

## EU Policy on the Southern Caucasus<sup>1</sup>

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2003, it was said, would be a crucial year for all South Caucasus republics. The elections to take place in the three states would test their democratic development. In preparation for these elections, Western governments and European organizations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and the OSCE made joint efforts to improve the electoral system and electoral observation process.<sup>2</sup> All three states failed to pass this test, but to different degrees.

In the case of Georgia, the lack of legitimacy of the newly elected parliament led to regime change. For the second time since Georgian independence in 1991, a democratically elected president was overthrown by a popular revolt. And Western governments twice approved of such a move, in the hope that a new leadership would allow radical state reforms to take place and would avert the total collapse of the political order. But there are some signs of progress in this peculiar type of regime change. Unlike in the winter of 1991-1992, when President Zviad Gamsakhurdia was forcibly toppled from power, now Georgia is not isolated on the international scene. The American and Russian governments have been actively involved in attempts to mediate between the state's leadership and its opposition. Such mediation efforts may largely account for the fact that the transition could now remain peaceful, in contrast to the bloody civil war of 1991-1992.

All three South Caucasus states are confronted with the risk of possible failure in establishing statehood. Neither Georgia nor Azerbaijan has sovereign control over its entire territory. A refusal by Achara to take part in the coming presidential and parliamentary elections in Georgia would mean that a new 'de facto' state had been established in the South Caucasus. Armenia's borders are largely closed to trade. None of the three states is capable of managing the conflicts with its neighbours or its national minorities by relying solely on its own means. All three are dependent on outside support in order to keep their state and economy afloat.

In principle, the fact that the South Caucasus was opened up to the world during the 1990s creates favourable conditions for economic development and prosperity. But international involvement in regional affairs is not sufficient for consolidating statehood or successfully carrying out the wide range of reforms necessary. Russia and the US – with their opposing geopolitical agendas – are perceived as relatively strong players in the region. The European Union, on the contrary, is perceived as a weak one. As indeed it is.

### *The European Union as a weak player: the perspective from the periphery*

The EU is perceived in the region as being weak: the consolidation of statehood at the domestic level and all prospects for regional and European integration are – for recognized and unrecognized states alike – linked to a settlement of the secessionist and border conflicts they are all involved in.<sup>3</sup> It is assumed that a 'just' solution to these conflicts would result from fundamental changes in the balance of power. Such a shift would strengthen these states' own position, thereby allowing the imposition of a 'legitimate' solution. Up to now, settlements involving complex federal formulas, or

based on territorial exchanges, have not been perceived as either just or viable. The lack of legitimacy attributed to compromise solutions is largely due to the fact that all these conflicts have gone through an extremely violent stage during which international humanitarian law has not been respected and serious injustices have been inflicted on both sides.

This view means that geopolitical calculations and vague expectations of a strategic realignment in the region dominate all political discourses on national, regional and European integration. Both Russia and the US are perceived to have sufficient strategic interests in the region to bring about such a realignment. From the perspective of the unrecognized states, Russia's strategic interest in preserving a foothold in the region makes them confident that they will not be subdued against their will into a federal arrangement. From the perspective of Azerbaijan and Georgia, greater involvement by the US and NATO may lead in the long run to a realignment of forces that would be to their advantage.

The EU has a subordinate role in these calculations. Its potential for determining the future of the region, for instance through its relations with Russia or by supporting US policies, is as yet merely a matter of conjecture. In the short term, the EU is not perceived by any of the parties – be they recognized or unrecognized governments – as having a decisive impact on the regional balance of power, as:

- (1) in the various mediation efforts it speaks not with one voice but with the many voices of its member states;
- (2) it is not seen as being motivated to change the balance of power in the Caucasus region by confronting Russia on issues that it does not consider to be vital to its interests;
- (3) it is unable to define the criteria for possible future participation in European integration by the South Caucasus.

In the long term, however, in the balance of power calculations by the recognized small states and the unrecognized micro-states, the EU is seen as being able to make a difference: the unrecognized states hope that the EU could normalize its relations with them, gradually paving the way for their political and economic integration into the region – according to their 'best case' scenario, going right up to international recognition. For the recognized governments, EU membership would dramatically raise their status in the eyes of their neighbours, in particular Russia and Turkey. Even if such full integration within the EU is not foreseeable, it remains a long-term political objective. Apart from balance of power calculations, it also meets domestic political concerns, as long as stability, national strength and economic well-being are perceived by a large proportion of public opinion to derive from closer links with the Western world.

This dual view of balance of power considerations (the EU perceived as a weak but not an irrelevant player) and European integration (perceived as a weak but not irrelevant form of integration) is mirrored by the dominant attitude among the political élites in the South Caucasus to the international security organizations. The European Union has strongly supported the efforts by the OSCE to mediate in the conflicts on Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia, and those of the UN in Abkhazia. These efforts have so far failed to lead to a settlement. This is likewise perceived by the conflicting parties in the region to be the result of the present balance of power between the main external players. Unlike with the secessionist conflicts in the Balkans, where the international community accepted the leading role in the imposition of a political solution

of either the United States (Dayton Agreement) or the European Union (Constitutional Charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro), there is no such agreement in the South Caucasus on the leading role of any country or organization.

European integration processes based on common values and norms, and on the enforcement of the rule of law, are perceived in the region as being subordinate to the existing balance of power. Moreover, such forms of Europeanization are, by definition, 'weak' forms of integration. This does not mean that they are irrelevant: the conflicts in the South Caucasus are first and foremost identity conflicts in which claims of closeness to Europe are used by all sides to enhance the legitimacy of their cause.

### *The European Union as a weak player: the perspective from the centre*

In Brussels too, the European Union is seen as being a weak player in the South Caucasus, but for different reasons from those given by the various players in the region itself. Balance of power considerations are not absent from the EU's policies, but they are seen as subordinate to the establishment of a dense network of institutions throughout the whole of Eastern Europe, capable of guiding and assisting the post-communist countries through their process of domestic transformation.

Some EU member states have bilateral military cooperation programmes in the region. There are also military observers from EU member states in the UNOMIG mission in Abkhazia. Within the framework of its CFSP, the European Union has given material support to the OSCE observer mission at the Georgian border with the Russian Federation. Future involvement in peace-keeping operations is not to be ruled out. It would therefore not be correct to describe the EU policies as those of a civilian power. But the EU has no military ambitions that could be compared to those of the United States. The EU's concern to ensure energy security dictated its support for a 'Western' pipeline and a policy of diversification of transport routes for oil and gas. But it has no declared interest in containing the influence on the South Caucasus of neighbouring countries – including Iran. The EU and Russia have divergent views on the future of the region, which are low on their bilateral political agenda, but these differences are not conceptualized by the EU within the framework of a balance of power.

The political strengths and weaknesses of the EU have to be defined in a different framework. The EU sees the strength of its foreign policy instruments for Eastern Europe as being their capacity to transfer its own norms and values beyond its boundaries.<sup>4</sup> These instruments are designed to transform domestic structures in accordance with democratic and legal standards. In addition, the behaviour (and not only the discourses) of national élites have to meet the standards in question.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to the secessionist crises in countries that have a more or less reasonable prospect of being integrated into the EU (Cyprus, Serbia and Montenegro, Moldova), the EU has the possibility of using a set of strong incentives and disincentives – including the macro-incentive of membership itself – to transform the parties' conflict behaviour and get them to move towards a negotiated settlement. For the conflicting parties, EU membership opens up the possibility of conceiving their future within the framework of European Union structures – which include open borders, shared forms of sovereignty, multiple layers of citizenship, and particular forms of representation of and involvement by sub-state state entities at the supra-national level. Aspirations to EU

membership thus create a favourable setting for Europeanization and socialization policies.

The capacity for using these incentives is only to a limited extent available to the EU in the South Caucasus. It is available insofar as the political élites of the recognized states in the South Caucasus view some form of closer association with the EU, or even EU membership, in the long term, as a strategic objective, and are keen to enhance their political status through their membership of the European framework organizations, the CoE and OSCE. The EU may thus make use of these aspirations.

Transforming this capacity into a strong foreign policy instrument requires a series of conditions. Two of them are clearly missing. First of all, the EU has traditionally spoken with several voices in the peace processes in the region. It also speaks with the many voices of its constantly rotating presidencies. The appointment of a Special Representative for the South Caucasus in 2003 is intended to address this lack of coherence. But this Special Representative is able to guarantee only minimal continuity between the fluctuating agendas of the various presidencies, and has received a mandate to be the common voice of the Union only on a limited number of issues.

A second factor weakening the EU's position is the lack of strategy on the region. It is difficult to use the instruments of incentives and disincentives to achieve specific results – including the instruments of the 1999 Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) between the EU and the South Caucasus countries – when the EU is itself unable to define its own interests, its medium- and long-term objectives or the means it is willing to use. The European Union is conscious of its security interests in the energy resources of the Caspian. Unlike with the US, however, this has not led to a strong energy policy, despite the deep and long-term involvement of private oil companies from EU countries in the Caspian region since the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

The EU also has a strong objective interest in stability in the region, but its perception of the South Caucasus as a conglomerate of weak and failing states, authoritarian regimes, poor and corrupt economies and unresolved border and secessionist conflicts makes it difficult for it to design a coherent EU strategy. This will remain the case as long as, in particular, the possible consequences of having failed states close to its borders, together with the existing aspirations to Europeanization in the region, and other mobilizing factors for reform, are not sufficiently taken into account. Also, in designing a strategy on the South Caucasus – which will have to include an inventory of potential socializing instruments that are appropriate for weak and failing states – the EU Special Representative has a substantial role to play.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union in the South Caucasus is thus neither sufficiently 'common' nor sufficiently clear to be perceived in the region as a 'policy'. Changing this situation would have to entail: (1) closer coordination with the European and Euro-Atlantic framework organizations, the CoE, OSCE and NATO, and with the international NGO community; (2) the inclusion of the South Caucasus in an EU regional policy on the 'wider Caucasus'; (3) the formulation of clear objectives and socializing instruments when integrating the South Caucasus into the 'wider Europe' framework; (4) the capacity to engage the Russian Federation in a long-term policy of conflict management, to engage the parties involved in a secessionist conflict in a policy of conflict transformation, and to design an institutional perspective for the wider Caucasus that would link post-conflict rehabilitation with the increased

integration of the region into European structures. The significance of a regional Stability Pact has to be discussed in this context.

*The EU and the European/Euro-Atlantic web of security institutions and NGOs*

The EU has both an interest in and a certain potential for ‘Europeanizing’ the South Caucasus region, including its ‘de facto’ states. Europeanization is not necessarily EU-ization, as it has predominantly been taking place with and within the accession countries. Besides the EU, the CoE, the OSCE and NATO are currently institutionalizing specific norms in specific fields of specialization, ranging from *constitutive norms* for the international community, such as democracy and transparency, to more *specific norms*, such as civilian control over the military.<sup>7</sup> These institutions are using a variety of strategies in order to socialize the states of the South Caucasus. Some are using *inclusive strategies* aiming at socializing them from within. All three South Caucasus states were readily accepted as members of the OSCE, and the organization then began to ‘teach’ them new rules of behaviour. The new members had to accept an obligation to internalize the new norms. Other institutions, such as the EU, are following an *exclusive strategy*: the organization explains its constitutive norms which the applicant members are requested to meet before they are entitled to join.

It is striking that the EU is the only organization that has strictly followed an exclusive strategy, without combining it with an inclusive one: NATO, for instance, has set up the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, in which the norms to be met are far easier to comply with than those required for NATO membership. The CoE has followed an intermediate strategy: some norms have to be met before accession, and compliance with a new set of norms is then required upon accession, and is subsequently monitored from within. The fact that the EU – for a whole series of reasons – cannot follow such an intermediate strategy, or create a new institutional framework for European countries that have no reasonable prospect of becoming accession countries, means that in the long run it will have to complement its use of the PCAs and Wider Europe framework by drawing on the existing web of security institutions present in the region, in order to play a socializing role and to be able to make optimal use of its arsenal of incentives and disincentives.

The question of coordination with the existing security institutions is thus crucial. EU links with these organizations are already formally institutionalized with the OSCE and the CoE, but no formal coordination on the South Caucasus exists between the EU and NATO. There is, however, a need for a shared understanding of their respective roles in the region. In respect to a closer coordination, all these institutions are on the demanding side (even though their demands are not necessarily consensual within the organizations and have thus not always been translated into formal requests). Their demands cover a range: from increased dialogue on the South Caucasus (NATO), to a stronger supporting role at both the political and financial levels (OSCE), right up to a fully fledged, formal request for associate membership of the EU within the CoE.<sup>8</sup>

The question of an optimal division of labour between the EU and these other organizations has to be addressed using various criteria, such as each organization’s experiences to date and existing capacities in a given field, and its ability to engage Russia and other strong non-EU members (such as the US). In some cases, the direct

engagement of the EU is a preferable choice, as it is able to deploy a set of powerful resources that are not available to other organizations. Closer coordination or direct involvement would even require it to take on direct political responsibilities in certain areas, for example as regards the structures linked to the structures of the mediation process in secessionist conflicts, where it now has only a supporting role.

Such direct involvement is, however, not perceived by all sides in these conflicts – including some EU members themselves – as being favourable to their cause, and would require sustained efforts and negotiation skills. Membership by the European Commission in the Joint Control Commission in South Ossetia would give a further impetus to its rehabilitation programmes in the region, but is not acceptable to the authorities of South Ossetia. Still more difficult are changes to the membership of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia, which at present has three EU members (France, the UK and Germany), in addition to Russia and the US. Concerning the conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh, direct participation by the EU in the Minsk Group would even require a more radical change of format in the peace process. But the practical difficulties of achieving such direct participation by the EU have to be overcome, if its aim is optimal efficiency through a direct linkage between its economic support for the conflict transformation process and political responsibility in the negotiation management process.

This division of labour between the EU and international security organizations in the South Caucasus is particularly important for the implementation of policies linked to justice and home affairs. The further development of the South Caucasus Anti-Drug Programme in cooperation with the UNDP, to improve state-led and region-wide anti-drug cooperation projects, is only one of the many examples in this field.<sup>9</sup>

Certain socializing tasks – particularly those to be performed in ‘de facto’ states – cannot easily be performed by the EU itself or by international organizations. The involvement of the latter in unrecognized states in order to support their civil societies and democratization processes may in some cases be regarded as legitimate by all parties concerned – such as the creation of a United Nations Human Rights Office which also involves the OSCE, and the running of OSCE human rights projects in Abkhazia<sup>10</sup> – but may in others be erroneously perceived (by one or both sides in the conflict) as a form of international recognition and strengthening of ‘de facto’ statehood. If secessionist leaderships perceive this involvement as a form of legitimization of their own authority, this may reduce their readiness to compromise in negotiations.

But engagement in the ‘de facto’ states may also strengthen democratization processes and promote conflict transformation.<sup>11</sup> International isolation – in order to avoid any risk of legitimizing secessionist leaderships – will only encourage authoritarianism and the criminalization of ‘de facto’ states, as well as increasing their unilateral economic dependence on outside forces. In order to overcome this real contradiction between the risk of legitimization and the risk of authoritarianism and the criminalization of ‘de facto’ states, it may be advisable for the EU to combine political support for international organizations engaging in the ‘de facto’ states (overcoming the political resistance of the central governments) with financial support for NGO programmes in unrecognized republics.

The South Caucasus in a Wider Caucasus Policy

In security terms, the three small states of the South Caucasus form part of a wider Caucasus region, which also encompasses the North Caucasus in the Russian Federation and which is shaped by its relations with neighbouring Iran and Turkey.<sup>12</sup> The security interests of all these countries are sufficiently interdependent for them to be regarded as constituting one single region, which one may call the 'wider Caucasus'. But there is also a good reason why the EU regards the three small states of the South Caucasus as constituting a separate region in its own right. The borders between the South and the North Caucasus are international borders, and designing regional policies that would encompass federated entities of the Russian Federation could easily be perceived by Moscow as an attempt to intervene in its internal affairs.

EU policies in the South Caucasus have to take both the patterns of conflict and cooperation in the Wider Caucasus and the international border separating the South from the North Caucasus into account. An East-West integration of the Caucasus will necessitate the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which will also have implications – both in the North and in the South – on relations with Russia, Iran and Turkey. A North-South integration of the Wider Caucasus will necessitate a settlement of the conflicts over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. But other questions too, such as the war in Chechnya that is poisoning Russian-Georgian relations, the division of the Caspian Sea shelf and the question of the Armenian genocide in Turkey, affect the interests of the European Union in the South Caucasus. Thus – in order to carry out his mandate – the Special Representative of the EU has to address a host of concerns that go far beyond his formal mandate and which have direct spill-over effects on common EU policies. It would therefore make sense to acknowledge the geopolitical realities – the regional patterns of conflict and cooperation – while not forgetting international legal distinctions. This means that the EU has to develop a policy on the regional integration of the South Caucasus in the context of the wider Caucasus, and even in the context of a policy on the wider Caucasus.

### *The South Caucasus within a 'wider Europe' policy*

The discussion on the geographical borders of the European polity has engaged several political generations and will probably engage several more generations to come. Decisions on the next stages of European enlargement – after the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 – will not be taken soon. In the short term, however, the European Union needs a coherent policy on its new 2004-2007 borders. Instead of drawing geographical borders around the hypothetical idea of a European polity, the European Commission has put forward the idea of a 'wider Europe' and has designed a policy framework that would include all countries geographically bordering the enlarged European Union. It claims in a footnote that, for geographical reasons, the South Caucasus states could not be included 'for the time being' in these new policies.<sup>13</sup>

Enhanced relations between the EU and neighbouring countries are seen in the document as promoting economic integration, cross-border cooperation, reforms which include legislation in line with the *acquis communautaire*, sustainable development and shared responsibility for conflict prevention between the EU and its neighbours. The incentives include an extension of the internal market and regulatory structures, prospects

for the lawful migration and movement of persons and intensified security cooperation: “Russia, the countries of the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean should be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU’s Internal Market and further integration and liberalization to promote the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms)”.<sup>14</sup> Concrete benefits and preferential relations would be given in exchange for progress made by the partner countries in implementing reforms.<sup>15</sup> The first action plans for individual countries will be drafted in 2004.

The exclusion of the South Caucasus from the Wider Europe/Neighbourhood policy framework is hardly to be seen as resulting from geographical considerations. It is rather to be understood as the result of a shift in European attitudes to the South Caucasus in recent years. The region is currently depicted in more negative terms than it was in the past, owing to the failure of reformist policies and of all attempts to reach a settlement in the various conflicts. The allocation by the EU of over a billion euro to the region for the period 1991-2000<sup>16</sup> – not taking into account the support coming from individual member states and from the rest of the international community – has not produced the expected changes. For the Commission and for many member states it may make sense to increase the political involvement of the EU in the region in order to improve efficiency, but not to include the region in a policy framework that aims at radical economic and institutional reforms. There is simply not a reasonable chance of success for such an inclusion, particularly as many of the key objectives and incentives – with the exception of the liberalization of the four freedoms – are already included in the existing PCAs.

But at the same time, the reason why the South Caucasus has been excluded ‘for the time being’ from the Wider Europe/Neighbourhood policies – the inability of these states to reform – is seen by the EU as a reason for increasing its own involvement in the region in the security sphere.<sup>17</sup> The European Union cannot afford the disintegration of states in the vicinity of its new borders. There is thus a contradiction between the EU policies that are responding to the challenge of states unable to reform themselves, on the one hand, and the EU policies that are responding to the challenge of weak and failing states threatening European stability on the other. In the first case there is a partial retreat from the socializing strategy, and in the second there is an appeal for deeper involvement. The two policies, even though they have won approval from the Council, have been developed by different EU institutions (the Commission versus the EU’s High Representative on CFSP). Both of these institutions have different foreign policy instruments at their disposal.

The EU has ‘for the time being’ not been able to overcome this contradiction. The non-inclusion of the South Caucasus states in its ‘Wider Europe’ framework has quite unconvincingly been presented by the Commission as the result of geographical factors. This choice neglects the importance of the identity factor and, more particularly, ignores how a concept like ‘Wider Europe’ resonates in the South Caucasus. As stated above, the reform potential in the South Caucasus largely depends on the ability of external players, including the European Union, to support the emergence of forces favourable to reform and to provide them with domestic legitimacy. Conditionality is important in this context. The use of this instrument is already not particularly easy as the reforms are needed in the short term, whereas substantial benefits of European integration are promised for a distant future. A lack of enhanced involvement may also be used by the region’s élites as a justification for their own unwillingness to promote reforms. In such a context, the

exclusion of the South Caucasus from an enhanced policy of European integration – the promotion of the four freedoms are even said to be able to bring countries in the wider Europe ‘as close to the Union’ as they can be without being a member<sup>18</sup> – will have a demobilizing effect on their political elites and public opinion, thereby weakening the socializing potential of the EU.

It would thus be a mistake to scale down expectations in the South Caucasus by abandoning the Wider Europe policy framework for this region until such time as an alternative integration framework – which would be better adapted to weak and failing states – can be provided. And at present it does not seem feasible to provide such an alternative policy framework, which would have to be tailor-made to the specific problems of such weak and failing states. One has, moreover, to take into account the extreme variety of the countries that are part of the present framework (including states such as Belarus and Moldova) – a factor that also justifies the inclusion of the South Caucasus.

The Wider Europe/Neighbourhood policies are furthermore presented as an attempt to prevent new dividing-lines in Europe. It would not be reasonable to exclude the South Caucasus from the scope of a large-scale EU integration project, while the region is fully integrated into existing European and Euro-Atlantic international security organizations. It is contradictory to require the OSCE and the CoE to integrate the South Caucasus into a single European or Euro-Atlantic space in accordance with the highest legal and political standards, while the EU – in name of political realism – is opting for different levels of European integration in the same policy fields. It is true that the present exclusion does not make close coordination between the EU and these organizations on their South Caucasus policies impossible, but nor does it facilitate coordination.

New dividing-lines between the North Caucasus – which is included in the Wider Europe framework – and the South Caucasus are a further consequence of the present choice. For all these reasons, it may be more appropriate for the European Union to address the problem of weak and failing states in the South Caucasus by getting the Commission to reserve more space for the particular problems of this region in its next communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the Wider Europe/Neighbourhood policies, rather than to try and exclude them from this framework ‘for the time being’. The General Affairs and External Relations Council of 16 June 2003 stated in its conclusions that it intended to come back to this question at a later stage.<sup>19</sup> It would be advisable for this ‘later stage’ to come sooner rather than later.

#### *A Stability Pact for the Wider Caucasus?*

The final question addressed in this paper concerns the so-called Caucasus Stability Pact. Does it make sense for the EU to support an institutional framework for regional integration – one that would include not only the Russian Federation but also the southern neighbours of the South Caucasus, Iran and Turkey – as long as the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia remains unresolved, and would such a prospect help to facilitate a settlement of these conflicts?

The idea of such a pact is based on a number of principles that deserve support. The first is the need to integrate distinct forms of governance on the inter- (supra-) and substate levels. A settlement of the various secessionist conflicts will have to

institutionalize a set of federal arrangements. Only Nagorno-Karabakh may be an exception in this respect, as the settlement of this ‘irrendentist’ conflict can in theory be based exclusively on territorial swaps. But in all the other cases, the titular nations of the federated entities will have a limited right to national self-determination at the external level, including the right to external representation and treaty-making power within their constitutional competences. A Stability Pact that recognizes these competences may thus enforce patterns of interdependence between the two levels of federal governance, and link them with intergovernmental and possibly even with supranational levels of governance.

The second principle that deserves support is the idea of regional integration, which may be achieved in a post-accord situation. A Stability Pact for the Caucasus will have to be implemented in the context of the wider Caucasus, which includes the Russian Federation, Iran and Turkey. A Stability Pact will also provide room for external support, including support from the European Union and other European structures.

The main problem with this idea of a regional pact, however, is that it can only be achieved in a post-accord situation. It is impossible to engage the breakaway republics in a regional setting as long as the question of their political status remains in limbo. The discussions on a Caucasus Stability Pact in the region itself during recent years have also demonstrated that even discussions on its institutional design do not prove very fruitful as long as the various territorial disputes remain unresolved.<sup>20</sup> The participants in these debates have in the first place been calculating the consequences for the regional balance of power of various formulas for representation and alliance-building within this pact. The idea of regional integration has therefore remained devoid of any concrete substance. The participants in these debates were moreover incapable of giving any realistic assessment of the future relations between the federal level of governance and the level of governance of the federated entities, on which such a pact would have to be based.

Until such time as existing conflicts over the political status of the ‘de facto’ states and secessionist movements – including Chechnya – are settled, the idea of such a pact thus remains utopian, in both the positive and negative senses of this term. This idea points to the emancipatory potential of a post-accord situation, but cannot be used as the main instrument for overcoming the present deadlock. The various players in the present conflicts can only project their present conflict behaviour into the discussions on this pact. Nor can it be considered a fruitful idea to foster EU engagement in the region. The EU has largely been fixated on post-settlement consolidation. Incapable of engaging itself in the present conflicts, owing to internal institutional constraints, it has been legitimizing its policies as being supportive to existing mediation efforts, particularly with respect to financial aid for post-conflict rehabilitation. It is time for the EU to overcome this restriction by engaging itself directly in conflict transformation and conflict management. The very limited experience it has had in this field in South Ossetia – through the involvement of the Commission and in cooperation with the OSCE – should be extended, including to other conflict regions. Such an approach to the present problems to be addressed in the South Caucasus requires more complex political formulas than those of a future regional Stability Pact. And it is the most effective way of bringing about such a Pact.

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<sup>1</sup> The present policy paper has been prepared at the request of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy. Some of the ideas contained in it were discussed in December 2003 with officials from the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, NATO, the Council of Europe, the Venice Commission and the Secretariat of the OSCE in Vienna. I have also listened to the views of scholars and of members of NGOs involved in the region. Obviously, the ideas put forward in this paper are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the positions of my interlocutors.

<sup>2</sup> See the assessment of the coming election year in the Southern Caucasus outlined at the beginning of 2003 at the High-level Tripartite meeting between the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the United Nations, together with the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration and the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, 14 February 2003. See summary of the High-level Tripartite Meeting (prepared by the Council of Europe Secretariat), on the Internet at:

[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Secretary%5Fgeneral/Documents/Information%5Fdocuments/2003/SGINF\(2003\)13E.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Secretary%5Fgeneral/Documents/Information%5Fdocuments/2003/SGINF(2003)13E.asp#TopOfPage) (accessed on 11 December 2003).

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh it would be more correct to speak about an irredentist conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which includes the secessionist demand for the separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan.

<sup>4</sup> The relationship between Europeanization and conflict resolution in secessionist crises is analysed in a research project of the Department of Political Science of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), with the financial support from the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (SPO). See Bruno Coppieters, Michel Huysseune, Michael Emerson, Nathalie Tocci and Marius Vahl, 'European institutional models as instruments of conflict resolution in the divided states of the European periphery', Working Document No 195, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, 2003, on the Internet at <http://shop.ceps.be/free/1046.pdf> (accessed on 11 December 2003). A book on this subject, with the co-authorship of Gergana Noutcheva and Tamara Kovziridze, is due to be published in 2003. I am grateful to Gergana Noutcheva, Tamara Kovziridze and Nathalie Tocci for their preparatory manuscripts for the chapter on Europeanization.

<sup>5</sup> See Frank Schimmelfenning, 'Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and Eastern European States – Conceptual and Theoretical Issues', in Ronald H. Linden (ed.), *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD, 2002, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> There is some movement in this direction, however: energy issues are now discussed in the EU dialogue with Azerbaijan in the Trade and Investment Subcommittee, under the PCA between the EU and Azerbaijan.

<sup>7</sup> On the distinction between constitutive and specific norms and between inclusive and exclusive socializing strategies, see *ibid.* pp. 7 ff.

<sup>8</sup> See the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, 'One Europe – A Europe of Partners. Towards an associate partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union. Memorandum by the Secretary General, on the Internet at [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Secretary\\_general/Documents/Information\\_documents/2003/SGINF\(2003\)35E.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Secretary_general/Documents/Information_documents/2003/SGINF(2003)35E.asp). (accessed on 11 December 2003).

<sup>9</sup> On this particular recommendation see Dov Lynch, 'The EU: Towards a Strategy', to be published in the Chaillot Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Annual Report on OSCE Activities 2002, Press and Public Information, OSCE Secretariat, Vienna, 2002, p. 41.

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<sup>11</sup> Conflict transformation is defined by Thomas Diez as a transformation of subject positions from incompatibility/antagonism to compatibility/tolerance. See Thomas Diez, “‘Roots’ of Conflict, Conflict Transformation and EU Influence. Summary of Initial Comments, European Commission Workshop’, Brussels, 14 February 2003. On the Internet at <http://euborderconf.bham.ac.uk/publications/files/brussels20030214.pdf> (accessed on 11 December 2003).

<sup>12</sup> On the following see Bruno Coppieters, ‘Peripheral Policies: an EU Special Representative’, to be published in the Chaillot Papers.

<sup>13</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, ‘Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours’, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 11.3.2003, COM(2003) 104 final, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.mfa.gr/english/foreign\\_policy/eu/eu\\_relations/nak\\_georgia.html](http://www.mfa.gr/english/foreign_policy/eu/eu_relations/nak_georgia.html) (accessed on 22 May 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Xavier Solana, ‘L’UE – Pilier d’un monde nouveau’, in *Le Monde*, 23 septembre 2003, p. 16. See Dov Lynch, ‘The EU: Towards a Strategy’ *op. cit.*; See also Javier Solana, ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’, European Council, Thessaloniki, 20 June 2003, on the Internet at: <http://ue.eu.int/solana/list.asp?BID=111> (accessed on 11 December 2003).

<sup>18</sup> Communication, *op. cit.*, p. 10. A book with innovative conceptions of a Wider Europe and a Neighbourhood policy is due to be published by Michael Emerson in 2003.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Council Conclusions on Wider Europe – New Neighbourhood’, on the Internet on [europa.eu.int](http://europa.eu.int) (accessed on 14 December 2003).

<sup>20</sup> On the idea of a stability pact see Bruno Coppieters ‘A Regional Security System for the Caucasus’, in *Caucasian Regional Studies*, Vol. 5, Nos 1 & 2, <http://poli.vub.ac.be/> also published by the Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels: CEPS Working Document No. 148, July 2000, pp. 50-58; Michael Emerson *et al.*, ‘A Stability Pact for the Caucasus. A Consultative Document of the CEPS Task Force on the Caucasus’, Brussels, Centre for European Policy Studies, 2000.