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The EU's role in the resolution of Georgia's Conflicts

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Declaration

I, Maka Mdivani hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "**The EU's Role in the Resolution of Georgia's Conflicts**", submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed   ....……

Date   13 August 2011

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If conflicts have gone unresolved, it is not because techniques for peaceful settlement were unknown or inadequate. The fault lies first in the lack of political will of parties to seek a solution to their differences …. and second, in the lack of leverage at the disposal of a third party if this is the procedure chosen. The indifference of the international community to a problem, or the marginalization of it, can also thwart the possibilities of solution.[1]

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Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN Secretary General

17 June 1992

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[1] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping Document A/47/277 - S/241111, 17 June 1992, (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations 1992) Found at http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html (accessed 5 April 2011)

Introduction

Both the Georgian -Abkhazian and the Georgian-Ossetian conflicts are linked to the issue of the status of ethnic minorities. Since 1801, when Russian colonial domination was forcefully established in Georgia, the Roman principle *Divide Et Impera* was employed by the Russian Empire and later by Soviet Russia regarding the country. The existence of different ethnic groups, like Abkhazians and Ossetians on Georgian territory was manipulated for the purpose of weakening Georgia and strengthening Russian influence in the region by dividing Georgian territory into ethnic units. During the Soviet Union the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia[2] enjoyed an autonomous status within the Soviet Republic of Georgia. In the early 1990s when the Soviet Union fell apart and Georgia proclaimed its independence[3], South Ossetia and Abkhazia refused to be integrated into the newly sovereign state and started fighting for independence from Tbilisi. Growing aspirations for independence escalated into large scale violence between separatist and Georgian forces. These conflicts took lives of thousands, forced many people to leave their homes and questioned the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

Those conflicts remained frozen during 15 years. In the meantime the issue of Georgia's conflicts was brought up to the agenda of international society, which resulted in the engagement of the UN and the OSCE representatives on the ground. They have taken the lead in promoting conflict settlement, yet more than a decade of negotiations led by the UN in Abkhazia, and the OSCE in South Ossetia, have failed to produce any result. In August 2008 the situation got worse and the ethnic conflict between Georgians and Ossetians escalated to an inter-state war between Russia and Georgia. Following a build-up of Russian troops in the North Caucasus and lasting shelling of Georgian villages in South Ossetia, on 7-8 August, Tbilisi launched a military operation against Tskhinvali,

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[2] South Ossetia is referred to as 'Shida Kartli', 'Samachablo' or 'the Tskhinvali Region' by Georgian politicians and historians. This work will use the term 'South Ossetia' as it is that most frequently used in official statements and academic works published in English.
[3] On 9 April 1991 Georgia became the first Republic to secede from the USSR when Georgian Parliament approved a decree formally restoring Georgian independence lost in 1921 due to the Russian invasion.

the main city in South Ossetia. In response to Georgia's actions, Russia moved large numbers of troops into Georgian territory announcing that Russia would defend its citizens living in South Ossetia. Due to the conflict several hundred people were killed, hundreds and among them children were wounded. According Amnesty International a total of nearly 200, 000 were displaced by the fighting when the conflict had erupted.[4] Both - Georgian and Ossetian civilians became victim of abuse and violence. There was a severe damage to infrastructure and civilian property, city Tskhinvali was left in ruins, ethnic Georgian villages burnt and razed to the ground.

The bloodshed was stopped by the EU which became a main negotiator between conflicting sides and ultimately managed to facilitate an agreement on a ceasefire. However the Russian occupation of Georgia continues until now. The current state of play of the conflict is unstable and a peace making process will take a long time. Two institutions working on conflict resolution issues United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) were forced by Russia to withdraw their missions and only the EU has its monitoring mission (EUMM) in Georgia.[5] At present the EU is the only body with the unique position to avoid a renewal of the conflict. Therefore the future of Georgia's peace process is largely depends on the EU's coherent and well-examined foreign policy regarding the Georgia's conflicts resolution.

In both academic and political discourse, the European Union has traditionally been considered as an atypical international player. It is heavily debatable whether the EU is capable of being an influential political player in world affairs. Some authors insist that despite its great economic power EU's role is diminished in world affairs due to lack of military power. Others suggest that as the EU promotes democratization and political liberalization in certain regions by spreading specific norms and values (as good governance, respect of human rights, the rule of law), it means the Union has a significant

[4] 'Georgia marks anniversary of War', BBC News website, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8188904.stm (Accessed 7 August 2010)
[5] Vladimir Socor, 'UNOMIG, RIP The Curtain Finally Falls on a Side –Show' Eurasia Daily Monitor, Vol. 6, Issue 116, found at: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35135 (accessed 10 August 2010)

impact on international politics. Moreover, according some scholars, it possesses a normative power which constitutes more strength than military or economic power.[6]

Some authors insist that the EU is a single international actor, while others disagree with this notion, claiming that because of different priorities of the Member States, the EU lacks capability to act as a single foreign actor. The EU is often portrayed as a case of *Sui Generis*[7] because the relationship between its Member States and the EU institutions does not fit into the long established framework of International Relations theories. Undoubtedly the EU is one of the successful projects of the 20th century demonstrating the economic and political benefits of cooperation and integration between the Member States, but what about its role in external affairs? As the EU is a unique actor to analyze, consequently its role in foreign politics, particularly in conflicts resolution of Georgia, is very interesting to explore.

Moreover, since Russia-Georgia war of 2008 the EU is the chief mediator between the conflicting parties and as it was already mentioned, the only international actor whose monitoring mission is presented in Georgia's conflict zones. It raises an interest toward the EU, if the Union is able to guarantee peace and play a leading role in the resolution of the conflicts in the region where the interests of the powerful international player as Russia are involved. The Russian factor cannot be ignored while discussing Georgia's conflicts. Despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union that caused to the independence of Georgia and other ex-Soviet Republics, the Russian political elites were not ready to lose control over these countries and wanted to maintain them in the orbit of Moscow's political influence. In the case of Georgia, Russia manipulated by Georgia's ethnic conflicts to enhance its leverage on the newly independent state. Russia deployed military troops in conflict zones and its presence in the region made difficult for other international actors to play an active role in conflicts resolution of Georgia.

The current study analyzes the role of the EU in the resolution of Georgia's conflicts

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[6] the concept 'Normative Power' will be discussed in Chapter1.
[7] *Sui Generis* is a Latin expression and means unique in its characteristics.

since Georgia's independence in 1990s prior the Russia-Georgia War of 2008. The thesis aims to investigate the following: What was the impact of the EU, as an international player on Georgia's conflicts resolution? Did the EU's involvement contributed to the resolution of these conflicts, or in contrary, the EU policies carried out in Georgia before the Russia-Georgia war contributed to the escalation of the conflict?

Theoretical framework

In order to evaluate the role of the EU in Georgia's conflicts resolution, the two relevant models of analyses in international relations - Normative Power Europe (NPE) of Ian Manners and a Neo-realistic critique of NPE of Adrian Hyde-Price will be used. The choice of these particular approaches is based on the assumption that the EU is often described as a normative power in international affairs. It is interesting to examine if the EU acted as a normative power in Georgia. The neorealist critique of NPE of Hyde-Price is selected due to its completely distinguished account of the EU as an international actor.

Key Concepts

The terminology that academic literature of conflict and peace uses is not very fixed and consistent. Different scholars and institutions in the field use different terms to describe same issues and similar concepts. Also in case of conflict resolution, there is no consensus to exactly what conflict resolution entails.

Conflict resolution according Zartman refers to 'removing the causes as well as the manifestations of a conflict between parties and eliminating the sources of incompatibility in their positions'.[8] Wallensteen defines a conflict resolution as 'a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other.'[9]

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8 I.William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen. (eds.) Peacemaking in international conflict: methods and techniques, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997) p.7
9 Peter Wallensteen, Understanding conflict resolution war, peace, and the global system, (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p.8

As the paper is dedicated to the role of the EU in conflict resolution, its definition of the concept is also interesting. Whitman and Wolff state that the EU does not have a clear definition of what conflict resolution is to mean 'in terms of the concrete policies that the Union is to formulate and implement', though Commission and Council officials who are responsible for assisting the conflicting parties, claim that conflict resolution means 'to achieve agreement on a mutually acceptable institutional framework within which they can deal with disputes by political means rather than through recourse to violence.[10]

Delimitations

The research does not aim to investigate who started the Russia-Georgia war of 2008 or who is blame in the escalation of the conflict. It focuses on the role of the EU in conflict resolution of Georgia during 1990-2008, from its independence prior the Russia-Georgia War. A long timeframe enables to have detailed analyses of the conflicts development. Geographically the research is limited to Georgia and its conflict zones.

Sources

To analyze the empirical events, different primary and secondary sources were used during the research process. Data as books, articles, journals, policy papers, statements/speeches of relevant politicians or institutions, reports of organisations with a profile on conflict issues (as International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch), official documents, as Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), European Security Strategy (ESS), Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) etc.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis has a following structure:

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10 Richard G. Whitman and Stefan Wolff, 'The EU as a conflict manager? The case of Georgia and its implications', International Affairs No86, January 2010, p.2

The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical framework relevant to the research theme. The two approaches applied to the empirical case of Georgia's conflicts and the EU's role in the conflict resolution, are Normative Power Europe (NPE) of Ian Manners and a Neo-realistic critique of the NPE of Adrian Hyde-Price.

The Chapter 2 will provide a empirical background of Georgia's conflicts. Through investigation of the roots and main causes of Georgia's conflicts with Ossetians and Abkhazians, this chapter will demonstrate the complexity of these conflicts. Also Russia's role in Georgia's conflicts will be discussed in order to understand a geopolitical environment in which the EU had to act in Georgia.

The chapter 3 will provide EU's political framework for conflict resolution in order to show how the policies developed inside the EU were later applied to Georgia's conflicts resolution. Then the EU's role in Georgia's conflict resolution will be analysed. Chronologically it will be divided in three main parts : From independence to the Rose Revolution, 1990-2003, from the Rose Revolution to 2007, and prior the Russia-Georgia War of 2008.

In the end the conclusion will be presented.

Chapter 1. Theoretical framework

1.1 Normative Power Europe (NPE)

The concept of Normative Power is the part of the liberal-idealist theory. This theory gives an importance to durable peace, cooperation and ethics in the international relations. Main values are peace, justice and human rights. Liberal-idealists consider nation-states as inter-dependent working together through international organizations to resolve disputes rather than go to war. According to liberal-idealism, security is not based on military but on human factors. The main role is given to international institutions with the aim of fostering cooperation between countries.

Ian Manners, the founder of the term 'normative power Europe', defines the EU's international role as representing normative power in world politics[11]. He considers a normative power as a power which is able to act as a changer of norms in the international system.[12] The aim of normative power is to set standards through spreading values and Manners believes that the EU has certain normative values that it is keen to diffuse around the world. He stresses on the historical context where the European Community (EC) and its norms and values have been shaped. Manners claims that despite the widespread view that the establishment of the EC was based more on the economic reasons than on the normative ones, prevention of the future world wars (after the WWII) and security was the principle motive behind the creation of the EC. After centuries of warfare, European states realized that cooperation and integration are the only route to shared security, peace and prosperity.[13]

According Manners, developments of the 1990s in international relations, particularly end of the Cold War also called for rethinking of traditional ideas of state-centric military and civilian power 'in order to consider the EU's normative power in world

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[11] Ian Manners, 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40.2, 2002, p. 238
[12] Manners, p.252
[13] Ibid., p.238

politics'[14]. He sees the EU as a new type of an international actor, clearly different from pre-existing political forms of power and agrees with Rosecrance, who states '…It is perhaps a paradox to note that the continent [Europe] which once ruled the world through the physical impositions of imperialism is now coming to set world standards in normative terms'.[15]

Manners highlights that to be normative means to have consistency between what is done inside of the EU and outside. Thus the EU seeks to advance a normative foreign policy agenda, Manners claims, to promote certain norms and values beyond its borders. These norms include democratization, human rights protection and the global abolition of death penalty. According Manners, in order to be normative it is necessary to fulfill three conditions: to be good internally, to act good, that is to develop a discourse or intentions on actions and to do good, i.e. to realize the discourse. Thus having good intentions is not enough, it is also necessary to act good according to these intentions and have actual results.

Analysing the EU's normative basis, Manners mentions five 'core' norms and four 'minor' norms. The five core norms identified are the centrality of peace; the idea of liberty and Respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. In addition to these founding principles there are four minor norms within the constitution and practices of the EU: the social solidarity; anti-discrimination; sustainable development; and the principle of good governance. Manners claims that its normative basis has been developed over the past 50 years through a series of declarations and treaties, as Treaty establishing the European Communities (TEC), Treaty on European Union (TEU), Treaty of Amsterdam, Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union. [16]

Manners acknowledges that the normative basis of the EU is not enough to announce the EU as a normative power. He has to show ways of diffusion of EU's norms. He describes six ways of spreading the values and norms: *contagion, informational diffusion,*

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[14] Manners, p. 236
[15] Ibid., 238
[16] Manners, pp. 242-243

procedural, transference, overt diffusion and *cultural filter*. [17]Under *contagion* he means that the EU not deliberately acts as a source of attraction and a role model for other players. *Informational diffusion* is a result of strategic considerations and declarations, produced by the EU institutions. *Procedural diffusion* is related to the institutionalized relationships between the EU and the third party, such as membership of international organization or the EU enlargement itself.

The *transference* considers exchange of goods, imposition of trade norms, or technical assistance to third parties by the EU. *Overt diffusion* is represented by physical presence of the EU in the third states, as Commission delegations of Member States or even monitoring missions of the EU deployed in conflict zones. Manners defines *Cultural filter* as a factor shaping norm diffusion 'which affects the impact of international norms and political learning in third states and organizations leading to learning, adaptation or rejection of norms.'[18] As an example to cultural filter, Manners mentions human rights diffusion in Turkey. These are six ways of contributing the EU norms which enables the EU to advance a 'normative' foreign policy agenda.

It should be noted that Manners does not reject the importance of conception of the EU as a civilian or a military power. He underlines that 'in addition to civilian or military conceptions, the EU should be considered a normative power.'[19] In order to clarify between three different concepts of the EU's power in international relations, Manners defines each of them. According to him, civilian power has an ability to use civilian instruments and military power has an ability to use military instruments. Though he claims the EU's normative power must be given priority, as the latter has an 'ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations.'[20]

Manners is against the notion that the EU must use force in order to actualize its normative power. He does not share a Therborn's approach that the normative power

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[17] Ibid., p.244
[18] Manners, p.245
[19] Ibid., p.253
[20] Ibid., p. 239

needs an enthusiasm to use force. According Therborn, 'without the backing of force and a willingness to use it, Europe is unlikely to become a normative power, telling other parts of the world what political, economic and social institutions they should have'.[21] In the contrary, Manners believes that EU's limited military resources and lack of coercive instruments of foreign policy, in fact constitutes the very sources of its strength.Manners claims that the ability of the EU to define what is 'normal' in international politics makes the EU 'the greatest power of all.'[22]

1.2 A Neorealist Critique of Normative Power Europe

Adrian Hyde-Price, the supporter of Neorealist approach in international relations, offers an alternative theoretical analyzes of the EU as an international actor. According Hyde-Price, neorealism is one of the most influential theories in international relations and it should be applied to the research of the EU's foreign policy. This theory questions many liberal and normative claims 'that surround the 'European' project.'[23] Hyde-Price believes that neorealism 'can shed considerable light' and 'open up space for more informed and balanced debate on the EU as a foreign and security policy actor.'[24]

A neo-realist theory is based on traditional realist assumption inspired by Hans Morgenthau that human beings are egoistic by nature and have an innate desire to dominate each other. Neorealists see states as the primary international actors. The states, especially powerful ones 'set the context and establish the rules for other actors, including the EU.'[25] According neorelaism, international systems are anarchic – 'a domain without a sovereign' and thus it is a "self-help system": states must look to their

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[21] Manners, p.241
[22] Manners, p.253
[23] Adrian Hyde-Price, "'Normative' power Europe: a realist critique." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13:2, March 2006, p.220
[24] Hyde-Price, p.219
[25] Hyde-Price, p.220

own security and survival',[26] that means in the case of threat they can rely only on themselves. It creates a security competition and a constant risk of eruption of wars. Therefore, everyone tries to maximize power.

Hyde-Price claims that the EU has failed to overcome the reality of an anarchic self-help international system in which individual, self-interested states actors continue to pursue their own interests. He disagrees with Manners who believes that the international system has changed since the end of the Cold War. In the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, dealing with the post-communist democracies of East Central Europe, states Hyde-Price, 'the EU was used by its most influential member states as an instrument for collectively exercising hegemonic power, shaping its "near abroad" in ways' that served 'long-term strategic and economic interests of its member states.'[27] Thus, even when the EU appears united for a common goal, it is again because of its largest members who seek to exploit the EU as an instrument for promoting their own stability and ensure their own security.

He doubts the EU's liberal-idealist aspirations aiming to uplift humanity by promoting democratization, respect for human rights and political reforms in non-member states. For Hyde-Price, member states cooperation in terms of the EU's normative foreign policy constitutes little more than 'a collective attempt at milieu shaping, driven primarily by the Union's largest powers.'[28] He claims that because Europe's great powers, as France, the United Kingdom and Germany which maintains their sovereign rights to pursue their own foreign and security policy priorities, the EU will never be able to act as an entirely unified body in international affairs.

While security is the most fundamental concern of all states according a neorealist approach, they have 'second-order concerns' as well, for instance an ethical concern such as protection of human rights. Hyde-Price agrees with Mearsheimer, that second-order concerns always rank 'below national security and other fundamental national interests in

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[26] Hyde-Price, 222
[27] Ibid., pp.226-227
[28] Ibid.

importance' and the security concerns of the EU's member states will prevail over other interests when it comes to the EU's foreign policy.[29] He insists that Member States will only allow the EU to act for protecting of ethical concerns as long as these policies do not conflict with their own national interests. 'Commitment to an 'ethical' foreign policy may lead EU member states to intervene in parts of the world where the great powers have no significant strategic interests (such as parts of Africa)'[30], concludes Hyde-Price.

Hyde-Price highlights the existence of strategic interests of EU member states, because it goes against the concept of the EU as a pure normative power. As such, the EU cannot be considered as a normative power.

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 223

Chapter 2: Empirical background of Georgia's conflicts

2.1. The Georgian-Ossetian Conflict

The duration of Ossetians' presence in the Southern Caucasus is disputable. Ossetians claim that their presence in the region is as ancient as the ethnic Georgians; they assert that at least five millennia ago their ancestors, Alanian tribes, migrated from Persia to the Caucasus.[31] While Ossetian people view the Caucasus as 'their historical homeland', Georgians argue that the mass movement of Ossetians to Georgia started in seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.[32] The first tensions between the two ethnic groups arose in 1918-1921 when Georgia gained independence from Tsarist Russia following the Russian revolution in 1917 and subsequently formed the Democratic Republic of Georgia led by the Georgian social democrats. In 1917-1921 The Ossetians collaborated with the Russian Bolsheviks in their struggle against an independent Georgia.

A 'Treaty of friendship' signed between Soviet Russia and the Social Democratic Georgia in 1920, recognized each other's sovereignty and, according to that treaty, South Ossetia was considered as an integral part of Georgia. However when, in 1921, the Bolshevik Red Army invaded Georgia and forcibly incorporated it into the USSR, North Ossetia was formed in Russia and the South Ossetian Autonomous Region was created in Georgia. Therefore, in Soviet times Georgians considered South Ossetia as an artificial entity. Although ethnic Ossetians had a very small population in absolute numbers, 100,000 within Georgia's population of 5 million (by the time of the 1989 census), they were in a demographic majority within the autonomous region of South Ossetia comprising 70 percent of its population. [33] Therefore, during Soviet times ethnic Ossetians controlled the everyday affairs of their region and held the key positions.

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[31] International Crisis Group 'Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia', Europe Report N°159, 26 November 2004. p.2

32 International Crisis Group 'Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia', November 2004. p.2

[33] Swante E. Cornell 'Autonomy and Conflict Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia.' (Uppsala University Department of Peace & Conflict Research, Report No. 61). Uppsala 2002. p. 189

In the beginning of 1990s Georgian and Ossetian interests conflicted with each other. For Georgia, in order to become a proper sovereign state, it became crucial to guarantee its territorial integrity; at the same time, South Ossetia was striving for its right for self-determination and aspiring to secede from Georgia. The tensions between Georgians and Ossetians heightened in the summer of 1990 when South Ossetia's officials sent a petition to Moscow requesting the unification of South Ossetia with North Ossetia. In September 1990 South Ossetia boycotted the elections held in Tbilisi. This decision was influenced by *Ademon Nykhas*, South Ossetian nationalist popular front created in 1988, which had openly been prohibited from running in the elections to the Georgian Parliament. In December, South Ossetia held its own elections and declared its independence from Georgia. The Georgian parliament cancelled the results of the Ossetian elections and abolished South Ossetian autonomy. On 5 January 1991Georgian troops entered Tskhinvali and the military confrontation started in South Ossetia, leading to a year of disorder and chaos in the region. External support evidently contributed to the escalation of the South Ossetian conflict:

> In 1992 Ruslan Khasbulatov [Russian parliamentary chairman], referring to South Ossetia, at one occasion stated that 'Russia is prepared to take urgent measures to defend its citizens [Ossetia's] from criminal attempts on their lives. Later, he claimed that Russia might find itself forced to annex South Ossetia.'[34]

The war's consequences were destructive.[35] In addition to the extensive damage caused to properties and infrastructure, approximately 1,000 people died and tens of thousands of ethnic Georgians and Ossetians had to leave their homes.[36]

In June 1992 Russia brokered the `Sochi Peace Agreement`[37] in which the then Russian

[34] Swante E. Cornell 'Autonomy and Conflict Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia.' Uppsala 2002. p.194
[35] International Crisis Group 'Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia', p.4
[36] Ibid.
[37] The text of the Sochi Agreement is available at:http://smr.gov.ge/uploads/file/Dagomis%20Accord.pdf in

and Georgian Presidents, Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze, alongside representatives from North and South Ossetia, signed a cease-fire to the South Ossetian conflict and agreed to the deployment of joint Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peace-keeping forces under Russian command, each party contributing 500 troops to the conflict zone.[38] It also established the Joint Control Commission (JCC), which was to supervise the implementation of the Sochi Agreement. The JCC's work focused on three main issues: military and security matters, economic rehabilitation of the conflict zone and establishing the conditions for the return of refugees and IDPs.[39] The JCC brought together Georgian, Russian and both North and South Ossetian delegations. The Sochi agreement was advantageous for Russia. Tbilisi perceived the nature of the JCC commission as being in a format of 'three against one' and has consistently tried, though failed, to change it.

In these arrangements, it was obvious that Russia would not be a truly neutral participant and, given the disproportionate format, it would be very hard for Georgia to defend its own interests in the JCC[40]. While the JCC was financially supported by the EU, the EU Commission was only present in the working group on economic issues. On November 1992 the Organisation for Security and Defence in Europe (OSCE)[41] established a mission in Georgia and agreed to monitor the ceasefire, thereby formalizing its contribution to the peace process in Georgia. In 1994, the OSCE mandate in South Ossetia was expanded to facilitate co-operation with and among the parties and, with their consent, monitor the Joint Peacekeeping Forces. Despite the fact that the conflicting parties made various commitments, particularly in issues such as economic rehabilitation and the return of refugees, negotiations on a full-scale political settlement made little progress. The negotiation process did not have a systematic character. For example, there

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Russian; http://www.rrc.ge/law/xels_1992_06_24_e.htm?lawid=368&lng_3=en in English.
[38] Tornike Gordadze, 'Georgian-Russian Relations in the 1990-s', in *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War In Georgia,* ed. Swante E. Cornell and S.Frederick Starr (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), p.31
[39] International Crisis Group `Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia`, *Europe Report N°159*, 26 November 2004. p.4
[40] Julie A. George, *The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave macmillan, 2009), pp.178-179
[41] OSCE was created under the UN charter in 1972 and its main role is maintenance of international peace and security. Its activities covers different security issues, such as conflict prevention, fostering economic development etc

were intervals of almost two years between JCC sessions from August 1992 to December 1994, September 1997 to March 1999 and July 1999 to April 2001. Though it should be noted that during the 1992 to 2003 period the conflict was frozen and ties between Georgians and Ossetians were normalized with only slight signs of ethnic hostility remaining. [42]

The situation changed dramatically in January 2004 when Mikheil Saakashvili was elected as President of Georgia due to the so-called 'Rose Revolution'. The new leadership of the country pledged to implement democratic and economic reforms, began building up Georgia's armed forces and pushed for the reintegration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[43] Regarding South Ossetia, the Georgian government stated that the conflict zone was fed by criminal activities, noting that: 'all parties were profiting from unregulated trade and smuggling.'[44] In May 2004, Georgian pressure on South Ossetia was increased through tightening border controls and launching an extensive anti-smuggling campaign in the region. As part of the operation, Georgia's interior ministry forces were sent to Georgian villages in South Ossetia, blockades on the roads were imposed and the region's biggest Ergneti market was closed.[45] Though Ergneti was an illegal market for smuggled goods, and thereby was weakening Georgia's economy, it was a place for interaction between Ossetians and Georgians.

Cutting off smuggling routes made Ossetian population even more dependent on Russian support as they were left without a major source of income. Moreover, 'the anti-smuggling operation had a direct effect on the security environment, as the Georgian checkpoints and increasing numbers of armed men in the zone shattered the peaceful environment and co-existence'[46]. The Georgian Government's 'peace offensive' only aggravated the separatist authorities' aspirations for independence, increasing their

[42] Dov Lynch, *Why Georgia matters*, in: Chaillot Paper 86, EU ISS, Paris, February 2006, p. 41

[43] Michael Merlingen, Rasa Ostrauskait, 'EU peacebuilding in Georgia: limits and achievements'ʺ working paper N°35 –December 2009. p.7

[44] International Crisis Group, Georgia's South Ossetia Conflict: Make Haste Slowly, *Europe Report Nº1837* June 2007. p.3

[45] Dov Lynch, *Why Georgia matters*, in: Chaillot Paper 86, p. 42.

[46] International Crisis Group, 'Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia', *Europe Report N°159*, 26 November 2004. p.13

perception of Georgia as a threat. Since 2004, tensions between Georgia and South Ossetia began to rise, escalating into the Russia-Georgia War of August 2008.

2.2. The Georgian-Abkhazian conflict

As in the case of Georgians and Ossetians, Georgians and Abkhazians 'use opposing principles of international law to legitimise their claims, either sanctity of international borders and state sovereignty or self determination, respectively'.[47] The conflict between Georgians and Abkhaz, as well as the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, is not only a phenomenon of the 1990s. This conflict has its roots in the period of the independence of Georgia in 1918-1921. Abkhazian sources argue 'they are indigenous to Abkhazia and have been the victims of mass displacement and colonialisation for 150 years ….. They never chose to be part of Georgia but were forced into the country when Soviet-era borders were defined.'[48] In the opinion of Abkhaz elites, centuries of independent rule justifies their aspirations towards statehood. Georgian historians maintain that 'Abkhazia has been part of Georgia since the first century before the common era.'[49] According to Georgian sources, in the years of independence (1918-1921) the Georgian government, despite significant pressure from the Bolsheviks, was trying to build a democratic state. Within this state, Abkhazia was already granted autonomy, but 'ungrateful elements among the Abkhaz sided with the Bolsheviks, betraying the good faith of the Georgians, and let themselves be manipulated by the Russians.'[50] The Abkhazian version presents a very different story: asserting that, as Abkhazia was never legally part of Georgia such accusations as made by the Georgians had no basis.[51]

The Bolshevik Red Army's invasion of 1921 ended Georgia's freedom for almost 70

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[47] International Crisis Group, Abkhazia Today, *Europe Report N°176*, 15 September 2006. p.2
[48] International Crisis Group. Abkhazia Today, p.3
[49] Ibid., p.4
[50] Swante E. Cornell 'Autonomy and Conflict Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia.' (Uppsala University Department of Peace & Conflict Research, Report No. 61). Uppsala 2002. p.175
[51] Swante E. Cornell, p.175

years. Abkhazia was proclaimed an independent Republic on the Soviet Union, though it retained a Special Union Treaty with Georgia.[52] In 1931 Stalin downgraded Abkhazia's status to that of an autonomous entity within the Soviet Union's Republic of Georgia. Moreover, 'Georgianisation' of ethnic Abkhazs took place in the Stalin era by the imposition of Georgian language schools in Abkhazia and of a Georgian-based alphabet for the Abkhaz language.[53] The Abkhazians feared that the Georgians would eliminate their political autonomy and destroy the ethnic identity, ultimately leading to their physical annihilation. Cornell suggests that Abkhazians' fears of physical or cultural destruction were evoked by the deportations of the Abkhaz (to the Ottoman Empire) by Czarist Russia in 1864 and 1877, which contributed to their weak demography.[54] According census of 1989 the Abkhaz comprised only 1.8 percent of Georgia's population – 105,000 out of 5 million people. This provides an explanation for repeated Abkhaz attempts to asking Moscow to change the status of Abkhazia. In 1978, Moscow tried to lower Abkhazian demands for independence by allocating 67 percent of the Communist party and government positions to Abkhazians, despite the fact that only 17 percent of Abkhazia's population was ethnic Abkhaz, 46 percent comprising ethnic Georgians and the rest coming from a variety of ethnic groups.[55]

In contrast to South Ossetians, who were not seeking an independent state, but instead sought reunification with their ethnic kin in North Ossetia within the Russian Republic, Abkhazians were demanding full independence. In April 1991 when Georgia declared its independence, Abkhazia refused to be incorporated into the country. In July 1992, the Abkhazian parliament, though lacking its ethnic Georgian component, voted to return to the 1925 constitution under which Abkhazia was separate from Georgia. Georgia's parliament nullified the Abkhaz decree; the legality of which was, in fact, questionable as the necessary quorum of two thirds was not present due to the non-attendance of the

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[52] On 16 December 1921 Sukhumi signed a Special Union Treaty with Georgia delegating some of its powers to Georgia.

[53] Swante E. Cornell, p.173

[54] When Russian Empire annexed Abkhaz territory in 1864, Abkhaz rebelled. To suppress Abkhaz resistance, Russia deported tens of thousands Muslim Abkhaz to Ottoman territories.

[55] Glenn E. Curtis (ed.), *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: country studies*, (Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1994), found at : http://countrystudies.us/georgia/ (accessed 11 April 2011)

ethnic Georgian parliamentarians.[56] In response, in August 1992, Georgia sent troops to Abkhazia in order to enforce the status quo – the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity. Abkhazian's believed that by 'sending troops against Sukhumi, Georgia lost any moral right to custody over Abkhazia.'[57] When Georgian troops entered Sokhumi, the capital of Abkhazia, the Abkhaz leadership fled to Gudauta in the North of Abkhazia, where a Russian military base was located. Georgia took control of most of Abkhazia, but its victory was ephemeral. At the beginning of the conflict Chechen and other North Caucasian volunteers joined the Abkhaz to fight against Georgian forces.[58] Soon after, Russia's military assistance to the Abkhaz became evident. This fact is acknowledged by Russian experts: 'Moscow was clearly held responsible for what was accurately described as a purposeful and purposefully one-sided military intervention on behalf of Abkhazian separation.'[59]

On September 3 1992, Georgian and Abkhazian leaders gathered in Moscow together with Russian and North Caucasus representatives to draw up a cease-fire agreement. The agreement was signed by Boris Yeltsin, then the President of Russian Federation and by Eduard Shevardnadze, the President of the Republic of Georgia. The agreement was guarantying Georgia's territorial integrity and its inviolability. Moreover, by this resolution, Abkhazia again confirmed its presence within Georgia. In addition, the agreement obliged to form a commission whose mandate would be to carry out 'disarmament and disbanding of illegal armed formations and groups and their removal from Abkhazia'.[60] The agreement was never implemented.

From the summer of 1992 to the summer of 1993, Georgian military forces controlled much of Abkhazia, including Sokhumi. The clashes stopped for a while in July 1993 after

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[56] Swante E. Cornell 'Autonomy and Conflict Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus – Cases in Georgia,' p.173

[57] International Crisis Group, Abkhazia Today, *Europe Report N°176*, 15 September 2006. p.5

[58] Abkhazian militants together with combatants from the North Caucasus Republics (Chechens, Circassians etc.) were members of the militarized political organization 'Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus' formed in 1990. Therefore when the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict erupted, many volunteers from this organization joined Abkhazian forces.

[59] Swante E. Cornell, p.175

[60] 'Svobodnaia Gruzia', № 112, 5 September 1992. found at:http://smr.gov.ge/ru/abkhazia/documents/bilateral_documents/moscow3 (accessed 11 April 2011)

Russia arranged a ceasefire agreement. Under this agreement, the UN established the mandate of military observers - United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to monitor the termination of hostilities. [61] However, on 16 September 1993 Abkhaz forces broke the ceasefire and opened an all-front surprise offensive from Gudauta and after eleven days of intense fighting, Abkhaz troops controlled almost all Abkhazia. Russia's military support made possible for the Abkhazs to defeat Georgian forces. As the report of Human Rights Watch states, 'Russian planes bombed civilian targets in Georgian-controlled territory, Russian military vessels, manned by supporters of the Abkhaz side, were made available to shell Georgian-held Sokhumi.'[62]

In May 1994 the Georgian government and the Abkhaz secessionist leaders signed a bilateral agreement in Moscow for a ceasefire and a separation of forces, which formally put an end to the bloodshed. The agreement included the establishment of a peacekeeping force under the guidance of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in addition to UNOMIG. They were responsible for monitoring the cease-fire, contributing towards conditions conductive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons, and carrying out these activities in full respect to the territorial integrity of Georgia.[63] As CIS peacekeeping force mainly consisted of Russian troops already operating in the region, Georgians viewed them as contributing to Abkhazia's independence and an obstacle to conflict resolution.[64]

In 1994 the UN initiated what came to be known as the 'Geneva process on Georgia' – meetings held in Switzerland in which Georgian and Abkhazian parties negotiated with Russia acting as the facilitator. The meetings were chaired by the UN Secretary-General's

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[61] Between July 1993 and March 2008 the UN Security Council adopted 38 resolutions on Georgia, all of them supporting the territorial integrity of Georgia and a return of internally displaced persons/refugees to their homes with full restitution of their property rights. None of these led to any clear result.

[62] 'Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict', *Human Rights Watch*, Vol.7, No.7, (March 1995). Found at: http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1995/Georgia2.htm (accessed 5 May 2011)

[63] 'Svobodnaia Gruzia', № 79, 17 May 1994, found at http://smr.gov.ge/en/abkhazia/documents/bilateral_documents/moscow5 (accessed 11 April 2011)

[64] Emma J. Stewart, 'The EU as an actor in Conflict Resolution: Out of its Depth?' *Plymouth International Studies Centre Working Paper*, p.6, found at: http://www.politics.plymouth.ac.uk/PIP/ConflictResolution.pdf

representative. However, the Abkhaz party soon refused to attend meetings unless the negotiations were transferred to Moscow and demanded a strictly bilateral format of negotiations (outside of the UN) between Georgia and the Abkhaz to be conducted under Russia's auspices[65]. Despite Georgian protests, the demand of the Abkhazians was considered. Though the Geneva talks were renewed in 1997, no significant results were achieved during negotiations. In December 1996 a joint UN and OSCE Office for Human Rights was set up in Sokhumi to promote human rights in Abkhazia. However, the activities of the Human Rights Office have not brought about any visible results. In 1999 a referendum was held in Abkhazia and most of the citizens had voted for independence, though the results were recognized neither by Georgia, nor by the international community, as the core population of Abkhazia - ethnic Georgians - were expelled or exterminated during the war.

It seems likely that had Russia remained neutral, the Georgian armed forces would have been able to restore the *status quo* in Abkhazia. Russian intervention prolonged and complicated this regional dispute. Russian intervention dictated the end of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict: Georgia lost the war and Abkhaz troops established control over the entire former autonomous territory. As the report of Human Rights Watch observes:

> Russia's extensive involvement in the Abkhazia conflict brought with it certain responsibilities for the human rights and humanitarian law violations that occurred there. Russia was in various ways responsible for escalating human rights abuse: members of its armed forces made available weapons to groups or individuals known or likely to use them to commit atrocities, and members of its forces indeed carried out a large number of attacks against Georgian targets, which resulted in civilian casualties. [66]

The war in Abkhazia left some 8,000 dead and 18,000 wounded[67] As a result of the

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[65] Vladimir Socor, 'Commentary : From Geneva To Sochi To Dead End in Abkhazia ', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 1, Issue 81, found at:
http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=26830 (accessed 30 March 2011)

[66] Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict', *Human Rights Watch,* vol.7, no.7, March 1995. http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1995/Georgia2.htm (accessed 1 May 2011)

[67] International Crisis Group, Abkhazia Today, *Europe Report N°176*, 15 September 2006, p.1

conflict, between 20,000 and 40,000 houses owned by Georgians were destroyed.[68] Up to 250,000 Georgians were expelled in, what the international community characterized as, 'ethnic cleansing'.[69] The Budapest (1994), Lisbon (1996) and Istanbul (1999) summits of the OSCE recognized ethnic cleansing and other serious violations of international humanitarian law in Abkhazia.[70] On May 15, 2008 in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution, the international community recognized the forced displacement of Georgians from Abkhazia as ethnic cleansing and called upon 'all Member States to deter persons under their jurisdiction from obtaining property within the territory of Abkhazia, Georgia in violation of the rights of returnees.'[71]

2.2. Russia's Role in Georgia's Conflicts

Since the 1990s, Russia has been actively involved in both of Georgia's conflicts and its intervention played a key role in both the warfare and the negotiation process between the belligerent parties. As was already described, Russia's policies towards the conflicts were, for the most part, supportive of the secessionist entities politically, economically and militarily. Encouraged by Russian support, the Abkhazian and Ossetian separatist regimes took hard line positions towards Georgia (which itself sometimes carried out aggressive policies regarding the breakaway regions), thereby further escalating tensions. With Russian help, the South Ossetians and Abkhazians were able to defeat Georgia's armed forces.

Some analysts argued that 'a Georgian defeat was in Russia's strategic interest because it

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[68] Magdalena Frichova Grono, 'Georgia's Conflicts: What Role for the EU as Mediator', Initiative for Peacebuilding – International Alert, (March 2010), Found at: http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Georgia_March2010.pdf (Accessed 29 April 2011)

[69] David L. Phillips. Restoring Georgia's Sovereignty in Abkhazia, the Atlantic Council of the united states *Policy Paper* (July 2008), p.3

[70] United Nations – General Assembly, 'Resolution 62/249 – Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia', (29 May 2008), Found at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/484d51ec2.pdf, (Accessed 1 April 2011)

[71] Ibid.

would make Georgia more willing to grant Russia military and political concessions.'[72] Indeed, conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia were the weak spot through which Russia continued its domination of Georgia and allowed the Kremlin to keep Georgia in its orbit. For instance, the war with Abkhazia forced Georgia both to accede into the CIS and to sign a military treaty with Moscow which allowed the Kremlin to maintain a strong military presence across the entire territory of Georgia. The treaty made it legitimate for Russia 'to have three military bases in Georgia, and [led to an agreement] ... to an open-ended Russian military presence in the form of peacekeepers in the break-away territory of Abkhazia.'[73]

Although in both of Georgia's conflicts Russia brokered a cease-fire, they did little to encourage conflict resolution. Furthermore, the Russian peacekeeping army in the conflict zones 'regularly failed to display neutrality and ... in several cases sided with the breakaway regions in the event of increasing tension.'[74] Whilst Russia was not the only peacekeeping force present in the conflict zones, a small UN mission in Abkhazia and an OSCE in South Ossetia were present, these other players were unable to adequately offset Russia's regional dominance. The function of the UN and OSCE missions was to monitor the CIS peacekeepers (consisting of almost Russian troops) and their presence added further legitimacy to Russia's domination in the region.

Moscow sees it as its duty to handle conflicts occurring in its own 'backyard' – in the Former Soviet Republics[75], including Georgia – and many Russian foreign policy statements indeed show that Russia does not intend to lose control over Georgia's internal and external politics. Russia's active involvement in Georgia's conflicts is not motivated by military considerations alone. Moscow has its own security, economic and

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[72] 'Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict', *Human Rights Watch*, Vol.7, No.7, (March 1995). Found at:http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1995/Georgia2.htm (accessed 5 May 11)
[73] 'Georgia/Abkhazia:Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict', *Human Rights Watch*.
[74] Niklas Nilsson, 'EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?' *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 2, 2008. p.9
[75] Russia played an active role in the Armenian- Azerbaijani conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh and in the conflict on Transnistria in Moldova.

ambitious geo-strategic interests in the Caucasus. First of all, control of the South Caucasus would permit Russia 'to keep' eye on the North Caucasus, a historically problematic and unstable region. Secondly, Russia uses energy as an instrument of foreign policy to help it achieve geopolitical goals. As Georgia is a transit country for energy resources it is in Russia's interest to maintain a margin of control over Georgia and thus benefit from leverage presented by unresolved regional conflict. Upholding the *status quo* in Georgia's conflicts, therefore, was in many regards more preferable for Russia than pursuing efforts for their peaceful resolution.[76] For Russia the 'status quo game' meant 'moving away from a solution while fuelling tensions, which could escalate at any moment'. [77]

The discourse in Russia-Georgia relations over the last decade provides insight into the game Russia is playing and highlights the value of Georgian conflicts as a 'trump card'. In 2000 in violation of both all existing norms of International Law, the Russian Federation started to issue Russian passports to the inhabitants of South Ossetia and later, in 2002, to the inhabitants of Abkhazia. In both breakaway regions Russia installed, on the territory of another sovereign state, puppet governments, and offered the local population financial assistance, 'even taking the burden of paying their pensions.'[78] At the same time, the Russian Federation imposed visa restrictions on the citizens of Georgia. Tbilisi was powerless to avoid the violation of its sovereignty by Russia as it was left with no external support from the west. Although Russia contributed to the victory of separatists in both wars and antagonist feelings existed among Russia's and Georgia's governments, there was no great tension in relations between the two states.

The escalation of the Russia-Georgia conflict began after Rose Revolution in 2003, when the newly elected government of Georgia challenged a status quo established during 1990s. The rhetoric of the new President, Saakashvili, contrasted from Shevardnadze's

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[76] Niklas Nilsson, 'EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?' *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 2, 2008. p.7

[77] Nicu Popescu,' "Outsourcing" de facto Statehood Russia and the Secessionist Entities in Georgia and Moldova', *policy brief No. 109*, July 2006, p.7

[78] Mark Leonard and Charles Grant, 'Georgia and the EU: Can Europe's neighbourhood policy deliver?', *policy brief.* 14 March 2005, p.5, found at http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/policybrief_georgia_sept05.pdf (accessed 23 April 2011)

moderate approach to the issue of conflict resolution. He announced a new political program consisting of commitments to the reintegration of lost territories within Georgia, democratization of the country, seeking membership to NATO and the European Union.

The western path taken by the Georgian government was based on several ambitious goals: integration in the West was desirable by most of the Georgian population as they perceived themselves as a nation with European identity and culture; Tbilisi also expected to resolve conflicts with the support of European institutions; and, most importantly, they hoped to reduce Russia's domination in the region as they believed that the EU and other western institutions would balance Georgia's powerful neighbour. The Western orientation of the new Georgian government aggravated the country's relations with Russia. It became clear to Moscow that it was losing control of a very important territory for Russia.

The radical changes that occurred in Russia since the second term of Putin's presidency also played a role in worsening relations between two countries. The shift in internal power structures in Russia, often defined as a 'Power Vertical' (centralization of power), steady economic growth thanks to revenues gained from Russian natural resources, as oil and gas, also disappointment among the Russian policy makers that the US and big European countries were ignoring the importance of ex-empire, caused to the lessening of democratization process in the country. Seeking for regaining the superpower status on the world politics, Russian foreign policy became more antagonistic and hostile with more focus on the spheres of influence (mainly on the post-soviet space) and demanding more respect from West. Thus Georgia's aspirations to join the western world were in complete contradiction with Moscow's plans. The Georgian commitment to democracy was seen by Russia as increasingly anti-Russian sentiment. This fear for anti-Russian sentiments and fear of losing its former sphere of influence, namely Georgia's territory to the other powers, made Moscow even more supportive of secessionist governments of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Georgia started to seek the 'internationalisaton' of the resolution of its conflicts, as it was

frustrated by ineffective negotiation process. As Gegeshidze notes, the existing formats of peacekeeping have demonstrated their ineffectiveness; they are 'even counterproductive, both in Abkhazia and South Ossetia' and thus 'the Georgian side requested a change in the current formats for negotiations and peacekeeping'.[79] The peacekeeping strategies for Abkhazia and South Ossetia were seriously flawed due to the fact that Russia was both a part of the conflicts whilst, at the same time, masquerading as a 'peacemaker' in the region under the CIS umbrella. Tbilisi turned to its Western partners in the hope that they would balance Russia's leverage in the region. In particular, efforts were made to widen the mandate of the OSCE mission to increase its role and presence inside the conflict zones and beyond of South Ossetia.[80] As the Kremlin was against external involvement in Georgia's conflict resolution, Russia used its power of veto at an OSCE meeting in December 2004 to end the mandate for the Border Monitoring Operation.[81]

An another attempt to engage the West, particularly the EU in Georgia's conflict resolution failed, when Saakashvili presented a new Peace Plan on South Ossetia to the Council of Europe in January 2005. This plan assured, amongst other things, an autonomous government and parliament to South Ossetians; funds to rehabilitate and develop the region; and the creation of a joint police force. The Georgian government asked the EU 'to become guarantor of the peace with supporting roles for the US and Russia ... the South Ossetian government has rejected it.'[82] Considering the fact that in South Ossetia political decisions were made after consultations held with the Russian government, the Ossetian refusal is somewhat understandable.

Russia wanted to regain the prestige it lost due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the opinion of the Russian government, in the 1990s the West sought to exploit Russia's economic and political weaknesses and enable the formerly Soviet Central and Eastern European countries to increase their distance from Russia and eventually join NATO and

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[79] Archil Gegeshidze, 'A Georgian Perspective: Towards "Unfreezing" the Georgian Conflicts', *Russian Analytical Digest* April 2008. p.12
[80] Dov Lynch, 'Why Georgia matters', Chaillot Paper 86, (EU ISS, Paris, February 2006), p. 43
[81] Mark Leonard and Charles Grant, 'Georgia and the EU: Can Europe's neighbourhood policy deliver?' p. 4
[82] Mark Leonard and Charles Grant, p.6

the EU. By 2004, however, Moscow was once again in a powerful position, strengthened by high profits from natural resources. Russia was determined to show to the West its uncontested leadership position in the resolution of Georgia's conflicts. Georgia's policy of isolating the breakaway regions from the rest of the world, made it easier for Russia to play this chief role. South Ossetia and Abkhazia were left with few, if any, options other than to build a closer relationship with Russia.

Moscow's attitude towards resolving the frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia was driven by Georgia's decisions. Georgia faced a de facto ultimatum: it could either remain as 'a grey zone' of Russia and abandon its western aspirations, or remain in a position of questionable sovereignty as a state with undefined borders. Ignoring Russia's interests in the region, Georgia continued its way to the West trying to distance itself from the Soviet past and from its big neighbour at the same time.

The Georgian government carried out reforms in different fields to meet western standards, the progress and increasing Western orientation was evident and Georgia's progress in its democratization process was welcomed by the international community.[83] Georgia became a candidate for NATO membership, attracted foreign investments, tourists, became a part of the *Nabucco* project – an EU initiated, gas pipeline providing Europe with an alternative route for energy resources from the Caspian Sea. Asmus rightly suggests that Moscow's goal was to control the energy sources and supply routes to Europe, and as Tbilisi was playing a game contradictory to Russia's interests by creating an alternative way to bring Caspian energy to the West, bypassing Russia, the conflict between two states became inevitable.[84]

During 2004-2007 Russia made all possible efforts to avoid Georgia's integration in the West, again by playing with the card of unresolved conflicts. Since 2004 Ossetia and Abkhazian leaders, instructed by Moscow, have rejected peace initiatives proposed by Georgian government many times. Moscow supported the separatist regimes of Abkhazia

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[83] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p .9
[84] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World*, p .9

and South Ossetia financially and militarily, and continued to distribute Russian passports to inhabitants of these regions, thereby granting Russian citizenship. Since citizenship allowed the residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to receive pensions, jobs and travel rights, people were therefore motivated to apply for Russian citizenship. Moscow subsequently would use the policy of granting Russian citizenship to invade Georgia in August, 2008, claiming that Russia was protecting its 'citizens' in South Ossetia.

Since 2005 Moscow started to send Russian military and civilian officials to govern the breakaway regions. At the time of the August War in 2008 the Prime Minister and Defence minister of South Ossetia were persons seconded from Russia. In 2006 Moscow closed land and air links with Georgia and imposed a trade embargo on Georgian exports. In the same year Russia restricted a migration policy for Georgian citizens living in Russia. As a result, many Georgians living there had to leave their jobs and return to Georgia. In July 2006, the *Duma* passed a resolution authorising Russian troops to serve anywhere in defence of Russian citizens – presumably including those who reside permanently Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Those events triggered Georgia-Russia uneasy relations; questioned the present status-quo regarding Georgia-Abkhazia and Georgia-South Ossetia conflicts and made evident that 'the prospects for a future resumption of violence in the conflicts cannot be ruled out'.[85]

Georgia has paid a heavy price for freedom. Since pursuing its independence, it has turned into a scene of bloody conflicts. The conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia had a severe impact on the building of Georgia's statehood. The struggle of the breakaway regions against Georgia was heavily supported by Russia. Moscow held common interests with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian political powers: both saw the independence of Georgia as being a direct existential threat to their interests. The Abkhazians and Ossetians feared that being a part of independent Georgia would lead to the elimination of their political and cultural rights.

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[85] Niklas Nilsson, 'EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?' *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 2, 2008. p.7

While Russia was supporting separatist regimes in order to decrease Georgia's sovereignty and deteriorate the newly independent state. While being a main guarantor of peace in both conflicts, Moscow extended the process of conflict resolution as long as possible in order to maintain influence over Georgia. It hoped that Georgia, exhausted from unresolved conflicts, would be forced to permit Russia to have military bases in its strategically important region. Russia sought to uphold control over energy transit routes via Georgia, to avoid an increased Western presence in Georgia's affairs and, at the same time, hoped to prevent Georgia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

Chapter 3. The EU's role in the resolution of Georgia's conflicts

3.1 The EU's Political framework of conflict resolution

> The EU in fact represents the (unfinished) product of one of the greatest and most successful conflict resolution endeavours worldwide. It is the outcome of an idea: securing peace in post-World War II Western Europe through integration and the ensuing creation of dependable expectations that inter-state disputes would be settled in peaceful ways.[86]

The end of the Cold War had a significant influence on the development of the EU, as an actor in international affairs. The appearance of a new post-communist world order and the growing international terrorism pushed EU countries to multiply their efforts to speak as one on foreign affairs in order to influence the process of decision making and further developments. The crises in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated that military force alone would result in neither lasting peace nor long-term stability. The unsuccessful mediation efforts of the EU in the War on Balkans made clear that the EU needed an official intervention capacity. In response to its failure and inability to contribute to conflict resolution in the former Yugoslavia, the EU developed new policies enabling the EU act as a security actor. The main goal of the new foreign policy instruments -Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the European Security Strategy (ESS) and the European Security Strategy (ESS) was to pave the way for a common and effective EU presence in foreign affairs.

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

The CFSP was established in 1993 and its objectives and implementation are determined by the Treaty on European Union signed at Maastricht in 1992. The treaty created a single institutional framework known as 'the European Union', which includes three pillars - European Communities, as a first, Common Foreign and Security Policy as the second and Justice and Home Affairs – as the third pillar. Then, the EU specified for the first time its foreign policy aims that became basic principles of CFSP: development of

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[86] Nathalie Tocci, '*The EU and conflict resolution Promoting peace in the backyard,*' (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p.7

democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, safeguard of the common values and fundamental interests, preservation of peace, strengthening the Union's, its Member States' and international security and promotion of international cooperation.[87]

The fundamental innovations introduced under the CFSP were that CFSP covered all areas of foreign and security policy, including framing of a common defence policy. The Member States were asked to inform and consult one another on foreign and security policy issues and in addition they had to ensure their national policies would conform to the common positions within the EU institutions. That meant, Member States could not decline from a common position. The principles and common guidelines developed by states for the CFSP, provide the basis for the Council to adopt decisions on relevant issues. The basis for CFSP remains 'soft' power, 'the use of diplomacy - backed where necessary by trade, aid and peacekeepers - to resolve conflicts and bring about international understanding.'[88]

Under CFSP the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM), an effective economic instrument was adopted in 2001. Its establishment aimed rapid contribution of funds and intended to support conflict prevention actions. The RRM was first used in Macedonia in 2001.[89]

EU Special Representative (EUSR)

In the beginning, the post of EUSR was introduced to the areas of concern of the EU. This action intended to promote EU policy implementation on the ground. The EUSR's presence in a particular region is a sign of the Union's commitment, and also support of conflict resolution becomes easier for Brussels based on information of the EUSR.

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[87] 'Exploring EU Foreign Policy', Institute for International and European Policy, found at
http://soc.kuleuven.be/iieb/eufp/content/common-foreign-security-policy (accessed 15 April 2011)
[88] 'Foreign and Security policy', Europa Gateway to the European Union, found at
http://europa.eu/pol/cfsp/index_en.htm (accessed 13 April 2011)
[89] Ibid.

Balkans, the Middle East, the Great Lakes region of Africa, Afghanistan and the South Caucasus were regions where EUSR-s very good initiative in order to stabilize the region.

The European Security Strategy (ESS)

The European security strategy was drawn up under the authority of the EU's High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana, and adopted by the Brussels European Council in December 2003. Following the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the divisions created by the war in Iraq in the spring of 2003, the ESS made it possible for Union Member States to first share a common vision of Union security. The ESS describes in detail the objectives assigned to the CFSP area. It identifies that one of the main foreign policy goals is a building security in the EU's neighbourhood. It also aims promoting an international order based on effective multilateralism. The ESS declares that 'European Countries are committed to dealing peacefully with disputes and to co-operating through common institutions'[90]. Moreover, the EU considers itself as a global player which 'has a political and moral responsibility to act to avoid the human suffering and the destruction of resources caused by violent conflicts …[and] should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world.' [91]

The ESS aims defining of more active, more capable and more coherent policies to pursue the European Union's strategic objectives; developing the diplomatic, civil and military capacities of the Union and its Member States, building security in the neighbourhood of the EU, in the Balkans, the Southern Caucasus, the Middle East, and around the Mediterranean Basin.[92] The global goal of the ESS is to promote an international order based on effective multilateralism, international institutions and regional organizations.[93] The ESS is implemented through all the actions conducted in the CFSP/ESDP framework.

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[90] A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy, 12 December 2003, found at http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.ASP?id=266&lang=EN&mode=g (accessed 15 April 2011)
[91] A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

The decision to implement an independent European security and defence policy was made in 1999. The ESDP is the Union's first strategy aiming to identify and take action about EU security concerns. In terms of policies and institutions, the ESDP is embedded within the Common Foreign and Security Policy and it provides credible effective capabilities for the latter. The ESDP can also be a 'purely military tool enabling the European Union to deploy its armed forces in peace-keeping missions or, where necessary, in peace enforcement missions.'[94]

In order to respond quickly, the EU has created battle-groups of about 1 500 forces each, among them two groups are on standby at any given time. Since 2003, the EU has carried out more than 20 operations. The EU's first ESDP operations were conducted in Macedonia and Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003. The EU became a military stabilization force in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 2005.[95] Other short-term missions were sent to Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

Since 2003, the EU has developed a European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), 'which declaredly aims to promote the EU's values as a means to spread peace, stability, security and prosperity in the southern and eastern neighbourhoods.[96] It also aspires to strengthen the EU's contribution to the resolution of regional conflicts. The main goal of the ENP is to ensure peace and stability through the promotion of the rule of law together with political and economic reforms. It should be noted that the ENP is based on mutual commitment to shared values peculiar to the EU, as democracy and good governance,

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[94] Foreign and Security policy, Europa Gateway to the European Union, found at http://europa.eu/pol/cfsp/index_en.htm (accessed 13 April 2011)
[95] Foreign and Security policy', Europa Gateway to the European Union.
[96] Nathalie Tocci, '*The EU and conflict resolution Promoting peace in the backyard,*' (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p.5

human rights and market economy. Under the ENP the Action Plans with each country were agreed bilaterally by 2007. Action Plans have identified reform priorities 'in the areas of institutions and governance, elections and electoral laws, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the development of civil society.'[97]

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[97] Ibid.

3.2. The EU's role in the resolution of Georgia's conflicts

From independence to the Rose Revolution, 1990-2003

During the 1990s the EU did not play an active political role in the resolution of Georgia's conflicts, mainly calling on the conflicting parties to resolve the dispute through peaceful means and contributing to conflict resolution by providing technical and financial assistance. According to the International Crisis Group report, the EU 'has only occasionally made political statements in support of the peaceful resolution of the conflicts and ongoing negotiation processes.'[98] The EU was a formal participant in neither the Georgian - Ossetian nor the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict settlement forums, and deployed no police or peacekeepers.[99]

There were number of reasons behind this moderate approach. First of all, Brussels failed to develop a coherent policy towards all former Soviet Republics, including Georgia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the EU preferred to distance itself from the new realities of the post-Soviet space. Instead of the one big Empire there were new 15 states to deal with. Thus, as Stephen Blank suggests: 'The EU lacked a strategy towards the region, if by strategy we mean a coherent relationship between ends and means, there was no EU strategy in the Caucasus.'[100]

Besides, in the 1990s the Balkans was a priority for Europe; the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and its implications, created a big threat to European security. Whilst Brussels was occupied with overcoming the security crisis near its borders, Georgia was geographically simply too far away from the EU to be given any real priority. As Georgia was not viewed as a part of Europe, there was no consensus among the Member States that its conflicts

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[98] International Crisis Group, 'Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role', Crisis Group Europe Report N°173, 20 March 2006. p.16
[99] International Crisis Group, 'Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role', p.16
[100] Stephen Blank, 'From Neglect to Duress', in *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), p.112

were an urgent matter. Georgia's claim that it was a European state was not accepted by all EU political leaders and doubts about its 'Europeanness' made it impossible to trigger EU involvement in the region. As Popescu assumes, 'Georgia ... [was] perceived as being too far from the EU to be really important, while being too close to the EU to be ignored. This resulted in an EU involvement in the conflicts that is gradual, shy and hesitant but still increasing.'[101]

The fact that Russia was actively involved in Georgia's conflict resolution, controlling and dominating the region, was an additional constraint to Brussels.[102] The EU was anxious not to offend Moscow through active engagement in Russia's zone of influence. The question of how to handle Russia received contradictory answers within the EU.

Despite the low-profile political role of the EU in the South Caucasus, the EU concluded a partnership and cooperation agreement (PCA)[103] with Georgia and the other former Soviet Republics in 1996, which is the legal basis for Georgia-EU relations up to today. However the PCA – the main framework of EU-Georgian relations in the 1990s – did not include conflict and security issues, as it was an essentially apolitical document. Through the PCA, the EU provided Georgia with economic and technical aid and provided cooperation in the spheres of trade, culture and technology.

Furthermore, under the Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme, the EU encouraged socio-economic development, assisted the IDPs from conflict zones and supported projects aimed at strengthening the rule of law, good governance, human rights and democracy. Altogether, Georgia received 370 million Euros in EU assistance in 1992-2003 and out of these 27 million Euros was allocated for the

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[101] Nicu Popescu, 'Europe's unrecognized neighbours The EU in Abkhazia and South Ossetia,' CEPS Working Document, No: 260, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, March 2007, p.21
[102] Georgi Kamov, 'EU's role in conflict resolution: the case of the Eastern enlargement and neighbourhood policy areas'. Institut Europeen des Hautes Etudes Internationales, June 2006. p.50
found at: http://www.iehei.org/bibliotheque/memoires/2006/KAMOV.pdf (accessed 27 April 2011)
[103] The PCA determined the policies of the EU to former Soviet Union states in the 1990s. The main weakness of the PCA framework was that it did not consider things from a potential membership perspective and that there was no differentiation between the individual countries covered.

rehabilitation of conflict zones[104]. These funds allowed the EU to implement the projects of post-war rehabilitation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It should be noted that Brussels gave priority to the former over the latter, because the resolution of the South Ossetia conflict was widely perceived as being easier to solve than the one in Abkhazia.

In South Ossetia the EU focused on infrastructure projects (gas, electricity) and the reconstruction of schools. The EU projects launched in Abkhazia were also aiming economic rehabilitation of the post-conflict region. These projects included humanitarian aid programs, the rehabilitation of the Enguri hydroelectric power plant, reconstruction of Sokhumi and the West part of Abkhazia, also the promotion of confidence building between the Abkhazs and Georgians through the activities of international and non-governmental organisations.

The lack of a proper framework for foreign policy action was an additional barrier to EU in developing a coherent policy towards Georgia's conflicts. Until the appointment of the EU High Representative for CFSP in 1999, the EU did not have a coherent institutional body responsible for EU foreign policy. The European Parliament did not have an effective mechanism to lead a peace process; the Commission and Council being the main bodies in the sphere. The European Commission[105] provided aid, with a focus on democratic reforms aiming to create good conditions for conflict settlement in Georgia. [106] As the International Crisis Group stated in its report,

> .... The EU believes its main contribution to conflict resolution should be assisting Georgia to create a state based on European values and standards, which ultimately could be more attractive to South Ossetia and Abkhazia than independence or closer integration with Russia.[107]

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[104] European Commission, EU's relations with Georgia, Overview, found at http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/georgia/intro/index.htm (accessed 18 April 2011)

[105] The first Delegation of the European Commission in the South Caucasus was set up in Tbilisi in 1993.

[106] Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite, 'EU peace building in Georgia: Limits and achievements', CLEER Working Papers, Working Paper No. 35 - December 2009, found at http://www.asser.nl/upload/documents/1272009_30528CLEER%20WP%202009-6%20-%20MERLINGEN%20&%20OSTRAUSKAITE.pdf (accessed on 17 April 2011). pp.16

[107] International Crisis Group 'Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role', Europe Report N°173, March 20, 2006. p.16

Even if the Commission had tried to play a more dynamic role in Georgia's conflicts 'under a conflict prevention label, it lacked the mandate to push such activities too far.'[108] The Council played a more political role through facilitating negotiations and mediation between the conflicting parties; Under the CFSP the Council provided grants to the OSCE Mission in Georgia to finance the JCC activities, in particular its office and travel costs, though the Council also lacked a clear definition of concrete aims and expected outcomes.[109]

As Akçakoca *et al*. conclude, while the Commission generally recognized that that 'Council bodies played a more political role (i.e. actively facilitate negotiations or mediate between the parties), there was no commonly-agreed conflict-resolution strategy neither general terms or for specific conflicts.'[110]

The main contribution the EU made to conflict resolution in Georgia during the 1990s, was the implementation of economic and infrastructure rehabilitation programs in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the assistance provided to the Georgian government to carry out democratic reforms. As Dov Lynch contends, 'The EU retained a low overall profile, with little presence in the negotiating mechanisms, no direct involvement in mediation, and an undefined strategy to lead policy.'[111]

For more than decade Georgia was not seen as a part of Europe. The EU chose not to play a leading role in conflict resolution issues in Georgia because, as Georgi Kamov concludes: 'The EU was too far away from these countries [Georgia and other CIS countries] and the

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[108] Nicu Popescu, 'Europe's unrecognized neighbours The EU in Abkhazia and South Ossetia,' CEPS Working Document, No: 260, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, March 2007, p. 10
[109] Amanda Akçakoca, Thomas Vanhauwaert, Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff, 'After Georgia: Conflict Resolution in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood', *EPC Issue Papers*: Issue, 57 (EPC, Brussels, 2009), p.34, found at: http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=99589&lng=en (accessed 27 March 2011)
[110] Amanda Akçakoca, Thomas Vanhauwaert, Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff, 'After Georgia: Conflict Resolution in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood', p.34
[111] Dov Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters*, Chaillot Paper No. 86, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, February 2006, p. 61

security problems were too complex for a credible action other than financial aid.'[112] Due to marked changes within both the EU and Georgia this '1990s-style EU policy towards Georgia ended in 2003.'[113]

From the Rose Revolution to 2007

The EU has become more involved in the South Caucasus region since 2003 as a result of the 'big-bang' enlargement.[114] Brussels got closer to the former Soviet Republics of Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the three South Caucasus states. For the first time, the resolution, or at least containment of conflicts in those countries, became a priority for the EU, 'as any renewed outbreak of war could spill over and undermine [European] Union security.'[115] One of the objectives of the European Security Strategy explicitly became: 'to avoid instability on its borders, the EU seeks [sought] a ring of well-governed countries around it.'[116] For the first time the official EU strategy was recognizing the importance of the South Caucasus region for the EU:

> It is not in our interest that enlargement should create new dividing lines in Europe. We need to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbours in the East while tackling political problems there. We should now take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus, which will in due course also be a neighbouring region.[117]

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[112] Georgi Kamov, 'EU's role in conflict resolution: the case of the Eastern enlargement and neighbourhood policy areas'. Institut Europeen des Hautes Etudes Internationales, June 2006. p.50.
found at: http://www.iehei.org/bibliotheque/memoires/2006/KAMOV.pdf (accessed 27 April 2011)
[113] Nicu Popescu, 'Europe's unrecognized neighbours The EU in Abkhazia and South Ossetia,' CEPS Working Document, No: 260, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, March 2007, p. 4
[114] On 1 May 2004, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia became the Member States of the EU. On 1 January 2007, this 'big-bang' enlargement came to a conclusion with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania.
[115] International Crisis Group, 'Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role', *Europe Report* N°173, (20 March 2006), p.1
[116] European Council, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy', Brussels, 12 December 2003, p.8
[117] European Council, 'A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy', p.8

Most importantly, the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline made Georgia even more attractive for the EU, as Georgia has emerged as an important transit country for Caspian oil to European Markets. The EU heavy dependency on Russia's oil and gas is known. Russia accounts for about 50 percent of the total gas imports of the EU and over 30 percent of its oil imports. Thus the diversification of supply routes through other reliable partners was in EU interest.

The Rose Revolution of 2003 also increased the interest of Brussels in Georgia. Western institutions approved of the new Georgian government's Western orientation and its aspiration to become integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions. Very soon after the revolution, in January 2004, the Council of the EU reaffirmed its willingness to work with the new administration of Georgia to support the territorial integrity of the country and further asserted its readiness to contribute to the reform process in the country through a range of EU instruments and policies.[118]

In 2003 the EU established the post of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) to the South Caucasus. This position was first held by Heikki Talvitie, a Finnish diplomat, with a mandate to develop a strategy to advance stability and security in the region. Talvitie was tasked with strengthening relations between the EU and the three countries of the South Caucasus; assisting Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in carrying out political and economic reforms, notably in the fields of rule of law, democratization, human rights, good governance, preventing conflicts in the region and assisting the UN and OSCE in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, including promoting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; and encouraging and supporting further cooperation between the states in the region in economic, energy and transport issues.[119] The EUSR had an only assistant role in the conflict resolution processes. He had no explicit negotiation or brokerage mandate and thus his capabilities were limited.

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[118] European Union, '2559th Council meeting - External Relations', Brussels, (26 January 2004). Found at: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/04/26&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en (accessed 16 April 2011)
[119] Council Joint Action 2003/496/CFSP, Concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, 7 July 2003, found at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/L169-8.7.2003.pdf (accessed 16 April 2011)

In 2006, Peter Semneby, the Swedish diplomat, became the EUSR to the South Caucasus. Despite the fact that he was a roving diplomat, not permanently stationed in the country, Semneby managed to become more engaged and visible EU actor. One of the main objectives of his mandate was to 'prevent conflicts in the region' and to 'contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts'.[120] However, the EUSR was given few tools to achieve these goals. He did not, therefore, have the authority to play a leading role and act as mediator between the conflict parties. The EUSR's main role was to act as the local relay of EU messages and promote a dialogue with the Georgian, South Ossetian and Abkhazian sides, and with the UN and the OSCE.

The EUSR Border Support Team was established after the EU's failure to deploy a full border mission on Russia-Georgia border. In 2005 the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation terminated its mandate and Russia used its veto power to end the mandate for the OSCE BMO. Georgian government invited an EU mission to replace the BMO and conduct a same operation under the EU mandate. The Baltic States and the UK were in favour of sending a border mission to Georgia, to increase the EU's presence and to reduce Russia's involvement in Georgia's conflict zones. Some other EU states, however, had other preferences; particularly France, Spain, Germany, Italy and Greece, which managed to keep the EU away from 'messy Caucasian affairs'.[121] As a result, instead of deploying a full border mission of 150 monitors the EU only sent three experts (later extended to twelve) under the EUSR to assist Georgia with its border management.[122] The purpose of EUSR Border Support team was to provide the EU with information and assessment on Georgia-Russia border situation 'thereby ensuring efficient cooperation and liaison with all relevant actors…'[123]

In 2004 EU became even more actively involved in Georgia through following policies:

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[120] Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite, 'EU peacebuilding in Georgia: Limits and achievements', p. 20
[121] Nicu Popescu, 'Europe's unrecognized neighbours The EU in Abkhazia and South Ossetia'. CEPS Working Document, No: 260, Centre for European Policy Studies Brussels, March 2007. p.3
[122] Ibid., pp. 10-11
[123] 'Council Joint Action 2006/121/CFSP', Concerning the appointment of an EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, *Official Journal of the European Union*, (20 February 2006), found at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/l_04920060221en00140016.pdf (accessed 16 April 2011)

The EU launched its first civilian Rule of Law mission (EUJUST-THEMIS[124]) to Tbilisi due to a request from Georgia's new government. The mission was a first ever ESDP operation in the former Soviet Union and it comprised a team of 12 persons with competencies in judicial reform. They worked in areas such as parliamentary and electoral reforms, confidence building among people affected by violence in breakaway regions and administrative reform of public organisations.[125] Moreover, under its Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) the EU allocated 4.65 million Euros for measures to reinforce the rule of law and democratic processes in Georgia, particularly to reform penitentiary and probation service, Ministry of Justice and other public institutions. Funds were allocated also for parliamentary and electoral reforms. [126]

In 2004 the EU integrated Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan into its European Neighbourhood Policies (ENP) to strengthen the cooperation with these countries. Georgia was invited to enter into intensified political, security, economic and cultural relations with the EU enhanced regional and cross border co-operation and shared responsibility in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. It should be noted that while via the ENP the EU aimed to create close relations and strong cooperation with those countries, the idea of neighbourhood meant denial for accession at the same time. An additional problem was that Georgia saw the ENP as an instrument for increasing the EU's involvement in the settling of Georgia's conflicts, while the EU was not ready to play a politicized and active role.

The main aim of the ENP was to bring Georgia closer to European standards through the commitments formulated in the ENP document. Regarding Georgia's conflicts the ENP only focused on contributing to settlement in the long run, including objectives such as the protection of human rights, encouraging economic development, strengthening rule of law

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[124] Themis was the goddess of justice in Greek mythology.
[125] Georgi Kamov, 'EU's role in conflict resolution: the case of the Eastern enlargement and neighbourhood policy areas' p.18
[126] 'Georgia - €4.65 million to reinforce the rule of law and democratic processes', European Union@United Nations, found at http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/es/article_3639_es.htm (accessed 13 April 2011)

and democracy, and cooperating in security and border management. [127] As the International Crisis Group reports:

> .... According to the original strategy, the ENP was to 'reinforce stability and security and contribute to efforts at conflict resolution' … [however], conflict resolution has largely fallen by the wayside, just one of many priorities under 'political dialogue and reform'. The focus is [was] on trade relations and economic and political change.[128]

Georgia appreciated the economic rehabilitation assistance the EU provided in conflict zones, but Tbilisi suggested that this kind of help needed to be supplemented by effective political and security-related engagement.[129]

In 2006 a Joint EU/Georgia Plan for reforms and cooperation was elaborated under the ENP. The Action Plan welcomed Georgia's readiness to enhance cooperation with the EU and underlined that the intensification of the relationship 'will depend on the degree of Georgia's commitment to common values as well as its capacity to implement jointly agreed priorities in compliance with international and European values and principles.'[130]

Despite the insistent demands of Georgian diplomats to give the peaceful resolution of internal conflicts the first priority in the EU/Georgia Action Plan, this most vulnerable and crucial issue for Tbilisi was mentioned in the action plan as sixth priority area. Among these priorities particular attention was given to the strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions, human rights and fundamental rights, to the cooperation in the filed of justice, freedom and security, to eradication of poverty and social cohesion etc.[131] Regarding Georgia's conflicts the Action Plan called the EU to speed up process of demilitarization and of conflict resolution and 'to increase the effectiveness of the negotiating mechanisms… Include the issue of territorial integrity of Georgia and

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[127] For more on the ENP see the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia: http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?sec_id=461&lang_id=ENG

[128] International Crisis Group, 'Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role', *Europe Report N°173*, 20 March 2006. p.8

[129] International Crisis Group, 'Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role', p.9

[130] European Union, *European Neighbourhood Policy: EU/Georgia Action Plan*, 2006. p.1. available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/pdf/enp_action_plan_georgia.pdf (accessed on 16 April, 2011)

[131] Ibid.

settlement of Georgia's internal conflicts in EU-Russia political dialogue meetings.'[132]

The ENP's role in conflict resolution in Georgia, and in the South Caucasus region in general, was, according to a 2006 EU document, estimated as having 'achieved little'. The same document went on to advise that: 'The EU needs to be more active, and more present, in regional or multilateral conflict resolution mechanisms and in peace-monitoring or peace-keeping efforts.' [133]

In 2005, the EU states Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and the EU membership candidate countries -Romania and Bulgaria formed an informal group – 'the New Friends of Georgia.' They supported Georgia's aspiration for a greater EU role in negotiations to resolve the frozen conflicts and called for internationalisation of peacekeeping forces in the both conflict zones of Georgia. Over the years, 'the New Friends of Georgia' initiated several proposals. They called for closer EU relations with Georgia, including a visa facilitation agreement, and the deployment of an ESDP rule of law.[134] In addition, they demanded to force the Kremlin to reduce its military stances in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and, when Russia banned Georgian import in 2006, they demanded to lift its economic blockade against Georgia.[135]

Despite the fact that the EU through the European Commission was the largest international donor in Georgia's conflict zones, 'the impact of its projects on the peace processes was at best marginal'.[136] The obvious question, therefore, becomes: what was the main incentive behind the millions of Euros that the EU policies put into Georgia's conflict zones? Merlingen and Ostrauskaite suggest that the EU hoped to change the perception of 'the enemy' that each party held through peace-building projects; it demanded cross-border interaction which would offer conflicting parties the opportunity for dialogue.

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[132] Ibid., p.10
[133] Commission of the European Communities, 'On strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy', Brussels, 4 December 2006 COM (2006)726 final, p. 4. available at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com06_726_en.pdf   (accessed on 16 April, 2011)
[134] Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite, 'EU peacebuilding in Georgia: Limits and achievements', p. 18
[135] Ibid., p.15
[136] Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite, pp.16-20

Moreover, Brussels aimed 'to encourage institutional change and empower civil society to hold local elites to account'.[137] The report of the International Crisis group supports this argument claiming that EU programs originally provided opportunities to the conflicting parties 'work together on concrete projects that created links between communities and required the parties to devise common solutions.'[138] Yet none of these policies were sufficient to bring about the excepted results.

The analyses of EU's activities in 2004-2007 have shown that the EU's involvement in Georgia's conflict settlement was largely restricted to providing financial aid and the EU avoided a direct engagement in conflict resolution process. The reasons were same as in the 1990s - the EU continued to lack both a common and proper strategy in the Caucasus and a consistent political approach regarding Georgia's conflicts. The EU was actively supporting Georgia's territorial integrity, but this was not backed by innovative policies that would secure Georgia's stability.

The Russian factor again as in 1990s, was playing a crucial role. The EU preferred to call upon Georgia to find peaceful ways resolving its conflicts and to inspire the Abkhazian and the South Ossetian regimes to cooperate with Tbilisi. The EU was, however, ignoring the fact that Russia was providing political, financial and military support to the breakaway regions and thus any attempt that focused on Georgia's own abilities to resolve its conflicts were doomed to fail. As Popescu accurately predicted only one year before the Russia-Georgia War of 2008:

> …. while the EU is working on long-term objectives in Georgia and on the fringes of the conflict-resolution processes, there might be no intra-Georgian conflicts to solve in a few years, but a big Russia-Georgia conflict on which the EU will be even less able to have a significant impact.[139]

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[137] Ibid, p.18
[138] International Crisis Group, 'Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia', *Europe Report N°159,* 26 November 2004. p.20
[139] Nicu Popescu, 'Europe's unrecognized neighbours The EU in Abkhazia and South Ossetia'. p.21

Prior the Russia-Georgia War of 2008

Two decisions made by the West in 2008, the recognition of Kosovo and not granting a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP)[140] to Georgia and Ukraine, placed even greater strain on Russia-Georgia relations. The United States and some EU Member States were seeking recognition of Kosovo with little consideration to international factors and probable geopolitical consequences. The Russian Federation from the beginning was criticizing the Kosovo policy of the USA and the European Union, as Moscow was against Kosovo independence from Serbia. The chief of the Russian General Staff, Yuri Baluyevsky, warned about Moscow's reaction a few months before Kosovo declared independence:

> If we cross the Rubicon and Kosovo gains independent status tomorrow, frankly speaking, I expect this independence to echo in other regions as well, including those close to Russia's borders. You perfectly understand what I mean – I mean Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transdniestria.[141]

Despite Moscow's threats that it would respond by recognizing Georgia's separatist regions, the west simply declared that Kosovo was no precedent for Abkhazia or South Ossetia and moved on.[142] When, on 18 February 2008, Kosovo declared independence, then the Russian President, Vladimir Putin responded immediately, calling Kosovo's independence 'a terrible precedent, which will de facto blow apart the whole system of international relations, developed not over decades, but over centuries ....'[143]

It is widely debatable whether, had the US and the EU considered Moscow's wishes in the Balkans, the Kremlin would have acted differently in Georgia. The Georgian government realised that Russia would use the Georgian situation as a mean of showing its power to the West, but the problem was that there was very little Georgia could do about it. If the United

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[140] MAP is a NATO program of advice, assistance and practical support implemented by the consideration of the individual needs of states aspiring to join the Alliance

[141] David J. Smith, 'The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies before the 2008 War,' in Swante E. Cornell and S.Frederick Starr, (eds.) *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War In Georgia*, pp.122-142. (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009) p. 125

[142] David J. Smith, 'The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies before the 2008 War,' pp. 124-125

[143] 'Putin calls Kosovo independence "terrible precedent"', European Union Business website http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1203714121.65/ (accessed 28 March 2011)

States and the EU had considered Georgia's regular requests and insisted for expanded UN and OSCE missions, this would have led to an extended international presence in the conflict zones which would have consequently provided more transparency and reduced the potential for hostile Russian activities. As Asmus stated, the only way in which conflict could have been averted was for the international community to 'push for full-scale internationalization of the management of these conflicts under the auspices of the UN – as it had done in Kosovo a decade earlier.'[144]

At the NATO summit in Bucharest held in April 2008 the allies had to decide whether to grant Georgia and Ukraine MAPs. The Member States of the EU were divided into two groups: Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg were against granting MAPs, arguing that Georgia and Ukraine were not ready for membership. As Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, argued: '"Georgia's regional and internal conflicts barred its membership bid" even though it would have applied equally to West Germany at the time it joined NATO'.[145] On the other hand, the Baltic States, Poland, the UK and Romania, supported by the US, claimed that granting MAPs would stimulate Georgia and Ukraine to continue their democratization processes and would show the solidarity of the West with them. The compromise that was eventually reached avoided granting MAPs, but instead gave the commitment to eventual membership for these two countries, although no precise date was given.

The rejection of MAPs for Ukraine and Georgia demonstrated the Kremlin's ability to affect decisions made by the Western countries 'not at least through its control over Georgia's unresolved conflicts.'[146] Later, after the Russia-Georgia War of August 2008, the International Crisis Group will conclude, that defeating Georgia served several of the Moscow's planned goals: 'to punish one nation for its NATO ambitions; to warn others, especially Ukraine, not to go down the same route; and to humiliate NATO by showing it to

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[144] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.89
[145] David J. Smith, 'The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies before the 2008 War', pp.122-142 in Swante E. Cornell and S.Frederick Starr (eds.), *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War In Georgia*, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), p.136
[146] Niklas Nilsson, 'EU and Russia in the Black Sea Region: Increasingly Competing Interests?' *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 2, 2008. p.8

be indecisive and ineffective'.[147]

With hindsight analyzing Russia's policy towards separatist regions in spring 2008, it is evident that Russia provoked the war with Georgia. On March 6, Russia withdrew from the 1996 CIS treaty imposing economic sanctions on Abkhazia and held discussions in the *Duma* on the possible recognition of the independence of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. With that Russia once again underscored that it was a participant in Georgia's conflicts, rather than a disinterested mediator. In April more Russian peacekeepers were sent to Abkhazia. In May Russian army railway units arrived in Abkhazia with the purpose of repairing the Sokhumi - Ochamchire railroad. Subsequently, At the time of August War this roads would be used by Russia to transport its 9000 troops to Georgia.

On 12 May 2008, the President of Georgia met with a group of foreign ministers from visiting EU countries. Saakashvili asked the EU 'to study, investigate and react on illegal movement of Russian peace-keeping forces … [and consider the] EU's more active involvement in the conflict resolution process.'[148] The growing sense of danger in the end motivated the European Union to become more involved in Russia-Georgia affairs. The EU high representative Javier Solana travelled to the region in early June to offer a greater EU role and was welcomed by all sides. The EU developed a set of confidence-building measures, including holding conferences in Sokhumi and Brussels, sending a border support team and offering to host the conflicting parties in Brussels in order to contribute to the dialogue.[149]

The former EUSR for the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby states that despite the number of high-level interventions in the spring and summer of 2008, yet there was only slight interest in dedicating resources to conflict prevention and resolution efforts on the ground in

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[147] Richard G. Whitman and Stefan Wolff, 'The EU as a conflict manager? The case of Georgia and its implications', International Affairs No86, January 2010, p.12. (The Royal Institute of International Affairs 2010)

[148] David J. Smith, 'The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies before the 2008 War,' p.139

[149] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.154-155

Georgia's conflict zones. In his speech at OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, Semneby declared:

> 'I recommended the deployment of EU police, but only at the end of July - two weeks before the war - did the EU finally decide to deploy a very limited number of police liaison officers. I believe that had the EU done more on the ground, we could have been in a substantially different and much more benign situation.'[150]

On 5 June 2008 the European Parliament adopted a resolution stating that 'the Russian troops have lost their role of neutral and impartial peacekeepers' and they called for an EU border mission to be deployed to Abkhazia as part of the ESDP.[151] Moreover, it demanded an immediate withdrawal of additional Russian troops recently deployed in Abkhazia; it expressed deep dissatisfaction with Russia's April 16 presidential decree, which authorized the Russian government to engage in direct official relations with Abkhaz and Ossetian authorities, and pressed for the repeal of that decree. The resolution urged the EU executive authorities to 'firmly raise' these issues during the EU-Russia summit in July.[152] It was too belated and too weak reaction to Russia's aggressive actions.

In the middle of July 2008 then the German Foreign Minister Steinmeier, acting as coordinator of the Group of Friends, arrived in Tbilisi to calm the situation. He visited Tbilisi and Sokhumi in order to present a peace plan to Georgia and Abkhazia. The plan had previously been discussed with Russian government. Yet the summer of 2008 was a time of war, not peace in Georgia.

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[150] Peter Semneby, EUSR for the South Caucasus, Statement to the OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna, (10 February 2011), found at http://www.delegfrance-osce.org/IMG/pdf/pc_del_126_eusr_on_south_caucasus.pdf (accessed 17 March 2011)
[151] Vladimir Socor, 'Solana Returns Empty-handed from Abkhazia', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 5, Issue 113, found at: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33717 (accessed on 28 March 2011)
[152] Vladimir Socor, 'Solana Returns Empty-handed from Abkhazia'

Conclusion

Conflicts in two autonomous republics of Georgia - South Ossetia and Abkhazia broke out when the Soviet Union began its collapse in early 1990s. Georgia was looking for independence from the Soviet Union and two autonomous republics were seeking separation from the Republic of Georgia. UN and the OSCE have taken the lead in promoting conflict settlement, yet more than a decade of negotiations led by the UN and OSCE were ineffective as Russia was a main peacekeeper force in Georgia's conflict zones. Russia played a leading role during the warfare and its aftermath, backing separatist governments with various forms of support, often acting as a mediator with its own interests and preventing other actors to promote peace process in Georgia. A chief principle of effective conflict resolution is that peace keeping force must be neutral and must enjoy the trust of both sides. During 2004-2007 Russia tried everything conceivable in its efforts to stop Georgia's westward movement, from imposing trade embargo on Georgian products to openly arming Separatist regimes in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Neorealists claim, the states in the international relations act according to their interests. As analyzes of Russia's role in Georgia's conflicts has shown, Moscow's involvement in conflict resolution was driven by its own incentives. Since the Tsarist times South Caucasus was strategically important region for Russia and even after gaining independence by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1990s, Russia wanted to keep the control over them. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Georgia's conflicts with Ossetians and Abkhazians, which significantly shattered these states economically and politically, eased Russia's task to maintain them in the sphere of its influence.

The assessment of the EU's role is more complex. Was the EU an international player with a normative agenda in the resolution of Georgia's conflicts? As the analyses of EU's policies have shown, After the 2003 Rose Revolution, the EU became more involved in Georgia's affairs and tried to promote the Georgia's conflicts resolution as Manners calls it, by 'spreading normative values'. The New policies conducted by the EU, as signing the ENP AP with Georgia, an appointment of the EUSR for the South Caucasus and a financial

aid provided to Georgia and its breakaway regions, has increased the Union's engagement in Georgia's conflicts settlement. Nevertheless the EU was more comfortable to constrain its activities to economic rehabilitation and humanitarian assistance than to be directly involved in conflict resolution through ESDP military presence on the ground in conflict zones. Tbilisi was seeking support from the EU and asking to play a more active role in achievement of peace in the region and contribute to the conflict resolution. The government of Georgia tried hard to push the EU to send military mission for South Ossetia and Abkhazia in order to lower the tenses in conflict zones. For Georgia's leadership the military presence of the ESDP was crucial to guarantee peace and decrease Russia's dominancy in the region. The fact that EU preferred to avoid the use of military power does not necessarily mean that the EU was a normative player in Georgia's conflicts resolution.

There were other reasons that made it impossible to develop EU adequate policies on Georgia that would contribute the resolution of its conflicts. As the EU Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson has claimed: 'No other country reveals our differences as does Russia. This is a failure of Europe as a whole, not any member state in particular.'[153] Russia is the EU's third biggest trade partner and one of the EU's main energy suppliers. Moscow exploits the EU's dependence on Russia as an energy provider. Russia became more powerful and less accommodating due to increased oil and gas exports and higher world prices for these products. So the EU has become increasingly dependent on more costly Russian oil and gas. The agendas of the biannual summits become more and more dominated by the pragmatic discussions over major economic issues.[154]

For some larger EU member states economic profits gained through cooperation with Russia are more important than political and economic benefits of the European Union. Issues, like human rights violation and Russia's intervention in political processes of sovereign states are not widely discussed. For example, the EU has frequently chosen not to systematically criticize Moscow's use of disproportionate violence in Chechnya. Russian

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[153] Stephan Keukeleire and Jennifer MacNaughtan, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 317
[154] James Hughes, 'EU Relations with Russia: Partnership or Asymmetric Interdependency?' in *An Evolving International System:The Road Towards Convergence,* (ed). Nicola Casarini and Costanza Musu (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.91

troops do not leave occupied territories of Georgia despite the Russia's commitments. According the cease-fire agreement initiated by the President of France Nikola Sarkozi during Russia-Georgia war in August, 2008 Russia was obliged to leave the occupied territories a long time ago, but this question is not raised by Sarkozi while meeting with the Prime minister of Russia Vladimir Putin or the Russian President Dimitri Medvedev.

No sanctions or strong measures were taken by the EU that would diminish Russia's ambitions and leverage in its neighbour country, when Russia was openly violating Georgia's sovereignty. Brussels' statements on Russia's aggressive policies were largely rhetorical. The EU was not able to reach common position between its 27 countries as they each had very different perceptions about the EU's role in Russian-Georgian relations. These internal divisions prevented the EU from responding coherently to belligerent Russian politics towards Georgia. Strong trade relations with Russia, dependence on Russia's energy and other interests of member states on the national level makes hard to reach the consensus within the EU, particularly on matters where Russian interests are involved. Thus it is no wonder that the EU avoided to play a more significant role in Georgia's conflicts resolution.

The analyses of the EU's role in Georgia's conflicts resolution has shown that the EU was not an international player that we can define as NPE according Manners. It has chosen policies regarding Georgia with normative agenda (PCA, ENP AP, EUSR etc) and avoided sending ESDP mission to Georgia's conflicts zones. The role of the NPE was more convenient for the EU regarding Georgia, as the powerful EU Member States, as Germany and France cared about their strategic relations with Russia more than about Georgia's conflicts. As neorealists claim, states and especially powerful ones, define norms and set rules for other actors, including the EU. The latter serves mainly as Hyde-Price calls 'a vehicle for the collective interests of its member states' – interests that often contradict each other and diminish the role of the EU as an international actor in world politics.

The EU's policies in Georgia's conflict resolution did not have a significant impact, it neither promoted a conflict resolution process nor contributed to the escalation of the conflict between Russia and Georgia. As the interests of other powerful international

player, Russia were involved in Georgia's conflicts, the EU preferred to play a secondary role in the conflict resolution of Georgia.

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