

Does the Prospect of EU Membership for Countries in  
Conflict Complement or Contradict International Peacemaking  
Efforts?

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**List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
AKP	Justice and Development Party
BDH	Peace and Democracy Movement
CTP	Republican Turkish Party
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DPK	Democratic Party of Kosovo
DS	Democratic Party
DSS	Democratic Party of Serbia
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
MHS	Mutually Hurting Stalemate
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
SAP	Stabilization and Association Process
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UBP	National Unity Party
UN	United Nations
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WTO	World Trade Organization

## **Abstract**

This study evaluates the impact of the EU's membership offers on peacemaking. It analyzes the frozen conflicts of Cyprus and Kosovo by proposing a theoretical framework based on the concept of ripeness. Case analysis is the main methodology and a comparative evaluation is carried out with the derived results.

The main hypothesis is that the EU can facilitate ripeness and contribute to international peacemaking with its enlargement incentive. However, this statement is not confirmed as the findings reveal that the EU is not playing a constructive role in terms of reaching a peace settlement.

The desire of the disputants to join the EU provides significant potential to overcome deadlocks and set aside the expectations of a unilateral victory in frozen intrastate conflicts. Yet, the EU is unable to utilize this desire as it fails to fulfill certain requirements. It doesn't assess the impact of its own involvement on the peace process, lacking a clear perspective on how to achieve a compromise between the conflict parties. It generally proceeds with the pre-accession & accession process without requiring a peace agreement, strengthening the status quo or one side's expectations of winning. The general weakness of EU foreign policy, setting effective strategies as a united body, is again apparent in the peacemaking context. Also, the EU has limited means to promote pro-peace groups in domestic politics and even pro-EU groups tend to deflect from a pro-peace stance.

These findings have important implications for further research and the EU in practice. It is shown that the concept of ripeness can be extended beyond the study of actual violence and military affairs. The EU needs to address its inadequacies as its will to become a global security player is likely to be tested again in the field of peacemaking.

## Introduction

The European Union (EU) has rekindled its will to become a global security actor with the adoption of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in 2009. As “naked military power” is becoming less and less suited to resolve the complex security problems in the era of globalization, the EU’s civilian competences are promising for such a role (Howorth, 2008: 223). This applies to the area of conflict resolution, where the EU can deploy a wide variety of soft instruments with the goal of achieving peace (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan, 2008: 217). Accordingly, the EU’s activities in this field have already attracted scholarly attention (Hughes, 2009; Tocci, 2007).

Yet, not all components of conflict resolution have been sufficiently addressed. The EU’s influence on peacemaking is largely ignored in academia despite its importance. A theoretical conflict perspective is missing, along with the empirical data required to assess the EU’s role. This paper attempts to address this gap, particularly by looking at the EU’s most comprehensive foreign policy tool, the offer of membership. The focus is on “frozen” intrastate conflicts, in which peace settlements are not in place despite long-lasting negotiations and absence of military clashes (Tudoroiu, 2012: 136-137). EU membership is not a viable option where high-scale violence exists, so the analysis of the membership carrot here will be limited to frozen conflicts.

The concept of ripeness, originally put forward by Zartman (1989), will constitute the basis of the theoretical framework of this study. It is assumed that there may be ripe moments in conflicts where the conflict parties are more likely to agree on peace terms. The EU’s contribution to peacemaking will be evaluated relative to its ability to ripen a conflict. It should also be noted that the EU integration carrot will be evaluated complementary or contradictory to the official mediation roles carried out by other external actors such as the United Nations (UN). It is most likely that a peace agreement will be concluded in the

channels of mediation even if the EU plays a definitive role through the prospect of enlargement. The EU itself is often not a direct mediator, as is seen in several cases (Ker-Lindsay, 2005; Perritt, 2009).

This study will first discuss the different variations of the ripeness concept and then try to construct its own theoretical framework to assess the performance of the EU's offer of membership in peacemaking. Then, this model will be applied to conduct a case analysis of two conflicts, Cyprus and Kosovo. A comparative assessment will follow and the limitations of the study will be addressed at the end.

It is argued here that the EU fails to complement international peacemaking with its enlargement incentive. The proposed ripeness theory reveals that the EU does have the capability to reinforce the possibility of a solution in frozen conflicts. Yet, the EU's lack of a clear peacemaking vision, timidity in requiring a peace settlement for eventual accession and the inability to act as a single entity severely undermine its capacity to put pressure on the disputants in the form of deadlines. Limited control over domestic politics in conflict countries also determines the boundaries of EU influence.

## Revisiting Ripeness

The concept of ripeness indicates that conflicts can only be resolved in a specific time period. Third parties need to act at this “ripe moment” in order to succeed in their mediation efforts (Zartman, 1989: 272). While timing is a central factor in different conceptualizations of ripeness, there is no agreement on what constitutes it and how it comes about (Zartman, 1989; Stedman, 1991). Trying to address this analytical ambiguity surrounding the concept, this paper will propose an integrated model of ripeness, particularly designed to analyze the relationship between the prospect of EU membership and peacemaking.

Zartman’s own conception of ripeness mainly focuses on the military aspects of intrastate conflict, yet it can also be applied to the political and economic spheres as a heuristic device. He argues that a “mutually hurting stalemate (MHS)” has to be present for resolution efforts to work, which means that the belligerent sides are unable to defeat each other in the battlefield and the ongoing military deadlock is harmful to all parties (Zartman, 2003: 19). Yet, it is not the existence of military parity per se that leads to an MHS. The parties to the conflict must perceive that they are unable to achieve victory under the current conditions and that the status quo is detrimental to them (2003: 20). Accordingly, Zartman explains the notions of “deadlock” and “deadline” to determine when an MHS exists. “Deadlock” refers to the belligerent sides’ perception that unilateral actions toward winning the conflict are blocked, while “deadline” means that the parties will be worse off if they don’t seek a way out of conflict soon (1989: 268). This brings up the last component of ripeness for Zartman, the existence of alternative options that are perceived favorable enough by the parties to leave conflict aside (2003: 20).

Zartman foresees an active role for external parties in creating or drawing on ripeness (Kleiboer, 1994: 111). They have to ensure that the belligerent parties understand that they are in a negative-sum competition and winning is not possible. It is again the role of the mediators

to propose viable solutions to the parties (Zartman, 1989: 268-269). Furthermore, Zartman emphasizes that external parties have to facilitate ripeness with the use of “carrots and sticks,” ranging from economic aid to sanctions (1989: 277).

The deficiencies of ripeness as an overarching concept will be discussed toward the end of this section, but the model originally put forward by Zartman has its own weaknesses. As Mitchell points out (1995: 40), there is no single type of stalemate and different disputants may be experiencing the deadlock divergently. In other words, it is less obvious when and how an MHS will be present. Also, Zartman neglects the fact that belligerent sides are not unitary actors and “willingness” of different factions is critical for a ripe moment to be realized (Kleiboer, 1994: 115). At the same time, however, the idea of an MHS and the circumstances of deadlock and deadline are functional as they can be interpreted in both political and economic terms. Parties to the conflict may be facing a hurting stalemate in politics, like the erosion of legitimacy on both sides as a result of the absence of a plausible resolution. A deadline may be approaching with the possibility of severe political and economic costs, making it more urgent for the disputants to find a way out.

Pruitt addresses some of the deficiencies of Zartman’s conceptualization by proposing the “readiness theory,” a revised version of ripeness. While his focus is mostly on how a cease-fire is achieved and negotiations start, he emphasizes that “readiness” is required in order to conclude a peace agreement (Pruitt, 2007: 1525). The concept of “readiness” rejects both the unitary view of Zartman and the tendency to evaluate the joint perceptions of disputants. Instead, it focuses on the “motivation” and “optimism” of a single party, especially the top leaders. The leaders have to be motivated to resolve the conflict; they should perceive that unilateral means are insufficient to achieve their goals and experience pressure from potent external parties, i.e. “allies” (2007: 1525). Pruitt differentiates between various groups in a single conflict party and underlines that their level of readiness is most likely to differ.

Some actors may assume the role of "hawks," reluctant to sacrifice their unilateral goals for a compromise solution, while others may be "doves," more eager to reach a resolution and flexible enough to make some concessions (2007: 1532).

The readiness theory is practical for understanding that ripeness is not just a joint status and each party may experience it to a different degree. Some factions that constitute the disputants may be riper than others. Also, Pruitt puts forward an active role for external actors in getting the antagonist sides "motivated," such as using political leverage to make "hawks" more moderate (2007: 1533).

While Pruitt introduces some internal dynamics of disputants to shed more light on ripeness, Stedman extends the concept by focusing on internal politics and its connection to successful conflict resolution. He explains that the ripe moment depends on the political leadership (1991: 211). He argues that ripeness is signaled by leadership change and proposes some hypotheses to be tested in this regard (1991: 241). Two are particularly important for the purposes of this paper: emergence of new possibilities for a resolution with leadership change and the effect of the disposition of the new leaders toward the conflict (1991: 241). These may indicate the time period when third parties need to concentrate their efforts.

Accordingly, Stedman presupposes a productive role for external actors. He argues that the mediators should possess "strategic leverage" over the disputants for success (1991: 219). While he does not provide a comprehensive list of what constitutes leverage, he mentions tools like granting recognition, applying/lifting sanctions or providing diplomatic support (1991: 221). This is complementary to the dynamic role of third parties envisioned by Zartman and Pruitt, clarifying the means that can be used to strengthen ripeness.

The theory of ripeness can be criticized for being impotent on several grounds, yet its analytical value has improved significantly with the proposal of alternative versions. Zartman's overemphasis on military affairs and negligence of internal factors (Mitchell, 1995:

50) was amended by bringing in the internal political situation and the role of leaders (Pruitt, 2007; Stedman, 1991). Accordingly, some others (Stover, 2002; Coleman, 2000) put forward the idea that ripeness at the leadership level is not always shared by the community at the societal level. Kleiboer criticizes the concept for failing in “predictive” and “prescriptive” terms, that is to say, for failing to determine both when the ripe moment to act has come and which tools should be deployed (1994: 114). While Kleiboer is right that there are no agreed conditions for ripeness and no roadmaps to follow for the external parties, there have been attempts to work out this problem.<sup>1</sup> Stedman’s propositions regarding internal political change (1991), as discussed before, provide the starting point for further research in this regard.

Another criticism directed toward ripeness is that it assumes “stages” in a conflict and prevents preemptive action as the conflict may not be ripe to act (Kleiboer, 1994; Mitchell, 1995). There are serious weaknesses in this argument. Different theories recognize that these “stages” are not clear-cut and both disputants and their various factions experience ripeness in diverse degrees (Pruitt, 2007; Stedman, 2001). Even Zartman underlines the need for preemptive intervention by third parties and emphasizes the importance of diplomacy (1989: 275). As a result, this critique is much weaker compared to the criticisms of the concept of predicting the ripe moment and stating necessary action in normative terms.

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<sup>1</sup> See Stover (2002) for a list of circumstances when ripeness occurs naturally and how it can be created by the third parties.

## EU Membership and Conflict Resolution

Before putting forward a framework to evaluate how an EU membership incentive relates to ripeness, the notion of membership itself has to be clarified. Smith explains that becoming a member of the EU means being part of the world's largest economic grouping and a robust network of democracy and welfare (2003: 5). As a result, the EU possesses a significant "power of attraction" and can utilize this as a foreign policy tool to shape the policies of potential members (2003: 5). It uses membership as leverage in the form of conditionality, directing countries toward a certain set of goals. Copenhagen European Council and Agenda 2000 list the necessary conditions for becoming an EU member<sup>2</sup> (Smith 2003: 15). Membership is not the only benefit the EU can offer, but it's definitely the most advanced one. However, the offer of membership is also not applicable to all countries and should be considered within this limit.

The relationship between the promise of enlargement and conflict resolution has been addressed in a number of studies (Diez, et al., 2004; Tocci 2007). However, the peacemaking component is not sufficiently researched<sup>3</sup> and current studies attempt to theorize the EU's impact without incorporating conflict dynamics such as the political and economic status of disputants and the state of the peace process. Tocci (2007), for instance, argues that the EU's influence on ethnic conflicts is connected to factors like the "subjective" and "objective" value, "timing" and "credibility" of the EU's offer (this can be membership or lesser degrees of incentives like aid). She underlines that the perceived gains from the EU offer are critical and there will be no willingness to abide by conditionality if they are not seen as noteworthy (2007: 21). The factors listed by Tocci are inevitably linked to the notion of consistency. As

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<sup>2</sup> These are respecting democracy and human & minority rights, having a running liberal economy, implementing the legal rules of the EU and conducting good relations with neighbors.

<sup>3</sup> Ker-Lindsay (2005) provides an empirical analysis of peacemaking in Cyprus relative to the EU accession yet leaves theorization aside for future research.

Smith points out, the impact of EU membership conditionality fades away if it's not applied "fairly" and "consistently" to various candidate countries (2003: 16). While Tocci's study puts forward different dimensions that can be used to evaluate the impact of EU membership, it does so at the expense of ignoring conflict dynamics. It is not clear what effects the EU will have on internal political leadership or the possibility of a peace settlement.

The study by Diez et al. (2004) is also crucial for this paper, as they carried out a theoretical impact analysis regarding how the process of integration into the EU affects peace in conflicts surrounding Europe. They identified the EU as a "perturbator," creating a "conflict with the conflict" already existent inside a country (2004: 14). Their focus is on identity and discourse change as a result of EU involvement: acting to influence the top leadership through sticks and carrots, influencing the wider context of societal discourses (2004: 16), interacting with bottom-level actors and facilitating identity change (2004: 17). This theorization resembles ripeness as it incorporates the active involvement of a third party and underlines the impact of external interference on political leadership and society at large. Yet, as in Tocci's analysis, the peace process itself and the disputants are marginalized in the theoretical framework.

### **An Integrated Model of Ripeness**

The following model is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather analytically and predicatively robust enough to assess the viability of EU membership as a tool of ripeness. Thus, based on the discussion above (Zartman, 1989; Stedman, 1991; Pruitt, 2007), a ripe moment can be facilitated to the extent that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a) Disputants are in a “mutually hurting” political and/or economic “deadlock” and entrance to the EU provides a way out.
- b) The EU sets “deadlines” that link the process of enlargement to an agreement on peace terms, pressuring all conflict sides for compliance.
- c) New leaders that see peace more favorably due to the EU membership carrot gain authority (i.e. pro-EU actors may receive support from society as they advocate integration into the EU and need to push forward for peace as the EU requires them to do so), and the EU has the capacity to strengthen pro-peace groups in domestic politics.

It can be argued that the model above is intended to test the following hypothesis:

The incentive of integration into the EU facilitates ripeness and complements international peacemaking efforts, thereby increasing the chances that the disputants can agree on a peace settlement.

The paper now will analyze this hypothesis by applying the model discussed above to the cases of Cyprus and Kosovo. These countries are chosen as both are involved in frozen intrastate conflicts where integration into the EU has played a vital but complex role for peacemaking. The theoretical perspective will disclose the implications of the enlargement incentive relative to a peace settlement. Internal politics and negotiations for a long-lasting resolution will be at the forefront in both cases.

### **The Cyprus Conflict: A Brief Background**

After decades of colonial rule by the UK, Cyprus became independent with the London-Zurich Agreements in 1960. The emerging Cypriot state was based on a power-sharing system between the island's two ethnic communities: Greek Cypriots that constituted 77% of the population and Turkish Cypriots that made up the remaining 18% (Bose, 2007: 68). The new constitution compelled them to live under a single binational state as it explicitly banned the ideas of "enosis" (union of the island with Greece) and "taksim" (partition of the island into two separate states) (Bose, 2007: 71). However, the consociational system of governance quickly led to immobilism and deadlock, particularly because the Greek Cypriots perceived that the Turkish Cypriots possessed disproportionate influence (Bose, 2007: 75). This was related to the rights granted to Turkish Cypriots that didn't correspond to the demographic conditions of the island.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after the Greek Cypriot leader Makarios proposed constitutional amendments that would degrade the powers of Turkish Cypriots in 1963, violence erupted on the island. This led to the deployment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in March 1964 (Ker-Lindsay, 2005: 11). The accompanying UN mediation attempts in the 1964-1974 period failed to stabilize the country and interethnic tensions continued to escalate (Ker-Lindsay, 2005). In 1974, Greek Cypriot radicals carried out a military coup in favor of enosis. As a result, Turkey decided to act based on its role as a "guarantor" country, which was recognized in the London-Zurich Agreements. When it failed to convince the UK to intervene jointly (Dodd, 2010: 111-112), it carried out a unilateral military operation in 1974. When a lasting ceasefire was achieved, the Turkish army occupied around 37% of the island, which came under the de facto control of Turkish Cypriots. The Greek Cypriots retained power only in the southern part (Christou, 2004: 52).

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<sup>4</sup> See Dodd (2010) for a detailed explanation of the 1960 Constitution and the rights of each ethnic community.

The peacemaking efforts mainly led by the UN proved to be fruitless in the following decades. Although both sides agreed in principle to form a common federal state based on “bizonality” and “bicommunality,” they couldn’t reach a compromise over the peace terms regarding sensitive issues like security, return of refugees and power-sharing (Bose, 2007). Complicating the situation, the Turkish Cypriot state declared its independence under the leadership of Rauf Denktas in 1983, only to be recognized by Turkey. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) strongly criticized the decision and requested its withdrawal (Dodd, 2010: 149). This strengthened the international isolation experienced by the Turkish Cypriots, who were already disconnected from the world market after the Turkish intervention and faced severe economic blockades. They were both politically and economically dependent on Turkey’s support. Meanwhile, Greek Cypriots were quick to restructure their political, social and economic order after the de facto partition and achieved economic growth, also thanks to the de jure recognition enjoyed by the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) (Christou, 2004: 52-53).

A European component was largely absent from the conflict up until the beginning of the 1990s. The European Community (EC) played a trivial role regarding Cyprus by only supporting the UN and the US, who tried to ensure the continuity of the negotiation process between the two ethnic communities (Michael, 2009: 151). It was only after the Greek Cypriot application for full membership that the EC/EU started to significantly shape the course of the conflict. With the hope of balancing the power of Turkey, which stood firmly behind the Turkish Cypriot state, the RoC submitted its application for integration to the EU in July 1990 (Michael, 2009: 152).

### **Cyprus and the EU: An Analysis of Ripeness (1993-2005)**

To what extent did the EU manage to create the ripe moment in Cyprus? The answer depends on the interaction between the EU and the conflict parties, Turkish and Greek Cypriots. It will be argued that Turkey should also be evaluated as a special actor in conflict rather than an external party because of its bid for EU membership and dense political-economic linkages with the non-recognized Turkish Cypriot state. Greece's role will be addressed particularly as an EU member.

#### *Deadlock and a way out*

The two Cypriot communities were definitely in a political deadlock during the 1990s as no solution was in sight, but this wasn't hurting the disputants in the same degree. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) was in a more difficult position as it was still not recognized in the international arena, despite having all the operational features and structures of a state. Greek Cypriots fully controlled the RoC, which enjoyed international recognition and had a seat at the UN General Assembly, yet they lacked "de facto sovereignty" in the north (Carkoglu and Sozen, 2004: 124). Despite all the international support the Greek Cypriots enjoyed, they still didn't possess enough leverage to break the deadlock in their favor, particularly because of Turkey's strong commitment to the TRNC. As Ker-Lindsay (2005) argues, Turkey didn't experience any major setback in international affairs because of its policy on Cyprus.<sup>5</sup>

In the economic sphere, again the deadlock was hurting the Turkish Cypriots much more. As a result of ongoing economic isolation and trade embargoes, GDP per capita in the TRNC (around \$4,000) was only 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the RoC's figure in 2002 (Bose, 2007: 92). This was compensated to a certain extent by the financial subsidies provided by Turkey to the TRNC administration (Bose, 2007: 92). The deterioration of economic conditions in both Turkey and

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<sup>5</sup> Turkey's key relationships with the US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remained robust (Ker-Lindsay, 2005: 4).

the TRNC throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, however, made it much more challenging to maintain the status quo (Carkoglu and Sozen, 2004: 129-130). While the economic difficulties didn't bring about a radical shift toward resolution, they facilitated the process of ripeness as the support for hardliners in the TRNC started to erode slowly (Carkoglu and Sozen, 2004).

The issue of EU membership became closely associated with the conflict after the Greek Cypriot application for accession. While the EU had the potential to facilitate ripeness, it was only able to provide a "way out" for Turkish Cypriots. For the Greek Cypriots, the EU membership incentive started as a roadmap toward resolution, but it was gradually perceived as something more beneficial – a form of leverage to achieve a better outcome (Dodd, 2010). When the EU Commission responded to the Greek Cypriot application in 1993, it evaluated the resolution of the Cyprus conflict as a "precondition" for integration. It adopted a balanced approach by implying that the failure of negotiations because of Turkish Cypriot reluctance can lead to the RoC's membership within the status quo (Tocci, 2007: 45). Yet, it later abandoned this perspective in favor of the Greek Cypriots, disregarding resolution as a precondition by confirming Cyprus' candidacy in 1997 and starting accession negotiations a year later (Christou, 2004: 72). When the RoC signed the Accession Treaty in 2003, it became certain that its EU membership was guaranteed without a settlement (Michael, 2009: 157).

Greece as an insider played a significant role in this. It was able to link the fate of Greek Cypriot membership to the other key interests of the EU, like enlargement to the European Free Trade Area and Eastern Europe, via the threat of veto (Tocci, 2007: 52). In the end, the EU membership carrot without the requirement of a resolution strengthened the perception of Greek Cypriots that they can break the deadlock in their favor by obtaining additional means of pressure over Turkey and Turkish Cypriots. This was especially important considering that Turkey still remained a candidate country and Turkish Cypriots were left outside the EU in practice.

The incentive of integration to the EU had rather different effects on the TRNC and Turkey in terms of the deadlock. The EU applied “strict conditionality” to both actors, linking the prospect of membership to a lasting settlement on the island (Christou, 2004: 178). While the nationalist elite have been reluctant to reach a compromise for the sake of EU membership, it became clear at the beginning of the 2000s that there was a shift of opinion at the public level. Most of the population, experiencing “isolation, economic stagnation and high unemployment” for many years, looked very favorably to becoming part of Europe, particularly because of the economic gains, and demanded a more flexible line in peace negotiations (Michael, 2009: 166). At the same time, the EU made it very clear that Turkish accession will not be realized without a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem, one that exceeds the formal requirements set with the Copenhagen criteria (Christou, 2004: 149). This substantially contributed to the formation of a “new Cyprus policy” by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in Turkey, which differed from previous policies of promoting two separate and independent states in Cyprus (Celenk, 2007: 350). The new policy recognized that a mutually-acceptable settlement should be sought through negotiations with positive contribution from Turkey (Celenk, 2007: 351).

The prospect of enlargement came on to the international scene when a hurting stalemate was present for both Cypriot communities. The deadlock wasn't experienced equally, but the EU still possessed the potential to make the conflict actors riper. Yet, it gained limited success because its management of the process made the EU part of the deadlock that it was expected to break.

#### *Setting deadlines*

To what extent did the EU set deadlines to put pressure on the disputants? It adopted a reactive rather than a proactive role and supported the UN's lead on peacemaking. Yet, it lacked a clear perspective on how a peace agreement could be achieved, creating the difficulty

of how to ripen Turkey and the TRNC. It refrained from using conditionality to gain leverage over the party that was hurt less, that is, the Greek Cypriots. The EU attitude toward the Greek Cypriot membership created “conflicting calendars” with the UN efforts to come up with a settlement, especially by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the early 2000s (Michael, 2009: 170).

Michael identifies three “turning points” where the EU’s influence was of particular importance: the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002, the signing of the accession agreement with Greek Cypriots in April 2003 and the final accession date of the RoC in May 2004 (2009: 170-171). The Copenhagen Council failed to set an effective deadline, mainly because Turkey didn’t give in to EU pressure regarding Cyprus without an explicit date for commencing the accession negotiations (Ker-Lindsay, 2005: 45). The UN proposed to have the Annan Plan voted just before April 2003, which can be evaluated as the second deadline. Yet, no party including the EU could convince the TRNC leader Denktas to take the Plan to a referendum, which also gave a safe shelter to his Greek counterpart Papadopoulos. It is not only that the Turkish Cypriot position was weakened, but the last chance of getting an agreement with the Greek Cypriots before their EU membership was also lost (Dodd, 2010: 233).

The final deadline, the date of Greek Cypriot accession, had divergent effects from those of the first two. The main reason was the parliamentary elections in the TRNC in December 2003, in which the pro-Annan (and pro-EU) parties gained half of the seats (Carkoglu and Sozen, 2004: 132). Not only was a more moderate government formed that perceived the need for an urgent solution (see below), but also the Turkish government saw this as an opportunity to push for a resolution. A month before the TRNC elections, the EU Progress Report had again noted that Turkey had to play an active role in settlement and the status quo could be an enduring problem for its integration process (Dodd, 2010: 238). Within

this context, the UN was able to persuade the Cypriot communities to take the Annan Plan to a referendum. The government of Turkey actively supported a “Yes” vote and the Turkish Cypriot community voted in favor by 64.95%. The Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly voted for “No” by 75.83% (Bose, 2007: 100). Unlike the former, the Greek Cypriots didn’t change their positions as the upcoming deadline wasn’t perceived to introduce any detrimental costs.

Deadlines only work if they create a sense of urgency and have to be treated cautiously in order not to further entrench a conflict. The costs associated with the first two deadlines weren’t sufficient to bring about a compromise. The upcoming Greek Cypriot accession compelled only the Turkish Cypriots to seek a solution. Consequently, the EU needs to better coordinate its enlargement process with international efforts for a successful settlement.

#### *New leadership and strengthening pro-peace groups*

The EU affected the peacemaking process through the impact of the offer of membership on the domestic politics of both conflict sides. Yet, the case of Cyprus demonstrated the limits of the EU’s impact on the outcome of elections and the attitudes of political leaders.

In the RoC, there was no leadership change between 1993-2003, and Glafcos Clerides as the president managed to secure the RoC’s inclusion in the next line of enlargement (Christophorou, 2003). However, the EU did succeed in making the Clerides administration more moderate and open to compromise by offering the membership carrot (Ker-Lindsay, 2005: 133). Even in the 2003 presidential elections, Clerides made it clear that he was in favor of the Annan Plan. Yet, even with his success in guaranteeing Greek Cypriot membership, the community didn’t think that he needed to be elected again because of his governance record, old age to stand office and confusing promises (Christophorou, 2003: 113-114). Instead, Tassos Papadopoulos, known for his hardliner stance, was elected president and later

campaigned against the UN plan before the referendum, even though the EU desired otherwise (Ker-Lindsay, 2005: 127). This shows how domestic political developments can constitute the limits of EU influence in creating ripeness.

The politics of the TRNC was dominated by the continuously re-elected president Denktas and his home political organization, the National Unity Party (UBP), in the 1990s up until the 2003 parliamentary elections. Denktas and UBP were committed to EU membership, but they strongly advocated an independent TRNC and legitimization of the status quo (Carkoglu and Sozen, 2004: 127). However, a sizable opposition to Denktas and UBP emerged in the early 2000s, including left-wing political parties and various NGOs. They blamed the rigid attitude of the Denktas leadership toward resolution for lagging behind the Greek Cypriots regarding EU accession (Michael, 2009: 166).

The prospect of EU enlargement created a political push for resolution in the TRNC by increasing the visibility of these “opposition forces” at national, regional and global levels (Christou, 2004: 176). This, in 2003, contributed to the victory of the pro-resolution parties, the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) and the Peace and Democracy Movement (BDH), as the whole election was “solely” focused on the resolution of the dispute with the Annan Plan and EU accession (Carkoglu and Sozen, 2004: 130). Even after the failure of the Annan Plan, the desire for EU membership consolidated the dominant position of CTP and its leader Talat in the 2005 elections (Sozen, 2005: 474). The case of the TRNC shows that the level of ripeness can differ within a single conflict party and the EU has the potential to empower riper actors in the political sphere.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In the last stages of my research, I found an earlier study by Tocci (2004), which has some similarities with my analysis in this chapter. Tocci also suggests the application of the ripeness concept to an assessment of the impact of the EU on conflict resolution in the case of Cyprus. However, my study differentiates itself in several important aspects. I focus solely on the concept of ripeness as a heuristic device that can be applied in peacemaking. The emphasis is not on the broader topic of conflict resolution and there are no other, different theoretical frameworks, as there are in Tocci's analysis. I try to distinguish between different aspects of the

### **The Kosovo Conflict: A Brief Background**

Kosovo became an autonomous territory under the Yugoslav Republic with the 1974 constitution. After the death of Tito and the weakening of Yugoslav identity, Kosovar Albanians demanded “republic status” for the province. Yet, Milosevic didn’t give in to these calls and stripped Kosovo of its autonomous status in 1991. As a result, Kosovar Albanians established their own “state apparatus,” which continued to defend the Kosovar right to rule. The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) was the local leading party that controlled this governance framework (Klasnja, 2007: 16).

LDK’s goals fell short of an independent Kosovo and it increasingly became sidelined against the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which was a rebel-like organization that had a more aggressive and violent stance. The strengthening of KLA created a very repressive and harsh reaction by the Milosevic government, leading to a high number of civilian deaths and massive displacement on the side of Kosovar Albanians (Klasnja, 2007: 16). The inability to stop the Serbian aggression within the UN framework eventually brought about the involvement of NATO. As a result of the NATO airstrikes against Serbia in 1999, Kosovar Albanians assumed full “de facto” control of Kosovo. UNSC Resolution 1244 marked the end of the NATO operation, but it was a “ceasefire, not a peace agreement” (Yannis, 2009: 162). It didn’t clearly state the future of the Kosovo province, leaving the issues of sovereignty and governance ambiguous. While the Resolution maintained the unity of Serbia in legal terms, Serbia lacked sovereignty over Kosovo in practice. At the same time, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was created to administer Kosovo until a permanent resolution to the conflict could be reached, turning the territory into an international protectorate (Yannis, 2009: 163).

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concept of ripeness in order to come up with an integrated model, while Tocci doesn’t delve into the various components like deadlocks or deadlines. Lastly, the goal here is to draw general conclusions regarding the EU’s offer of membership, and the results of the analysis of Cyprus are compared with those of Kosovo.

The Kosovo issue has been highly internationalized since the outbreak of violence in 1999. The Contact Group is the most important grouping of states for the Kosovo conflict, which includes the US, Russia, France, the UK, Germany and Italy. As a result of the diplomatic weight of these countries in different international platforms, decisions of the Contact Group are usually reflected in the actions of the EU, UNSC and NATO (Perritt, 2009: 80). Any disagreement equally contributes to the complexity of the situation. Furthermore, regardless of the interests of great powers, neither the Contact Group nor the UNMIK could delay the question of Kosovo's status forever. The dissatisfaction of Kosovar Albanians with the uncertain status of Kosovo led to the violent March 2004 riots, revealing the urgency to act (Perritt, 2009: 81).

The EU has been actively involved in the Kosovo conflict from the beginning. It launched the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) during the Kosovo war, which introduced the membership perspective for Western Balkan countries with the expectation of bringing long-term peace to the region. The promise of enlargement was again confirmed with the 2003 Thessaloniki European Council (Smith, 2008: 314). The EU also assumed direct responsibility in Kosovo within the UNMIK framework, funding the activities under Pillar IV which aimed at improving the economic progress of the country (Klasnja, 2007: 17). The growing presence of the EU in the region and the territory-based contestation between the Kosovar Albanians and Serbs eventually gave rise to the idea of a "European solution" to the conflict. Since EU membership was desired by both ethnic communities, it was expected that the integration process would gain priority over the status of Kosovo (Yannis, 2009: 163).

**Kosovo and the EU: An Analysis of Ripeness (1999-2008)**

How did the EU perform in consolidating ripeness in the Kosovo conflict? Did it take the necessary actions to strengthen the ripe moment? In order to answer these questions, the chain of events in Kosovo and Serbia will be evaluated with the ripeness model deployed before. The presence of a deadlock, the existence of deadlines that pressure parties for resolution and the emergence of pro-peace leadership/other political groups will be the criteria which determine the success of the EU membership incentive.

*Deadlock and a way out*

While the Kosovo issue has attracted many international actors with different interests, it is important to recognize that the highly irreconcilable positions of Kosovar Albanians and Serbs lie at the heart of the conflict. The deadlock emerged from how these two communities saw the past, the current status and the future of the Kosovo province. For the Kosovar Albanians, independence had already been achieved after the war in 1999 and the international administration was just a stumbling block against a separate state. For the Serb minority in Kosovo and the Serbian government, Kosovo remained under the sovereignty of Serbia and the end of de facto Serbian control over Kosovo was against international law (Perritt, 2009: 76). The same mindset continued to exist in the aftermath of the March 2004 riots, when the international community decided that it was time to start the negotiations regarding Kosovo's status. For Kosovar Albanians, anything less than unconditional independence and sovereignty was not acceptable. The Serbs were ready to introduce some form of mutually-acceptable autonomy to the province, but were strictly against secession (Altmann, 2006: 147). However, neither side was strong enough to win the conflict on the desired terms. As the Serbian administration and the Kosovar Albanian government didn't possess the necessary economic and military power to prevail over one another, it was up to the international community to come up with a sustainable resolution (Perritt, 2009:95).

The high degree of foreign involvement in the conflict complicates the analysis of a mutually-hurting stalemate. While the Kosovar Albanians lacked a *de jure* recognized state in the 2000s, they still had their own local political framework, including a parliament and a president. This was a consequence of the "Provisional Institutions for Self-Government" that was created in 2002 within the UNMIK setting (Klasnja, 2007: 17). In the political sphere, this made a resolution less urgent for the Kosovar Albanians, as the persistence of a deadlock didn't prevent them from running their own state mechanism in practice.

The picture was rather different for Kosovo's economy. Despite extensive international support and aid, Kosovo still didn't have a sustainable local economy. In 2005, its GDP was the lowest among the Western Balkan states and unemployment was around 40% (Papadimitriou, et al., 2007: 233). The economic hardships were inevitably connected to the uncertain status of Kosovo. It was difficult for Kosovo to establish trade links with other countries, most importantly its neighbors. It couldn't officially become part of the free trade regime under the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the financial system governed by institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Papadimitriou, et al., 2007: 234). Yet, because of the political context, this fueled the desire of Kosovar Albanians for independence, not for a mutually-acceptable solution with the Serbs.

Serbia wasn't hurt either from the ongoing stalemate in a degree that made it urgent to reach a compromise. While Kosovo was a barrier to the consolidation of the Serbian state and society, as well as to its democratization and the creation of a well-functioning economy, no Serbian government could make concessions, as that would have severely undermined domestic political support (Ristic, 2009: 51). Serbian officials were increasingly aware that Kosovo as an autonomous territory was no longer an attainable goal, but refrained from acknowledging it because of this reason. The Contact Group also recognized that a return to the pre-1999 status (meaning Serbian control) was not possible (Altmann, 2006: 148). Yet, it

should also be stated that Russia prevented international pressure on Serbia by using its diplomatic weight in nearly all attempts of peacemaking. Serbia was a traditional ally and a bridge for Russian influence in the Balkans. The Russian support definitely contributed to the rigid stance of Serbia regarding Kosovo's independence (Perritt, 2009).

A "European solution" to the problem increasingly came to the fore as the EU membership incentive was seen as the only leverage capable of overcoming the deadlock. It was expected that the supranational nature of the EU and the decreasing importance of the borders/territory of the nation state within the integration framework would facilitate a resolution. This was not about putting forward the technical details of the settlement or an exact territorial status, but rather a more forward-looking, comprehensive and "tangible" perspective that could help Serbia and Kosovo reach a compromise (Yannis, 2009: 169). The Ahtisaari peace process, which produced the Ahtisaari Plan in March 2007, was a reflection of this mentality in practice. The plan proposed the idea that Kosovo should proceed toward independence under international supervision, but only if multiethnicity were accepted as a ground rule and the rights of different minority groups, especially the Serbs, were protected (Hughes, 2009: 298). It was the EU that would carry out the envisioned supervisory role and prepare Kosovo for eventual membership in this manner. It would assume direct responsibility with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), taking over the duties of UNMIK (Pond, 2008: 99).

In a general sense, the conflict parties were in a hurting stalemate, but it wasn't strong enough to push for a resolution. Yet, the EU still had the potential to provide a way out and peacemaking efforts started to revolve around this idea.

#### *Setting deadlines*

The EU had the capacity to enhance ripeness, but to what extent was it able to utilize it? It failed to put sufficient pressure on either disputant as a result of its lack of concern for its

actions in peacemaking and its inability to take a common stance in the moments that could have served as deadlines.

When the Ahtisaari process reached an impasse, the EU couldn't deliver any effective deadlines because it didn't take into account the peacemaking consequences of its involvement. Neglecting the uncertain status of Kosovo and the ongoing peacemaking efforts, the EU had already legitimized the political structures in Kosovo by initiating the membership process and providing financial support under its "Instrument for pre-Accession" and other aid mechanisms (Economides, et al., 2010: 103). As a result, the EU membership carrot couldn't act as leverage as Kosovar Albanians just had to wait and "could only win" (Altmann, 2006: 152). Kosovo was being treated as a separate entity as early as 2002, as it was included in the SAP through a parallel framework, the Stability Tracking Mechanism. This approach strengthened Kosovo's hand in pursuing unilateral independence (Klasnja, 2007: 22). The Kosovar Albanians started to believe that they could pursue EU membership as an independent state.

On the Serbian side, the EU also failed to effectively manage the process, as Kosovo's bid for independence could have been used as a deadline. Since the Serbs were in no position to stop Kosovo's declaration, the explicit linkage of the Serbian membership could have made the Serbs more flexible toward resolution. Yet, the EU treated Kosovo as irrelevant to Serbia's desire for integration (Batt, 2009: 123). This had negative implications for the peace process, making it much harder to reach a compromise using the membership carrot. Pro-EU forces in Serbia started to believe that they could "have both Kosovo and the EU" and the EU could be brought in line with the Serbian position (Batt, 2009: 124). The EU again failed to create the sense of urgency on its part.

In order for the EU to set deadlines, it has to have a united stance. There were significant divisions between the member states in the time period leading to Kosovo's

independence. Five member states,<sup>7</sup> which were against Kosovo's secession from the beginning, didn't recognize the new Kosovar state and thus prevented an EU position (Hughes, 2009: 297). Ironically, the member states were able to agree to deploy CSDP's most comprehensive mission in the post-independence era, EULEX, hoping that strengthening the institutions of Kosovo would make the country ready for membership (Pond, 2008: 104). Again, this move ignored the peacemaking context and strengthened the status quo.

*New leadership and strengthening pro-peace groups*

The EU membership carrot proved to be a valuable leverage to support the more moderate pro-EU leaders in Serbia and Kosovo. Yet, the link between pursuing EU membership and favoring a compromise on Kosovo's status was very unclear. The EU was restrained by its lack of control over the actions and fate of significant political figures.

The prospect of membership per se can contribute to the political power of domestic actors, without any direct EU action. In the early 2000s, Djindic emerged as a popular leader who focused on the long-term interests of Serbia as a future EU member. Most Western states thought that Djindic could manage Kosovo's partition and direct the country toward Europe. Yet, he was assassinated in 2003 by radical nationalist groups (Perritt, 2009: 96). After the death of Djindic, the political scene was dominated by Tadic, the leader of Djindic's Democratic Party (DS), and Kostunica, who was leading the more nationalist Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS). Kostunica increasingly adopted a radical position, particularly by preventing Kosovo from being a bygone in the hopes of EU membership (Perritt, 2009: 85).

The political scene was dominated by the nationalist parties until the 2008 parliamentary elections, where the EU actively promoted Tadic's DS. Fearing another victory by the nationalist parties in the aftermath of Kosovo's independence, the EU signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia in 2008 to strengthen Tadic, and it

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<sup>7</sup> Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Slovakia and Spain.

succeeded in doing so. Tadic's pro-EU electoral coalition got most of the votes with 38.4% (Konitzer, 2009: 142-143). The elections also revealed that the Serbian public was quicker in shifting their "priorities"<sup>8</sup> than the political elite in the aftermath of Kosovo's partition (Biserko, 2009: 77). However, Tadic's victory per se didn't make Serbia more open to compromise.

The EU's mark in Kosovar Albanian politics was less definite. Kosovo had three important political parties in the political scene after the Kosovo War: LDK led by Rugova, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (DPK) headed by Thaçi and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) under the leadership of Haradinaj. The West perceived Rugova as a weak leader without effective authority and Thaçi as a symbol of militaristic politics and refrained from providing support (Ingimundarson, 2007: 103). The EU, together with the US, explicitly opposed Thaçi's premiership in 2002 (Ingimundarson, 2007: 103). Haradinaj, on the other hand, was seen as a moderate and modernist figure. He received significant diplomatic support from the international community (Ingimundarson, 2007: 106). Yet, in 2005, the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia (ICTY) charged and arrested Haradinaj for his role in the events of 1999. Even though he was allowed to temporarily participate in Kosovar politics at the request of the UN's Special Representative, he had to remain in the background because of his status (Perritt, 2009: 99). Furthermore, Kosovo went ahead with the "unilateral declaration of independence" under Thaçi, despite explicit warnings from the EU foreign ministers to delay the process (BBC News, 2007).

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<sup>8</sup> Kostunica's DSS lost the elections despite its emphasis on opposing Kosovo's independence.

### **Comparative Analysis and Evaluation**

In the analyzed periods, Cyprus and Kosovo were both "frozen" conflicts in which territory and sovereignty were contested. EU membership became a viable possibility after high-scale violence had already ended. The incentive of accession demonstrated a vast potential for enhancing ripeness, but not without certain requirements and limits.

In both conflicts, the disputants were in a deadlock and unable to win the conflict. Yet, in neither conflict were all disputants hurt in the same way. Kosovar Albanians and Turkish Cypriots were suffering more both politically and economically. The status quo was still sustainable to a degree with outside support from Turkey for the Turkish Cypriots and from the UNMIK for Kosovar Albanians. Thus, the required sense of urgency for a resolution was absent. The EU membership carrot, under these relatively insufficient conditions for ripeness, still provided an alternative future in both cases with its associated benefits (and costs of not pursuing them).

The membership incentive is useful for peacemaking to the degree that the EU is able to wield it. The cases revealed the gaps in the EU's capacity to contribute to the existence of a ripe moment: acting without a clear peacemaking perspective, abstaining from linking the prospect of membership to a compromise and not possessing the willingness and/or capability to act in a united manner. The EU could put forward effective deadlines only by overcoming these problems.

The EU lacked an explicit peacemaking agenda and its actions were often counterproductive. The granting of EU membership to Greek Cypriots before a resolution and treating Kosovo as an individual state very early on complicated the problem of how a peace settlement could be achieved. Also, the EU refrained from making a peace settlement a precondition for enlargement in both cases, except for the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey. Interestingly, these two parties became much riper than others as a result of the EU's attitude.

The EU didn't need a united and proactive position in the Cyprus conflict because there were no major stakes like in Kosovo, except for Greece. The membership incentive rather boosted the expectations of Greek Cypriots to win, making them unripe. Kosovo wasn't a case of EU unity either, though most member states were actively involved in the conflict. The different interests and visions of member states prevented the effective management of the struggle for Kosovo's status.

The EU's capacity to empower pro-peace leadership and groups is significant but remains limited by domestic political developments and the ambiguous link between having a pro-EU stance and advocating a compromise. In both cases, the elections determined the attitudes of the political leaders and reflected the will of the public, over which the EU had only limited means of control. Clerides' failure in the 2003 elections in the Republic of Cyprus and nationalist victories after Djindic's assassination in Serbia reflected this reality. Also, the desire for EU membership doesn't automatically translate into a flexible position for resolution. The hardliner parties like Denktas' UBP and Kostunica's DSS didn't oppose membership in principle. Even Tadic's DS, which won the elections with substantial support from the EU, didn't alter Serbia's position on Kosovo.

The analysis of the two cases fails to confirm the hypothesis that the EU paves the way for the ripe moment and complements international peacemaking activities. Effective and coordinated management of the conflict and the accession process lies at the core of the EU's impact. Under the current circumstances, the EU is unable to translate the power of the membership offer into influence.

**Limitations**

There are two types of weaknesses in this study that need to be addressed: the deficiencies of using ripeness as a conceptual framework and problems regarding the analysis of EU membership as a tool of ripeness.

While ripeness analysis is useful in terms of explanatory power, it is limited by the fact that there is no single agreed definition or form of ripeness (Kleiboer, 1994). It becomes particularly difficult to trace causality under these circumstances, as each study sets forth its own model like this one. The problem of studying causal links is exacerbated by the impotence of ripeness in capturing the interaction between a wide range of external actors. It is not just the EU that affects peacemaking activities and the challenge to incorporate a multiplicity of international players within the ripeness framework is apparent. For instance, the US and the UN repeatedly tried to reach a peace settlement in Cyprus (Ker-Lindsay, 2005), which definitely affected how the EU membership carrot performed. In a similar manner, NATO presence and Russian involvement in the Kosovo conflict have defined the context in which the EU operates (Yannis, 2009). Yet, there is only a limited theoretical basis to accommodate these factors.

The second set of limitations is related to the choice of EU accession as a facilitative instrument for ripeness. Conflict resolution in general and peacemaking in particular are not the only considerations of the EU with regard to enlargement. The process of accession is a long-term, transformative process where candidate states have to fulfill the political and economic requirements set by the EU. The EU itself also has to be ready to "absorb new members" (Smith, 2008: 306). At the same time, the EU may enhance ripeness not just through the accession process, but also with the use of a combination of other tools, ranging from financial aid to external trade agreements.

## Conclusion and Implications

Developing its own model of ripeness, this study evaluated the effect of potential EU membership on peacemaking in frozen conflicts. The cases of Cyprus and Kosovo revealed that the EU's offers of accession are not contributing to peacemaking attempts by the international community. While EU enlargement is a potential source of leverage not possessed by official mediators like the UN, it remains insufficient to achieve the desired results and even leads to counterproductive consequences.

The EU's unconcern for how its actions shape the peacemaking process severely undermines the strength of the membership offer. The EU refrains from making accession conditional on a peace settlement, while the research here suggests that explicit settlement conditionality may be the right course of action. Also, an overarching problem of EU foreign policy-making, the capacity to "speak with one voice" (Gebhard, 2008: 109), is again existent, as the divergent views of member states complicate an effective EU role.

There are several implications of this study for future research and possible EU action. First, following Stedman's idea that ripeness can be sought outside the boundaries of military stalemate (1991), it is shown that the concept is applicable as a theory to the political and economic spheres for peacemaking analysis. Further studies can address the limitations in terms of causality and evaluation of other external players. Also, ripeness can provide the necessary conceptual framework to assess the influence of other EU instruments used in conflict management, as recognized by Tocci (2007) and Diez et al. (2004), such as free trade agreements or aid provided under European Neighborhood Policy.

The EU can draw lessons from its involvement in Cyprus and Kosovo with regard to the membership perspective. Then, it will be more capable of managing the conflicts in countries where a European future is currently possible or may be so in the long term. Turkey's Kurdish question, the uncertain future of Transnistria - Moldova and Bosnia's

fragile political situation signal that the EU may have to step in with the accession incentive again. It is of paramount importance that the EU learn from its mistakes to play a contributive role in the field of peacemaking.

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