries as the only way to resolve the existing disputes, but in reality this military aid and Russia's role as a mediator over-all has deepened the existing conflict. In the Russian perspective, when a country that traditionally belongs to their sphere of influence gyrates towards EU membership it diminishes economic opportunities for Russia (Lambert, 2018). It is all part of the Russian zero-sum thinking.

Theoretical framework sheds light on the fact, that Russia and EU are both new to being a global actor, which leads to the clash of their interests, mainly because Russia has more realist approach, whereas EU's behaviours are more post-modernist. Main point of the constructivism approach was that interaction of the two are quite impulsive, constantly evolving, as depicted by the history of their relation starting from "the optimism phase" (1992-94) ending with "rapture of relations" (2012). Constructivism also draws attention to complexity of EU's decision-making structure and describes it as reason for weakness of European identity. Constructivist theory offers significant insight regarding this relationship, and urges EU and Russia by constructing the meaning of the relationship. An important point made by the theory is that EU's multilevel policymaking leaves too much room for vagueness, often well used by Russia's partner member states to keep their bilateral relationship.

EU's involvement in the conflict resolution is a result of combination of three variables: EU relations with Russia; EU's interests and internal tensions posed by interest of member states. Perfect example of this was the Ukraine, where EU's interest (both as a Union and member states) was greater than the risk that Russia could pose – hence the capable and continuous economic sanctions had been placed by the EU on Russia in regards to Ukraine. In case of Moldova one criteria was met, one of the leading policy-pushers (Germany) had direct interest, and the EU took the problem seriously, since it threatened its borders, advocating for the resolutions and partnership initiatives. But after one of the major played lost willingness due to failure of the democratization process, the interest did not outweigh the fact that Russia was heavily involved in the Transnistrian conflict. As for Georgia – EU has its geopolitical interests, but not all member states are convinced. Most importantly, Russia has the history of the harsh aggression towards Georgia, with lack of sanctions, but high level of constructive engagement from the EU. Armenia and Azerbaijan are drastically different cases, since these two states show no pursuit towards European integration, Russia is still heavily involved in the region, but because Azerbaijan and its energy sources remain, independent and available EU has no need to try any harder than it does.

To conclude, the EU does not have a holistic approach when it comes to post-Soviet states. Challenging Russia in a real, hands-on way would be something EU has never done, and it is doubtful that it wants to find out. At the same time, it wishes to secure eastern neighbourhood, mostly by imposing its norms and values. EU set an impossible goal to reach a win-win situation, which ultimately can be a demise of its influence in the region.

Bibliography

Broers, L. (2015). From "frozen conflict" to enduring rivalry: reassessing the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. *Nationalities Papers, 43*(4), 556-576. doi:10.1080/00905992.2015.1042852

Büscher, K. (2016). The Transnistria Conflict in Light of the Crisis over Ukraine. In S. Fischer, *Not frozen! The unresolved conflicts over Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh in light of the crisis over Ukraine* (pp. 25-42). Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Całus, K., & Kosienkowski, M. (2018). Relations between Moldova and the European Union. In M. M. Paul Flenley, *The European Union and its eastern neighbourhood: Europeanisation and its twenty-first-century contradictions* (pp. 99–113). Manchester: Manchester University Press. doi:10.7765/9781526109118.00017

Cornell, S., & Starr, F. (2009). *The Guns of August 2008.* New York: ME Sharpe.

Council of European Union. (2009, November 10). *Consept on Strenghtening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capaci-*

ties. Retrieved from https://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015779%202009%20INIT

DeBardeleben, J. (2012). Applying constructivism to understanding EU–Russian relations. *International Politics, 49,* 418–433. doi:doi:10.1057/ip.2012.8;

Eastern Partnership. (2019). *EU NEIGHBOURS - Policy*. Retrieved from https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/policy#the-eastern-partnership

EEAS. (2020, 06 10). *EU-Moldova relations - factsheet*. Retrieved from European Union External Action: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4011/eu-moldova-relations-factsheet_en

EEAS. (2020, September). *EU-Ukraine relations - factsheet*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4081/%20EU-Ukraine%20relations%20-%20factsheet

European Commission. (2020). *European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/armenia_en

European Commission. (2020). *European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations*. Retrieved from ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/azerbaijan_en

European Parliament. (2014, September 14). *European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Ukraine and the state of play of EU-Russia relations*. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2014-0025_EN.html

European Parliament. (2018, June 14). *Georgian occupied territories 10 years after the Russian invasion*. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0266_EN.html

European Parliament. (2019, March 12). *Building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation (2018/2159(INI)).* Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0158_EN.html

European Parliament. (2019, March 12). *European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2019 on the state of EU-Russia political relations (2018/2158(INI)).* Retrieved from European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0157_EN.html

European Parliament. (2019, March 11). *State of EU-Russia political relations (debate).* Retrieved from European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2019-03-11_EN.html

European Parliament. (2019). *Three Eastern Partnership neighbours in the South Caucasus.* . Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/172/three-eastern-partnership-neighbours-in-the-south-caucasus

Fischer, S. (2016). Not frozen! The unresolved conflicts over Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh in light of the crisis over Ukraine. Retrieved from https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/48891/ssoar-2016-fischer-Not_frozen_The_unresolved_conflicts.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2016-fischer-Not_frozen_The_unresolved_conflicts.pdfdraftdraft

Fix, L. (2014). Georgia Knocking on Europe's Door: Russia, Georgia, and the EU Association Agreement. *Forschungsinstitut der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*. Retrieved from https://nbnresolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-53817-3

Forsberg, T., & Haukkala, H. (2016). *Avoiding A New 'Cold War': The Future of EU-Russia Relations in the Context of the Ukraine Crisis.* LSE IDEAS.

Freire, M., & Simão, R. (2007). *The Armenian road to democracy: dimensions of a tortuous process. CEPS Working Document.*

Glüpker, G. (2013). Effectiveness of EU Conditionality in the Western Balkans: Minority Rights and the Fight Against Corruption. Journal of Contemporary European Research. Vol. 9 No. 2

Gogolashvili, K. (2009). The EU and Georgia: The choice is in the context. *Europe in Dialogue, 1*, 92-129.

Gvalia, G., Siroky, D., Lebanidze, B., & Iashvili, Z. (2013). Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policy of Small States. *Security Studies, 22*(1), 98-131. doi:10.1080/09636412.2013.757463

Helmerich, N. (2007). CFSP and ESDP - How to include new partners? In J. Varwick, & K. O. Lang, *European Neighbourhood Policy : Challenges for the EU-Policy Towards the New Neighbours.* (pp. 103-116). Leverkusen-Opladen : Barbara Budrich-Esser.

Kamov, G. (2006). EU's role in conflict resolution: the case of the Eastern enlargment and neighbourhood policy area.

Lambert, M. (2018). *Russian smart power at work in the Eastern Partnership.* Prague: Institute of International Relations.

Lehne, S. (2017). *Is there hope for EU foreign policy?* (Rep.). Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12822List, C. and Spiekermann, K. (2013). Methodological Individualism and Holism in Political Science: A Reconciliation. American Political Science Review, 107(4), 629–643. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000373

Lynch, D. (2004). *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States.* Washington D.C.: The United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lynch, D. (2006, February). Why Georgia Matters. *Chaillot Paper, 86*, 7-73. Retrieved from https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cp086.pdf

MacFarlane, N., & Menon, A. (2014, May 23). The EU and Ukraine. *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy, 65*(3), 95-101. doi:http://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080/00396338.2014.920139

Niemann, A., & De Wekker, T. (2010). Normative power Europe? EU relations with Moldova. *European Integration online Papers (EIoP), 14*(14). Retrieved from http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2010-014a.htm

Nitou, C. (2016). Russian and EU's quest for status: the path to conflict in the Post-Soviet space. *Global Affairs*, 143-153. doi:10.1080/23340460.2016.1163775

Amanda, P. A. U. L. (2018). Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus – the Role of the EU. The Centennial of the Independence of the Three South Caucasus States: Historical Background, Contemporary Developments and Prospects of Peace and Prosperity.

Petrov, R., Van Der Loo, G., & Van Elsuwege, P. (2015). The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement: A New Legal Instrument of Integration Without Membership? *Kyiv-Mohyla Law and Politics Journal, 1*. doi:10.18523/kmlpj52678.2015-1.1-19

Popescu, N., & Leonard, M. (2007). *A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations.* Brussels: European Council on Foreign Relations.

Presidency of the EU. (2009). *Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on Russian plans to build up its military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.* Brussels. Retrieved from http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/cfsp-statements/declaration-by-the-presidency-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-russian-plans-to-build-up-its-military-presence-in-abkhazia-and-south-ossetia-9021/

Roth, M. (2007). EU-Ukraine relations after the orange revolution: The role of the new member states. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society, 8*(4), 505-527. doi:10.1080/15705850701641023

Schmidt-Felzmann, A. (2014). Is the EU's failed relationship with Russia the member states' fault? *L'Europe en Formation, 374*, 40-60. Retrieved from https://www.cairn.info/revue-l-europe-en-formation-2014-4-page-40.htm#

Simão, L. (2012). The problematic role of EU democracy promotion in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 45*(1-2), 193–200. doi:10.1016/j.postcomstud.2012.03.001

Smith, B., & Harari, D. (2014). *Ukraine, Crimea and Russia.* House of Commons Library, London. Retrieved from researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk

Stewart, E. J. (2011). Mind the Normative Gap? The EU in the South Caucasus. In R. Whitman, *Normative Power Europe* (pp. 65-82). Palgrave Macmillan.

Thapa, M. (2015, January 1). The Role of the European Union in Conflict Resolution in Nepal. *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations, 51*, 83-92. doi:10.7366/020909611201505

Tudoroiu, T. (2012, February). The European Union, Russia, and the Failure of the Transnistrian Frozen Conflict. *East European Politics and Societies, 26*(1), 135-161. doi:10.1177/0888325411404885

Vahl, M. (2004). *Is Ukraine Turning Away from Europe?* Brussels: CEPS Policy Brief No. 57.

Whitman, R. G., & Wolff, S. (2010). The EU as a conflict manager? The case of Georgia and its implications. *International Affairs, 86*(1), 87–107. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2010.00870.x

Annex 1:

EU and Eastern Partnership, marking disputed areas.
Sargsyan, Arpine. (2019). INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS: INTERRELATION WITH INTEGRATION, TRADE AND INNOVATION.