D.6.3: Scholarly article on the European Governance Agenda

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EU Engagement with Civil Society Organisations in Conflict-Ridden Countries:
A Governance Perspective from Georgia, Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina[1]

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Support to civil society organisations (CSOs) plays a central role in the European Union's (EU) development, neighbourhood and enlargement policies. In the current discourse, CSOs are seen to play a crucial role in democratisation, socio-economic development, as well as in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. In the case of the latter, CSOs are perceived as sources of bottom-up or mid-level peace initiatives, connecting top-level peace processes with the grassroots, and as non-partisan, non-violent alternatives stretching across enemy lines. This positive notion of civic engagement is reinforced in a recent communication by the European Commission (EC) depicting an 'empowered civil society [as] a crucial component of any democratic system [and] an important player in fostering peace and in conflict resolution.'[2]

In this communication, CSOs are defined as 'membership-based, cause-based and service-oriented organisations, spanning broader than NGOs' and 'embracing a wide range of actors with different roles and mandates'.[3] The expectable tension between such a broad range of organisations and the uncritical depiction of CSOs above is countered by the ascription of certain normative attributes and the exclusion of nationalist, divisive, radical or violent actors, making the 'good civil society' a tautology. It is explicitly stated that the EU only engages with 'accountable and transparent CSOs which share its commitment to social progress and to the fundamental values of peace, freedom, equal rights and human dignity.'[4]

This indicates the narrow definition of CSOs as organisations sympathetic to the EU's political orientation and priorities. It resonates with a tendency discussed in several studies of international support for civil society actors in post-conflict situations.[5] Recognisably legitimate and Western-friendly organisations are supported, resulting in what has been described as 'the NGOisation of society'.[6] According to Paffenholz and Cubitt, this approach not only creates an artificial civil society, but ignores the contribution to peacebuilding by non-elite organisations that might be more representative than internationally backed NGOs. From the perspective of general EU foreign policy, however, this 'ignorance' is supposedly in line with the overarching objective of

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[2] European Commission, 'The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations', *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions* (Brussels, 12 September 2012), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF (accessed 7 May, 2013), 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, footnote 1.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] E.g. Thania Paffenholz (ed.), *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: a Critical Assessment* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010); Christine Cubitt, 'Constructing Civil Society: an Intervention for Building Peace?', *Peacebuilding* 1, no. 1, (2013); Jason Miklian, Kristoffer Lidén, and Åshild Kolås, 'The Perils of 'Going Local': Liberal Peace-Building Agendas in Nepal,' *Conflict, Security & Development* 11, no. 3 (2011).

[6] Paffenholz, ibid, 428.

EU neighbourhood and enlargement policies to support the formation of effective modern, liberal and transparent states.

In turn, the EC emphasises that a vibrant civil society depends on a sufficient degree of freedom, rights and security provided by the state. Hence, the EU support for civil society is presented as twofold: direct, through support to CSOs, and indirect, by helping governments to create an adequate legal framework for CSO activity.[7] Rather than representing a non-interventionist niche of sheer assistance for local organisations, this advances a particular model of liberal political order.[8]

In this paper, we analyse the character and effects of such EU CSO support in the cases of Georgia, Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Based on fieldwork, a general account of the CSO support is given before the validity of four competing theoretical perspectives on EU CSO support is evaluated in each case. Along the lines of Max Weber's notion of 'ideal types' we assume that these perspectives describe different aspects of the phenomenon under investigation, appearing in various constellations and gradations rather than being mutually exclusive.[9] Before we turn to the cases, the four perspectives are briefly outlined below. By way of conclusion, the findings from the three cases are contrasted and compared in the final section.

Four perspectives on EU governance of foreign conflicts through CSO support

The following section briefly outlines four ideal types of EU engagement with civil society, each resulting in a set of hypotheses on the impact of EU CSO support and on the relations between these CSOs, state, society and the EU, respectively.

Liberal peace

From a liberal internationalist perspective, the combination of trade, democratisation, human rights and international collaboration is the source of domestic and international peace.[10] The transformation or integration of customary non-state economic and political institutions into a liberal democratic political and economic system is seen as a necessary step for the establishment of a just and representative order within a state framework. The emergence of a modern, liberal civil society prescribed in EU policies is a central part of this equation. However, rather than undermining customary and traditional actors and institutions, this is expected to lead to a more hospitable environment also for these as long as they stick to the rules of the liberal order. The alternative is not seen as a more pluralistic peace but civil strife and international instability. The following hypotheses for the effects of EU CSO support can be derived from the liberal internationalist perspective:

A. (CSO vs. state) EU supported CSOs will counter illiberal, sectarian, aut horitarian and corrupt elements in the political system, entailing a more democratic, legitimate and effective state apparatus.

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[7] European Commission, 'The roots of democracy,' 5-6.

[8] See e.g. David Chandler, 'Democratization in Bosnia: The limits of civil society building strategies', *Democratization* 5, no. 4 (1998): 78-102; David Chandler, 'EU Statebuilding: Securing the Liberal Peace through EU Enlargement', *Global Society* 21, no. 4 (2007): 593-607; Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaite, *European Union Peacebuilding and Policing: Governance and the European Security and Defence Policy* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[9] On this 'reflexive' approach, see chapter 6 of Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[10] See e.g. Michael W Doyle, 'A Liberal View: Preserving and Expanding the Liberal Pacific Union', in *International Order and the Future of World Politics*, ed. T.V. Paul and John A. Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

B. (CSO vs. society) EU CSO support strengthens other domestic non-state organisations and institutions that are compatible with human rights and a liberal democratic order while weakening outright illiberal organisations and institutions

Hollow hegemony

According to the 'hollow hegemony' perspective advanced by David Chandler, to the contrary, liberal peacebuilding efforts by the EU do not engender democratisation and peaceful self-governance but subjection to confused and dishonest foreign regulation.[11] This dependence and eschewing of domestic political processes has the counterproductive effect of undermining proper democratisation and peacebuilding. It is a form of international statebuilding that turns the liberal peace on its head, making self-determination and rights a function of dependency and foreign dictates.[12] The result is a 'hollow hegemony', an international order which lacks a rooting in social or political movements or clear instrumental reasoning.[13]

In this picture, EU efforts at building a democratic civil society are portrayed as a technique of foreign regulation that detaches the political process from the domestic political sphere: 'The state and society actors 'empowered' by the West appear alien and distant from their own societies and lack the legitimacy which comes from strong mechanisms of social connection.'[14] While being an inversion of the sovereign state, the outcome is also not a regular empire.[15]

On these premises, another set of hypotheses can be derived that diverge markedly from the liberal peacebuilding perspective:

A. (CSO vs. state) EU CSO support undermines the power and consolidation of the state by reinforcing dependency on foreign assistance as well as by shifting accountability from the domestic to the international scene.

B. (CSO vs. society) EU CSO support boosts an artificial civil society at the expense of locally accountable groups that could drive proper statebuilding and democratisation processes forward. When foreign financial and political support for the CSOs decreases, the bubble will burst as they are lacking in domestic resources and legitimacy.

Vibrant hegemony

According to the 'vibrant hegemony' perspective of Shahar Hameiri on contemporary international statebuilding, EU CSO support can be interpreted as a continuity of domestic power struggles in which the recipients strategically arrogate foreign assistance to their own advantage.[16] Hameiri agrees with Chandler that the international statebuilding approach wrongly assumes that the state can be built outside the realm of the political.[17] However, he criticises Chandler for drawing the

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[11] David Chandler, *International Statebuilding: The Rise of Post-Liberal Governance* (London: Routledge, 2010); Chandler, *EU Statebuilding*.

[12] Chandler, *International Statebuilding*,3-4.

[13] David Chandler, *Hollow Hegemony: Rethinking Global Politics, Power and Resistance* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

[14] Chandler, *EU Statebuilding*, 605-6. In this analysis of statebuilding in the context of EU governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chandler observes that the result is far from a sovereign state.

[15] David Chandler, *Empire in Denial* (London: Pluto Press, 2006); Chandler, *Hollow Hegemony*.

[16] As such, it resembles what Barnett and Zürcher call a 'captured' form of peacebuilding in which local elites redirect the assistance to their own advantage. See Michael Barnett and Christoph Zürcher, 'The Peacebuilder's Contract. How External Statebuilding Reinforces Weak Statehood', in *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Post-war Peace Operations*, ed. Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (London: Routledge, 2009), 24-5.

[17] *Ibid.*, 22-24. In this connection, Hameiri also refers to Marina Ottaway's related argument that international donors can establish organisations, but not institutions - that the transformation of organisations into institutions relies on domestic political processes that donors only have a limited influence on. Marina Ottaway, 'Rebuilding State Institutions in Collapsed States', in *State Failure, Collapse and Reconstruction*, ed. Jennifer Milliken (Malden: Blackwell Publishing , 2003).

wrong theoretical implications from this finding: that he firstly relies on a false 'Huntingtonian' idea of statebuilding as a process in which a consolidated political order evolves organically from within states, and, secondly, assumes that the subjects of international statebuilding are passive and merely 'affected'. Instead, Hameiri argues, there is a new form of transnationally defined and regulated statehood emerging, reflecting global economic and political structures that make the idea of purely internal statebuilding irrelevant.[18] This position resembles the liberal peacebuilding perspective in suggesting that the CSOs are rooted in local initiatives and agency rather than being sheer constructs of foreign interference. Yet, the initiatives are not regarded as motivated by a general political commitment to liberal statebuilding. They rather hollow out the space for such 'national' political projects by facilitating domestic political strategies that do not depend on broad based popular support. Accordingly, the benefit of the donors in this connection is the ability to regulate 'disorderly' states, turning them into manageable units that can be adjusted to the economic, political and security interests of the donors instead of turning into independent, potentially hostile, political units. It is a form of risk management in which peace, democracy and human rights are central normative components without dictating the very premises of the governance. In effect, the governance contradicts the ideal of supporting democratic self-determination that justifies CSO support in EU policies.

The hypotheses that can be derived from this perspective are:

A. (CSO vs. state) The supported CSOs are not independent from the state, as portrayed in liberal theory, but involved in the very production and reproduction of the state apparatus. EU CSO support therefore contributes to redefine the very nature of the state, integrating it in a permanent order of transnational governance.

B. (CSO vs. society) EU CSO support strengthens the economic and political interests of the supported organisations at the expense of groups that are not able to present themselves as eligible for EU support. The distinction between the supported CSOs as 'foreign' and non-supported CSOs at 'the grassroots' as more 'genuine' is false, as it is rather a question of power – of being sufficiently powerful to acquire the assistance, be it based on elite privileges or on the power of political movements.

Post-liberal peace

In *A Post-Liberal Peace*, Oliver Richmond shares Chandler and Hameiri's criticisms of the theoretical assumptions of liberal peacebuilding.[19] However, instead of depicting a hollow or vibrant hegemony, he sees the failure of the liberal peace as the success of a post-liberal peace in which the Western liberal hegemony is gradually outweighed.[20] Resonating with Paffenholz and Cubitt's analyses of the role of non-Western actors and institutions, emphasis is put on the subjection of global governance to local conditions through resistance, manipulation, indifference, subversive translation and co-optation.

On the one hand, Richmond's analysis is closer to Chandler than Hameiri in describing liberal peacebuilding efforts as failed and misconceived rather than as successful strategies of state regulation and risk management. On the other hand, Richmond's argument resonates with Hameiri's criticism of Chandler for ignoring the active role of the political subjects in the target countries and the resultant transformation of the global political order 'from the inside' of these

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[18] Shahar Hameiri, *Regulating Statehood: State Building and the Transformation of the Global* Order (Hounmills: Palgrave, 2010), 6.

[19] Oliver P. Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[20] While Chandler uses the term 'post-liberal' in a philosophical sense as the departure from truly liberal principles, Richmond conceives it as the departure from a hegemonic, exclusive and divisive 'liberal' political world order that betrayed its philosophical self-justification in practice.

countries. In contrast to Hameiri, however, his focus is not primarily on the immediate subjects of international assistance – local NGOs, private businesses, political parties and governmental bodies. Instead, he focuses on the role of the informal sectors and grassroots of society at the micro-political level, and how these tend to subvert the formal political processes described by Hameiri into 'liberal-local hybrids'. He sees a parallel tendency at the macro-political level in how international organisations, states and political organisations 'hybridise' Western liberal conceptions by engaging with them on non-Western political premises.[21]

One might expect this perspective only to apply to societies beyond the EU neighbourhood, as it involves an emphasis on the prevalence of customary non-Western institutions and practices. However, divergences from Western statehood can also result from a host of other factors, like extensive involvement by international organisations, private corporations, neighbouring states and non-state actors. Here, Cyprus and Georgia are cases in point. It should therefore be possible to apply the following hypotheses to the cases of BiH, Cyprus and Georgia as well as to typically 'non-Western' cases like the DRC, Afghanistan or East Timor.

A. (CSO vs. state) EU CSO support is partly co-opted and partly resisted by the recipients in ways that create new hybrid political orders instead of either being a direct continuation of local power struggles or of EU's political objectives. This dynamic challenges established hegemonies and has an emancipatory potential.

B. (CSO vs. society) EU CSO support fails to transform local non-state actors and institutions into a modern liberal civil society. Instead, the support is translated into the logic of pre-existing actors and institutions in new ways that open for new sources of peace and conflict, justice and injustice.

We will now introduce and analyse the three cases against the backdrop of these four perspectives.

The EU and civil society in the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict

The civil society sector in Georgia started developing in the 1990s, yet it soon proved its strength with the Rose Revolution, in which it exerted considerable influence. It has received far greater external support than its counterpart in Abkhazia. Over the years numerous international foundations assisted the democratic transition process in Georgia through different development projects. Prior to the revolution, civil society in Georgia operated largely in opposition to the state. CSOs were kept out of the peace process, which was firmly in the hands of the Shevarnadze regime. In fact, civil society constituted the seeds for an alternative 'political society' in Georgia, which came to the forefront during the revolution. Yet in post-revolution Georgia, as civil society transitioned into political society and the state, not only were many resources taken away from civil society, but also the Saakashvili regime persisted in its predecessor's approach of viewing the peace process as the exclusive domain of the state.[22]

In today's Georgia the civil society sector is independent from the government, but their influence on the policy making process is rather weak. Furthermore, civil society suffers from the polarized political environment. Generally the population associates the CSOs with one political

[21] Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace*, 206.
[22] Nathalie Tocci and Nona Mikhelidze, N. 'The European Union, Civil Society and Conflict: A Comparative Analysis', in *The European Union, Civil Society and Conflict*, ed. Nathalie Tocci (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

party or another. The same can be applied to the mass media characterised by strong polarization between pro- and anti-government broadcasting.[23]

On the other side, Abkhaz civil society has emerged in the form of grassroots organisations to perform humanitarian functions, gaining a strong backing from the local population as a result of its 'needs-driven' nature. Over the years, despite the lack of consolidated democracy and democratic values, civil society has succeeded in retaining some degree of independence and freedom of manoeuvre from the authorities. However, according to Freedom House, since Ankvab's presidency the situation has radically changed in Abkhazia: mass media are under the control of the state authorities and legal restrictions have been applied to internet access. However, the print media seems to be more independent and influential in shaping public opinion.[24] The NGO sector has a voice only on local statebuilding issues. With regards to conflict resolution issues and bi-communal projects with the Georgian counterparts, those should be agreed with the authorities.[25] Besides these challenges, the NGO sector in Abkhazia suffers from nepotism in many organisations, as the staff is often family members or parents of the organisations' director/founder. Furthermore, the local organisations are leader-centred, highly hierarchic and often lacking 'transparency and accountability'.[26]

Abkhazia is marked by the international community's non-recognition of the state and significant levels of socio-economic underdevelopment. The international community has largely kept out of massive involvement on the grounds of non-recognition. Insofar as international law has fallen on the side of Georgia by supporting its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, it has been reluctant to engage with the de facto republics. This has meant that civil society in Abkhazia has been deprived of the international funds necessary for its development.

Furthermore, unregulated border issues between Georgia and Abkhazia (Zugdidi/Gali border) has limited the activities of the civil society organisations over the years. After the Russian recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and the military agreement between these two, Russia has gained total control of the border. Interaction has become much more complicated than it was before 2008. Thus the chances for effective CSO confidence-building projects are very scarce in a context where the physical movement of people is limited.

However, the civil society organisations on both sides have still tried to promote people-to-people contact and reconciliation between confronted parties. Several meetings, summer camps and joint trainings have been organised. The internally displaced people (IDP) groups have promoted contacts between teachers from both sides as well. There were/are interactions between ex-combatants and the family members of the lost soldiers for grassroots peacebuilding purposes.

The EU assistance to the civil society: an overview

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[23] USAID, 'The 2011 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia', http://program.counterpart.org/Armenia/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2011CSOSI_Index_complete.pdf (accessed 5 May 2013).

[24] Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2013 – Abkhazia', 20 May 2013, http://www.refworld.org/docid/51a31700f.html (accessed 25 May 2013).

[25] In general, any kind of interaction with Georgians is seen with suspicion. Even ill persons needing to cross the border and enter Georgian territory in order to receive the free health care services provided by the Georgian government, have to get a permission from 'above'.

[26] Seamus Clearly and Tinatin Tkeshelashvili, 'Final Evaluation: Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM)', *Final Evaluation Report* (UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre, 14 May 2012), http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=5345 (accessed 23 May 2013).

As defined in the introduction, the EU's support for the civil society in the target country, in this case in Georgia, is twofold: (1) assistance to the government to establish a favourable context for the development of the civil society by inducing political and economic liberalisation and (2) the direct funding for CSOs. Since the second half of 1990s, the EU (and single EU member states as well as various European foundations) has allocated many funds to the third sector in Georgia. The development of civil society was viewed as an end in itself and a means to induce conflict transformation/resolution. The EU has tended to support those civil society organisations (both in Georgia and Abkhazia) which have had a positive conflict management (but not transformation or resolution) impact on conflicts. Over the years, it has funded numerous projects designed for conflict-affected people and aimed at the improvement of their living conditions. Its activities have included the rehabilitation of damaged houses, schools and hospitals, as well as the promotion of small-scale agricultural programmes.

A far more important bi-communal activity is the EU's new initiative – Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM) – which started after the Georgian-Russian war in 2008. COBERM envisages small-scale projects and seeks 'to have a demonstrable impact on confidence building within and across conflict-divided communities'. The initiative is administrated by UNDP in cooperation with the EU Delegation.[27] COBERM targets different social groups: from the representatives of the mid-level civil society (NGOs, journalists, academics, researchers) to the grassroots (IDPs, ex-combatants, teachers, youth, farmers, etc.) and aims to finance projects supporting people and communities within or between conflict-affected areas with the aim of (re)establishing relations and joint activities, encouraging inter-community communication and policy dialogues and proposing innovative grassroots initiatives. The total budget of such projects can be up to 10,000 USD. The duration of projects can be short and long-term, with a maximum of 12 months.[28] According to a representative of an international organisation in Georgia, only a few NGOs or grassroots organisations managed to renew a project for more than 12 month.[29] COBERM has financed 68 projects up until now. However, these have had had little to no impact on the peace process. Many of the reasons for this are largely connected with the EU governance of the Georgian/Abkhaz conflict through CSO support discussed below.

Perspectives
Liberal peace
As introduced in the initial part of the article, in the liberal peace the EU tries to combat the corrupt elements of the state by assisting democratic developments in the country including sustainable support for the liberal domestic non-state organisations, while weakening radical illiberal institutions or movements. The European Union's policy ethos and logic in the conflict-governance premises nexus in Georgia are framed within the liberal peace paradigm, which views the development of democracy both as an end of statebuilding and a mean to induce conflict transformation. Thus in the first case the main EU assistance programmes in Georgia have been focused on the development of democracy, rule of law, the free media, civil society, an independent judiciary, transparency, the reduction of corruption, the improvement of the business environment, poverty reduction, etc. Whereas the financial assistance to international and local NGOs have been aimed to provide mediation forums for the reconciliation of conflicting parties. By assisting both the state and non-state actors, the EU has strengthened its position in Georgia and contributed to the development of the pro-EU political orientation of the country.

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[27] EU Delegation to Georgia, 'Overview of EC Assistance to People Affected by Conflict in Georgia', May 2010.
[28] COBERM-2: Call for project ideas, COBERM – A joint EU-UNDP Initiative, http://www.undp.org.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=22&info_id=11669 (accessed 26 May 2013).
[29] Interview with a CSO representative in Georgia, Tbilisi, April 2013.

However, as far as the EU civil society support for conflict related issues is concerned, the liberal peace hypothesis appears to have only partial validation. As mentioned above, the EU has tried to support those civil society organisations which have had a positive conflict management impact. However one should take into account that the CSOs in Georgia are politically polarised and divided in pro- and anti-government organisations and this surely has defined their connectedness with the grassroots. In such a context, EU funding has failed to empower some of the peacebuilding organisations, which have remained marginalised.[30] This aspect will be discussed in detail below under other hypotheses.

Hollow hegemony and vibrant hegemony
The perspectives of 'hollow and/or vibrant hegemony' find also partial validation of the EU's foreign policy in Georgia and towards conflict resolution through engagement with the CSOs. It is true that the EU reinforces the dependence of the Georgian state and non-state actors on foreign funds, but doing so it does not shift accountability from the local to the international scene. It is because the EU is not interested in Georgia's European integration in short or medium run. Consequently, without offering clear membership perspective it cannot call for international accountability.

However, one of the hypotheses of the 'hollow hegemony' which finds its reflection in Georgia is the EU's support to boost artificial civil society at the expense of the local groups that could drive conflict transformation, if not alone at least alongside those civil society organisations that benefit from European funding. This perspective is also very similar to that of the 'vibrant hegemony' suggesting that the EU assistance of certain organisations happens at the expense of groups that are not able to present themselves as eligible for EU support.

The civil society organisations in the regions (i.e. outside Tbilisi and Sokum(i)) of Georgia, even those in areas bordering the conflict zones, which have more knowledge about local needs, are largely excluded from the peace process. Because of limited human resources, as well as lack of administrative and management capabilities, they are not able to engage with the difficult application (and reporting) process for EU grants. Furthermore, the EU tends to finance those grassroots organisations which have English-speaking employees. Those who do not satisfy this criterion are simply left out of the sponsored peace process. In such a way a lot of the ideas from grassroots organisations bordering directly the conflict zone are lost. Furthermore, this EU approach contributes to the establishment of an elitist civil society sector that in turn leads to the monopolisation of the peace process by certain organisations on both sides. Thus, this dynamic has something to do with 'the question of power – of being sufficiently powerful to acquire the assistance' on the basis of elite privileges.

Also another example of EUs funding policy echoes the idea of a vibrant hegemony: According to a civil society representative, one of the projects was interrupted in a very important phase of its implementation, as COBERM refused to finance it for the second year.[31] The aim of this project, first funded under the Instrument for Stability and later under COBERM, was to empower young Georgian and Abkhaz students and professionals, to facilitate dialogue between them and deepen their understanding of political processes across the conflict divide. The project contained a series of training sessions conducted in Georgia and in Abkhazia. Unlike many other projects carried out by international organisations, it foresaw an ongoing rotation of participants, which enlarged the net of people involved and thus enhanced the effectiveness of the project. The

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[30] Nicu Popescu,'The EU and Civil Society in the Georgian-Abkhaz Conflict', in *The European Union, Civil Society and Conflict*, ed. Nathalie Tocci (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).
[31] Interview with a CSO representative in Georgia, Tbilisi, May 2013.

topics of the workshops regarded issues from the day-to-day political life and the perceptions of these issues by the different sides. The project also intended to build the capacities of young leaders to think about complex solutions to the challenges their societies face and to explore the possibilities and limits of trust-building processes.[32] The Abkhaz participants were young activists in the local political life. Therefore, countering stereotypes and prejudices they have towards their Georgian counterparts was essential.[33]

It is well-known that the only way to disseminate successfully the results of the project and to enlarge its impact to the wider population is to let the participants propose their own transfer projects,[34] which was in part what the above introduced initiative was doing. Yet, the project was interrupted, as COBERM rejected the idea to refinance it.

Therefore, the EU was highly criticised by several representatives of the local and international organisations because of a lack of sustainability of the projects related to the duration of the promoted or financed initiatives, as it is clear that confidence-building is not achievable in 6/12 months. One can also criticise the EU because of its financial support always for the same NGOs and thus of the creation so-called 'elitist civil society'. However, in this case the EU has decided to assist different organisations not because it wanted to differentiate its funding, but because it chose to allocate it to those which in its view are pro-European. The fact that these organisations use the financial resources for their own political purposes resulted to be irrelevant.

By doing so, however, the EU fails to achieve the very initial goal of COBERM, which is the confidence-building among Georgians and Abkhazs. It is well-known that the former representatives of the Saakashvili government, now acting as CSOs, have concentrated heavily on the Georgian-Russian dimension of the Abkhaz conflict, implicitly delegitimising thereby the Abkhaz as an interlocutor. Now one can wonder how the same people could engage Abkhazs and speak with them about confidence-building. Yet, they still received the EU funding for this.

As said, this newly emerged reality echoes the idea of a vibrant hegemony where the supported CSOs are not independent from the state, as portrayed in liberal theory, but involved in the very production and reproduction of the state apparatus. Furthermore, as the political pro-European orientation of the newly elected government has often been called into question, one should not exclude that through financing the organisations established by the former governmental authorities, the EU tries to strengthen (or maintain its influence) its positions inside Georgia and exercise its control over domestic political processes. As the interlocutors of the EU are largely detached for the grassroots, one could assume that the EU's interest is to regulate the political dynamics only at the top level, whereas to widespread pro-European feelings among broad masses results not to be an immediate goal.

Post-liberal peace
As mentioned above, since the Rose Revolution in 2003 in Georgia civil society has suffered from lack of human resources, as a large part of CSOs representatives moved to the top level of governance in order to take part in Sakashvili's government. In 2012, after the parliamentary elections, where Saakashvili's 'National Movement' party was defeated by the coalition 'Georgian Dream', a substantial part of the former government moved (for many it was just a return) to the third sector. The main aim, however, of these ex-politicians was not to exercise a watchdog

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[32] Interview with a CSO representative in Georgia, Tbilisi, May 2013.

[33] Interview with a CSO representative actively engaged in the project, Tbilisi, May 2013.

[34] Norbert Ropers, 'From Resolution to Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Projects', in *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict: The Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, ed. Alexander Austin, Martina Fischer and Norbert Ropers (Berlin: Berghof Foundation, 2004), http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2580/pdf/ropers_handbook.pdf (accessed 20 May 2013).

function over the newly elected government, but rather to continue the political struggle by other means. And here they have found the EU's financial support through COBERM. According to a representative of an international organisation in Georgia, some of the newly established NGOs and research centres participated in the latest call for projects of COBERM and 'managed' to win a grant, whereas a lot of other project proposals, including those which were successful in the previous years, were rejected.[35]

This EU policy echoes one of the hypotheses of the 'post-liberal peace' where the EU fails to build a vibrant civil society that challenges the state. It is true that the former state officials now acting as CSOs will challenge the newly elected government, but they will do so not from a civil society perspective, but rather as a political adversary. Thus, the EU support is translated into the logic of the pre-existing actors and institutions in new ways that could cause new tensions around the peace process.

The hybridisation of the liberal norms occurs also in another way. As already noted, the EU's support for the civil society is twofold: one is the direct funding and other assistance to the democracy development in the country. Over the years, the EU supported Saakashvili's form of governance embodied in managed democracy, a semi-militarised state and the securitisation of democracy, serving to perpetuate the power of political elites in Georgia as well as to contribute to establishing a hybrid peace as not 'always desirable form of peace as it may represent a combination of negative practices of the local and international governance initiatives. In some cases hybrid political regime may combine authoritarian rule and democracy'.[36] This top-down form of governance in turn contributed to the personalisation of domestic politics and the centralisation of power.

The EU's support to civil society in Cyprus

Cypriot civil society is considered weak by the European Union in both communities and as neither very active in advocating their rights nor participating in the conflict resolution process.[37] This is confirmed by two recent CIVICUS reports.[38] These parameters analysing civic engagement are, however, already embedded in its own normative framework and indeed seems to be rather patronising towards local engagement. As in many deeply divided conflict societies, it is more accurate to speak of 'civil societies' as Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot civil society have developed separately and in different political conditions and are currently engaging in different discourses on socio-economic problems in their own societies. Only the inter-communal movement is an exception that has long been working across the Green line and kept a constant interest in conflict resolution. Local activists assume that a missing 'culture of activism' within the Greek Cypriot entity contributes to a lack of broader social engagement. Greek Cypriot society remains dominantly organised along traditional political party lines that constitute the dominant channel to voice political ideas and participation.[39] Even sport teams are usually associated with parties – that harks back British colonial time when the only kind of social organisations allowed were charities and sport organisations. Families are deeply integrated in party structures and tend

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[35] Interview with a representative of an international organisation in Georgia, Tbilisi, May 2013.

[36] CORE, 'D.2.1 Background Report and Work Plan', Cultures *of Governance and Conflict Resolution in Europe and India (CORE)*, 2011.

[37] Interview with a European Commission representative, Nicosia, 8 November 2011; Interview with a UNDP representative, Nicosia, 8 November 2011.

[38] Civicus 2007:2009 http://socs.civicus.org (accessed 10 May 2012)

[39] Marina Vasilara and Gotelenne Piaton, 'The Role of Civil Society in Cyprus', *Cyprus Review* 19, no. 2 (2007): 107-212.

to follow party opinions, often uncritically.[40] The majority regards politics as a top-down business.[41] Consequently, civil society falls short of holding governments on both sides of the Green Line accountable for their actions, including the delay of a solution.

History of inter-communal peace engagement

In Cyprus, citizen-led reconciliation and conflict resolution activities started in the 1970s,[42] using problem-solving methodologies as theorised by John Burton and others.[43] Particularly during the times of closed borders between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot entities, the inter-communal movement played a significant role in keeping open communication channels between the two communities. They provided an opportunity to establish or sustain relationships with individuals from the other community.[44] In the early 1990s, the inter-communal movement's engagement was eventually recognised and supported by various third parties ranging from bilateral to multilateral donors including the European Union.[45] Today, conflict resolution via dialogue and cultural activities are the main approach of bottom-up initiatives to conflict resolution. NGOs are trying to counter stereotyping, ethno-nationalism and prejudices that are still dominant in Cypriot society and the official state discourse. Those projects range from youth sport projects to local and regional conferences. Inter-communal projects are trying to change the perception of the 'other side' and to provide space to imagine alternative solutions to the status quo. These inter-communal activities are generally locally-led but sponsored by external actors, mainly UNDP-ACT[46] and more recently the EU. Thus, local actors do have an international component, partly of dependency but there is also a lot of friction over what local actors believe is international insensitivity, and their 'pragmatic', results-oriented approach.

Support to peace-orientated civil society is largely driven by the UNDP-ACT programme (since 2005 and, previously, by UNPOS starting in 1997). Therefore, EU funding to civil society is considered less important than UN funding by many activists. That might change significantly in 2014 as the UNDP closes its programme in Cyprus at the end of the year.[47] Some NGOs articulated the hope that the EU will step in and provide more funds.[48] So far, the EU allows the UN-programmes to take the lead. That is surprising, as Cyprus is part of the EU and thus one could expect the EU to take on more responsibility.

The EU assistance to the civil society

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[40] Interview with an NGO employee, Nicosia, 15 October 2012; Interview with a Cypriot activist, Nicosia, 12 October 2012.

[41] The Management Center (2011): Civil Society in Cyprus; 24 -29.

[42] Amongst others: Maria Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 'Unofficial Inter-Communal Contacts and Their Contribution to Peace-Building in Conflict Societies: The Case of Cyprus', *Cyprus Review* 5, no. 2 (1993): 68–87; Benjamin J. Broome, 'Reaching Across the Dividing Line: Building a Collective Vision for Peace in Cyprus', *Journal of Peace Research* 41 (2004): 191-209.

[43] John Burton, *Conflict and Communication: The Use of Controlled Communication in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

[44] Birte Vogel and Oliver P. Richmond, 'A Viable Peace Process Already Exists: Relocating the Intercommunal Movements of Cyprus', in *Resolving Cyprus: New Approaches to Conflict Resolution*, ed. James Ker-Lindsay (London: I.B.Tauris, forthcoming).

[45] Broome, 'Reaching Across the Dividing Line', 192.

[46] USAID currently provides 100% of the funds for UNDP-ACT.

[47] Due to changing priorities in the US, USAID will not continue the support. Therefore, UNDP-ACT leaves Cyprus at the end of the current phase, which will be the end of 2013. Some projects are ending in mid-2013 already.

[48] Interview with an NGO employee, Nicosia, 3 November 2012; Interview with a representative of the Cyprus Community Media Centre, Nicosia, 25 October 2012.

To strengthen civil society and bottom-up initiatives, the EU has funded various programmes over the last two decades. They are either directed at (1) directly supporting civil society organisations, (2) through economic integration of the two communities, or (3) indirectly through the implementation and enforcement of the *acquis communautaire* that grants certain rights to citizens and CSOs to get involved in the governance process.

Direct support to civil society

Supporting civil society at a broad base, the EU is encountering the following problem: large civil society segments remain ethno-nationalist while simultaneously supporting international law, human rights or gender equality.[49] Therefore, a broad support to civil society organisations has included the support of ethno-nationalist orientated groups that do not contribute to conflict resolution but indeed oppose a bi-communal solution. Other donors, such as UNDP-Act analysts, see the EU programme as problematic because of their broad approach.[50] UNDP in turn, has changed their funding policy to some key players that are dedicated to conflict resolution, but removed from the wider society. Support to ethno-nationalist CSOs in the Republic of Cyprus remains indirect through EU funds to the state by single EU member states, as well as various European foundations that support the RoC government. The government, then, distributes the money – amongst others to non-peace orientated CSOs and that are in tension with the inter-communal movement that attempts to break through the elitist power structures.

Generally, civil society in the North and the South are treated differently from their Turkish Cypriot counterparts in the North by the EC. There is a separate programme aiming at the Turkish Cypriot community. Although Turkish Cypriots live outside the customs of the EU, it does not affect the rights of Turkish Cypriots as EU citizens. Legally, they are citizens of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) (and thus of the EU), even though they live in the 'areas not under government control'[51] as stated by the European Commission. The main support to Turkish Cypriot civil society is the *Cypriot Civil Society in Action Programme*. The overall objective of the programme is to 'strengthen the role of civil society in the Turkish Cypriot Community and to promote the development of a conducive environment for the further development of trust, dialogue, cooperation and closer relationship between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities as an important step towards a solution to the Cyprus problem.'[52] The programme had a budget of €311million from 2006-2012.[53] Under the headline of objective 3 *'Fostering reconciliation, confidence building measures, and support to civil society'*, the funding supported the Committee on Missing Persons, managed jointly with UNDP. UNDP signed a contract with the International Committee on Missing Persons for DNA analyses at their facilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[54] Further, out of 27 remaining projects funded under three grant schemes of the *Cypriot Civil Society*

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[49] Vogel and Richmond, 'A Viable Peace Process Already Exists'.

[50] Interview with a UNDP representative, Nicosia, 12 October 2012.

[51] European Commission, 'Turkish Cypriot Community', http://ec.europa.eu/cyprus/turkish_cypriots/index_en.htm (accessed 8 June 2013).

[52] EU Civil Society Support Team (2010) 'Cypriot Civil Society in Action: Awarded Projects' Nicosia, EU Civil Society Support Team.

[53] European Commission, 'Seventh Annual Report 2012 on the implementation of Community assistance under Council regulation (EC) No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006 establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community', *Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament* (Brussels, 4 June 2013), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkish_cypriot_community/20130604_seventh_annual_report_impl_community_assistance_en.pdf (accessed 8 June 2013).

[54] *Ibid.*

in Action programme, 23 were completed in 2012.[55]

The funding has been subject to some resentment in the South as the money is solely for the North. Some Greek Cypriot NGOs would have liked to benefit from the EU's civil society support programme, but the funding is reserved for Turkish Cypriots. Of course, the Republic of Cyprus is an EU member state, and it receives €800 million a year in EU grants.[56]

Economic integration

EU policy pursues the notion that economic interdependence and in particular trade integration could bring the two sides closer together. According to the EC in Nicosia the main objective of its Cyprus policy is to link both parts of the island to foster stable economic relationships and help Turkish Cypriots to overcome their isolation.[57] Among other documents, EC No 389/2006 specifies the idea that economic integration leads to conflict resolution. The EU states that its instruments aim to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, the economic integration of the island, improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and preparing for the *acquis communautaire*.[58] Hence, the EU passed several regulations seeking to ease trade between the two communities. The EU tries to foster economic integration by supporting the two chambers of commerce and their interdependence programme (the programme, again, mainly is run by UNDP-ACT, not the EU.[59])

Although more and more products have been added to the Green Line Regulation every year, trade between the communities decreases.[60] The EC, however, suspects much 'hidden trade' between the two sides. Members of the EC assume that social norms have a major impact on trade relations between the communities: as long as consumers reject products from 'the other side', traders have no incentive to openly do business across the Green Line.[61] Supermarkets might even be afraid of protest by their costumers if they stock Turkish Cypriot products.[62] Consequently, there are barely any Turkish Cypriot products on the shelves in the south and thus no demand to trade products over the Green Line.[63] Greek Cypriot farmers associations show similar patterns of resistance in opposing the Green Line Regulation. They fear competition from agricultural producers in the North and frequently complain about lower production standards in the TRNC.

Enforcement of the acquis communiauaire

For the Greek Cypriot entity, as a member state of the EU, the EU has the chance to influence the conditions for CSO on the ground through their legal framework, i.e. the implementation of the acquis.

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Third Report Visit to Cyprus', *House of Commons Publications* (21 January 2009), http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmfaff/196/19604.htm#a10 (accessed 3 June 2013).

[57] Interview with a European Commission representative, Nicosia, 1 March 2012.

[58] Council of the European Union, 'Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006 establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community', *Official Journal of the European Union* (27 February 2006), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:065:0005:0008:EN:PDF (accessed 3 June 2013), 2.

[59] For more information on this programme, see http://www.ktto.net/interdependence/.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Herman Prein Moestue, 'Wrong side of the (trade) barriers', *European Voice*, 5 September 2008, http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/wrong-side-of-the-trade-barriers/62192.aspx (accessed 3 June 2013).

[63] Conference presentation, Nicosia, 27 October 2012.

As far as the Turkish Cypriot entity is concerned, the Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument helps prepare the Turkish Cypriots for implementation of the EU acquis following the settlement of the Cyprus problem. TAIEX supports the preparation of acquis-compliant legal drafts. Progress of draft legal texts aimed at acquis-alignment was regarded as critically slow in 2012.[64]

Perspectives
Liberal peace
From a liberal internationalist perspective, the combination of trade, democratisation, human rights and international collaboration is the source of domestic and international peace.[65] The EU's approach in Cyprus mirrors this understanding of conflict governance. For the Republic of Cyprus, as a member state, the EU encourages democratisation and the rule of law indirectly through the implementation of the acquis and by giving the legal framework to CSOs to be part of certain processes and the chance to raise their voices in official governance discourse. This has happened for instance in the media sector, where NGOs have insisted on their right to participate in certain commissions to improve the media landscape.[66] The EU is supporting state as well as non-state actors, but has learnt to be more selective in its support to CSOs. It does further not support, neither financially nor morally, grassroots movements that are more radical. For instance the Occupy Buffer Movement, one of the recent young and left orientated grassroots movements, has not received any support from the EU.

Hollow hegemony and vibrant hegemony
These types seem more adequate for the support to civil society in the Turkish Cypriot part. As the EU cannot cooperate with the TRNC government due to its international non-recognition, it put more emphasis on CSO. The EU funds, especially initiatives that bring the TC community closer to the EU as the long-term goal indeed is to reintegrate the North into the EU. Therefore, the EU tries to give incentives to change legal frameworks, get more freedom to unions, media and implement human rights standards. But it is also an attempt of state or at least institution- and capacity-building. Turkey, in turn, tries to undermine this EU influence and keep the Turkish Cypriot community dependent on their support. One example is under the 'Aid Regulation' the EU has tried to assist the TRNC to harmonise laws with EU regulations in preparation for the implementation of the acquis (in case of a possible reunification and therefore possible EU membership) by establishing the 'TRNC Prime Minister Office - European Union Coordination Centre' in 2003. The attempt is seen as inefficient by the EU which feels the initiative is boycotted by the Turkish government.[67] For example, many recently trained Cypriot employees in the administration were made redundant (officially due to budget reasons) and later replaced with Turkish employees unskilled in EU law.[68] Further, Turkey subsidise farmers in Northern Cyprus only as long as they do not trade their products over the Green Line and thus are undermining the integration via trade approach.

Post-liberal Peace

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[64] European Commission, 'Seventh Annual Report 2012'.

[65] See e.g. Michael W Doyle, 'A Liberal View: Preserving and Expanding the Liberal Pacific Union', in *International Order and the Future of World Politics*, ed. T.V. Paul and John A. Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[66] Interview with Cyprus Community Media Centre, Nicosia, 25 October 2012.

[67] Interview with a European Commission representative, Nicosia, 1 March 2012.

[68] *Ibid.*

The community of CSO 'created' by the international community is indeed isolated, removed and in a way 'powerless'. They are hardly capable of really challenging the state on both sides of the Green Line. Maybe because of the NGOisation of the island the gap between civil society organisations and society is wide open. Peacebuilding activities tend to attract the same circle of participants over and over again. This has an impact on the discussion and the space provided for reconciliation talks, as the same set of opinions is presented by the same set of people. Donors and activists alike tend to speak of 'the usual suspects' when referring to bi-communal peace activists.

Interviews with citizens not involved in peacebuilding and CSO activities show that they tend to regard the sectors as artificial and externally driven (imposed by the EU or UN/ not Cypriot and artificial are common remarks). That seems not to be true, as the NGOs are usually locally-led and run by Cypriots but they seem to be closer to their donors than their societies.

A second trend is the regionalisation of civil society organisations that can be observed in Cyprus. Various events were designed to make neighbouring countries participate to enhance the exchange between Cypriot civil society and for example Arab and Eastern Europe CSOs. That clearly is in favour of a more regional power approach rather than a state centric approach.

EU support for civil society in BiH

<u>**Bosnian civil society in the post-war period**</u>
As was the case with most aspects of the political and social sphere in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the civil society had also undergone a total transformation. In the previous system, the concept of civil society included mainly cultural, sport and local community organisations, also known as *mjesne zajednice*. In the period following the war, however, the concept has drastically changed. The civil society sector has by and large become synonymous to an NGO sector. This has been the case due to the introduction of a Western model of civil society, the development of which has been incentivised through foreign donors' funds. Within this model, civil society in a post-conflict country is expected to complement the state in providing services, but also contribute to stabilisation and conflict resolution. Consequently, the funding of civil society, most of which has come from outside the country, has been conditioned by the type of activities and the form of the initiatives. Namely, in order for an initiative to be financially supported, it has to take form of an organisation, which in some cases has proven to be detrimental for the momentum of the initiatives.

As a result of the significant support this sector has received in the aftermath of the war, there has been a large number of NGOs set up, which has led to many referring to the sector as an *NGO industry*. At present, there are over 12,000 NGOs registered in BiH, not all of which are active.[69] These range in size and type, including youth organisations, women's organisations, religious communities, sports associations, farmers' associations, political organisations, veterans' associations, etc.

While there have been considerable achievements of the civil society organisations, the development as explained above has come at a cost. Namely, the civil society in BiH remains donor-driven and by and large follows the donors' agenda.[70] Reflecting on how their mission and activities have changed over the years, many share the sentiment of a Tuzla-based civil society organisation (CSO) representative that 'you have to follow the donors' trends and the availability

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[69] Interview with an international organisation representative, Sarajevo, 15 November 2011.
[70] Interviews with CSO representatives, Sarajevo, October-November 2011.

of funding'.[71] The donors are quick to point out that in deciding the priorities in which areas projects are to be funded for the year they consult with CSOs.[72] However, the opportunity for such input is perceived to be limited as the CSO representatives claim that it is clear in the consultation meetings who the one with the power to decide is and how much the CSOs can influence the list of priorities.[73] As a result, very few of them try. In addition, as part of the funding requirements of the donors, CSOs are encouraged to plan activities whose outcomes are measurable, indicator-oriented and tangible.[74] Finally, the CSOs are often divorced from the society at large. For the wider population, civil society remains synonymous with donor aid in the country's reconstruction, and with the perception of there being a foreign element. Most of the citizens are sceptical towards civil society and its initiatives.[75] The general public perception of CSOs is that of profit-making mechanisms that are close to the domestic governing structures and/or the international actors, and do not represent the wider population.[76] There are CSOs that are even perceived as a 'family businesses' with several family members being employed on various projects, which negatively affects the legitimacy of the organisation and its initiatives among the population.[77]

All of this has led to the CSO initiatives, including those that have a conflict resolution component, being anything but organic and genuinely bottom-up in most cases, even though many of them might have in actuality contributed to conflict resolution. One such example is the 'Community Gardens Project' of the American Friends Service Committee, which is run by a Bosnian, and has managed to bring together people of different ethnicities suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder in growing their own food and jointly managing their gardens.[78] While records show that the project has been successful in starting the process of reconciliation, the initiative has come from a foreign donor, rather than being an organic bottom-up project. Other examples include various youth initiatives, where young people of different ethnicities have been brought together to camps, workshops or public discussions.[79] Such initiatives, however, have two important limitations. On the one hand, they attract the same small group of people, and on the other, the results of those are not only non-multipliable, but also sometimes reversed when the participants return to their homes and continue functioning within the ethnically divided society.[80] As a result of all the aforementioned, the achievements of the civil society activities in the conflict resolution area have at best been limited.

EU assistance to the civil society
The civil society sector in BiH has been infused with a significant amount of financial, technical and human support. A lot of these funds over the years have been directed towards conflict resolution through civil society. In the period 1995-2000 alone, some $5-6 billion of international funds was

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[71] Interview with a CSO representative, Tuzla, 14 November 2011.

[72] Interviews with international organisations' representatives, Sarajevo, 15-16 November 2011.

[73] Interview with a CSO representative, Sarajevo, 15 November 2011.

[74] Interviews with CSO representatives, Sarajevo and Tuzla, October-November 2011.

[75] Nebojša Šavija Valha, 'Civilno društvo u Bosni i Hercegovini: između prava i pomoći', *Puls Demokratije*, 30 November 2011, http://arhiva.pulsdemokratije.net/index.php?id=1854&l=bs (accessed 9 May 2013),

[76] Field notes, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Brčko, Banja Luka, October-November 2011, May-July 2012.

[77] Field notes, Sarajevo, Brčko and Banja Luka, May-July 2012.

[78] Common Dreams, 'Healing The Wounds Of War - Sowing Seeds of Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina', last modified 15 September 2004, http://www.commondreams.org/news2004/0915-06.htm (accessed 28 April 2013).

[79] For instance, see Denis Dzidic, 'Bosnian Youth Step Across Ethnic and Religious Divides', *Balkan Insight*, 11 April 2013, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/peace-camp-brings-bosnian-youth-together (accessed 29 April 2013).

[80] Interviews with youth activists, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Brčko, Doboj and Banja Luka, October-November 2011 and May-July 2012.

invested in assisting local communities, which also includes the development of civil society.[81] It is difficult to estimate which part of that was invested in conflict resolution specifically, but many of the calls for applications for funding civil society projects even nowadays still require a 'multicultural' dimension. Assistance to the civil society has significantly decreased since.

At present, the EU remains the biggest donor. It has supported the development of post-war civil society in BiH through various financial instruments over the year. One of the most significant ones was the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS), which in the 2000-2006 period was used to support projects in numerous areas, spanning from reconstruction and refugee aid, to development of a market economy, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, civil society, and media.[82] This instrument was replaced with the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in 2007.[83] The two IPA components available to BiH are Component I, providing transition assistance and support for institution building, and Component II, which supports and promotes cross-border cooperation.[84] Launched in 2006, another instrument used to strengthen the role of the civil society is the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). For BiH, the annual EIDHR budget is some 1.2 million euros.[85]

Up until 2006, the EU funded the Bosnian civil society in a 'traditional manner', providing grants in the area of reconciliation and peacebuilding through CARDS.[86] Since 2006, however, having identified strategic problems in the functioning of the civil society in BiH, some of which include being donor-driven, lacking cooperation with the state institutions, as well as within the civil society sector itself, the EU has changed its approached to supporting CSO initiatives.[87] One change is seen through the 'Reinforcement of Local Democracy' project, whose aim is to reach out to grassroots organisations, whereby the municipalities apply for funds, for which in the second phase the CSOs can apply directly at the municipal level.[88] Another change is grants being given to NGO networks, in which case the priorities are not pre-defined, but the network has to explain the particular problem it wishes to address and show sustainability of the initiative.[89]

The large financial support to the civil society notwithstanding, the results when it comes to conflict resolution through this sector have been at best limited. What is interesting in BiH is that grassroots governance and conflict resolution initiatives are limited because, on the one hand, they have been smothered by donor-driven project funding and, on the other hand, the borders of ethnically conceived spaces are still hard. *Ethnic spatialisation* is evident throughout BiH. The concept alludes to Ferguson and Gupta's work on 'the spatialisation of the state', which is the operation of metaphors and practices through which 'states represent themselves as reified entities with particular spatial properties', that contributes to them '[securing] their legitimacy, [naturalising] their authority, and [representing] themselves as superior to, and encompassing of,

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[81] Žarko Papić (ed.), *International Support Policies to South-East European Countries: Lessons (Not) Learned in BiH* (Sarajevo: Open Society Fund/Mueller, 2001), 30.

[82] European Commission, 'The CARDS programme (2000-2006)', http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/western_balkans/r18002_en.htm (accessed 18 May 2013).

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] Directorate with European Integration, 'Uvođenje novog instrumenta pretpristupne pomoći IPA II (2014-2020)', http://www.dei.gov.ba/dei/direkcija/sektor_koordinacija/ipa_2/?id=11610 (accessed 18 May 2013).

[85] Interview with an international organisation representative, Sarajevo, 16 November 2011.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] *Ibid.*

other institutions and centres of power'.[90] Through a similar process, a spatialisation of ethnicity can be observed occurring in BiH and is at the core of the functioning of the bh. society nowadays. That said, any bottom-up or civil society conflict resolution initiatives inevitably has to be analysed within that context, given that the spatialisation remains the single most important constraint to conflict resolution.

Beyond the funding of its initiatives and its capacity-building, the EU has claimed to have found a strategic ally in the bh. civil society, especially in the policy-making realm. In practice, however, the power asymmetry has been very apparent. Not only does the EU have the power of determining the financing of the CSOs and thus the survival of many of them, but also it often is the one that the citizens and the CSOs turn to first for help, given the political situation in the country and the hindered electorate-representatives link. On the other hand, the collaboration of certain CSOs with the EU sometimes delegitimises their cause among the wider population as they are seen as foreign elements rather than something coming out of the local society.

Perspectives
Liberal peace
While the EU support for CSO's in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been based on the liberal peace model as described at the beginning of this article, the outcomes thereof have not followed the model expectations. Namely, the EU, along with other international actors in BiH, has pushed forward an agenda for reforms that would bring the country closer to being a functional market economy and a democracy. In these reforms, both the state institutions and the civil society sector have been foreseen to take an active role. Nevertheless, the results have been lacking. This is partially so due to the existing constitutional order in BiH and the EU's involvement in the governing of the country both through the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the EU Special Representatives, positions that were jointly held by the OHR until September 2011.The legacy of the era when the OHR widely used its executive powers still persists, since both politicians and citizens turn to the international community representatives in the country amid political crises. In recent years, it has been the EU Special Representative that has had the most prominent role among the foreign officials in the country. In turn, needless to say, this has affected the essential bond in democracies between the elected representatives and the electorate, including the civil society.

At the same time, as noted, the EU has supported the inclusion of the civil society in the policy-making of the country, in the hope that it will promote and seek the creation of a legal and institutional framework in areas that need to be brought in line with the EU standards. One such area is that of human rights, as well as minority rights. Nonetheless, as explained above, the civil society remains divorced from the larger population and is perceived by them as agents of the international community and/or the state. The latter is partially due to the strong personal connections of the people in the civil society sector and the state apparatus, which remain essential for 'doing business'.[91] In fact, the so-called *štela*, or the usage of personal connections to gain a certain advantage, is something that the society, including the international community in BiH, very strongly relies on.[92] This perception of the civil society, along with the existence of the ethnic spaces, has made the goal of reconciliation through it practically impossible.

Hollow hegemony and vibrant hegemony

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[90] James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, 'Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality', *American Ethnologist* 29, no. 4 (2002): 981-1002.
[91] Field notes, Sarajevo, November 2012.
[92] Field notes, Sarajevo and Banja Luka, May-July 2012.

The models of hollow and vibrant hegemony apply to the bh. context only partially. As already elaborated, foreign, including largely EU funds have made the bh. civil society entirely donor-dependent, whereby the functioning of the organisations is planned around the donor's calls for applications.

In addition, the EU support for the civil society sector has contributed to the definition of who is 'fit' to fall in this category. Namely, with most, if not all of the international funding requiring a certain organisational form in order for an initiative to be even considered eligible for funding, many grassroots movements, which in fact have more legitimacy among the society at large than most CSOs, have been marginalised. Moreover, it is only a certain type of initiatives, in line with the priorities determined by the donors, that are supported. For instance, JOSD, Unitary Organisation for Socialism and Democracy, has a socialist ideology at its core and it brings together people from different parts of BiH and from different backgrounds, that unite around the vision of the organisation.[93]Nevertheless, given the ideological discrepancy, this organisation has been by and large ignored and sidelined both by state and EU officials.

Where the hypotheses of this model are not applicable, however, is in the suggested shifting of accountability. While both the state and the civil society remain dependent on foreign funds, the accountability is not entirely shifted to the international scene. In fact, in recent years there have been consistent efforts to shift part of the accountability back from the international to the domestic scene.

Post-liberal peace

The post-liberal peace model, as was the case with the previous model, finds only partial applicability in the bh. context as well. The failure to build a vibrant liberal civil society notwithstanding, the civil society is not entirely powerless and artificial. A recent instance of the civil society organising massive protests in various parts of BiH, with the main protest held in Sarajevo in front of the state institutions, has shown signs of a possible civic awakening in the country.[94]

At the same time, even though the EU support is usually translated into the logic of the pre-existing local actors, this has rarely led to new ways that open for new conflicts. It has, nevertheless, to a certain degree cemented the existing conflict, which is manifested in the existence of ethnic spaces.

Lastly, BiH remains a country dependent on foreign presence, with an intact immense power asymmetry between the EU and the country. With the politicians from all three ethnicities and both entities having a lot at stake, a real reform that could strengthen the country and make it functioning is not likely to occur in foreseeable future.

Comparative analysis and conclusions

The theoretical and empirical study in this paper reveals several common trends in the general characteristics of the civil society development in the conflict cases as well as the forms and policies of the EU's assistance to the third sector. In all three cases we note that the civil society is formally independent from the domestic governments with limited influence on state policies, however. Generally, the local population associates CSOs with one political party or another (especially in the Georgian and Cypriot realities) and perceives them as a donor-driven entities. In the Abkhaz and B&H cases nepotism seems to be widespread, as often the CSO's main employers

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[93] Interview with a CSO representative, Sarajevo, 13 November 2011.

[94] Elvira M. Jukic, 'Bosnian 'Baby Protesters' Vent Anger at Politicians', *Balkan Insight*, 2July 2013 [accessed 5 September 2013].

are family members or parents of the executives. This has negatively affected the legitimacy of the organisations in the eyes of the local societies. Also in the main conflict resolution activities the CSOs seem to be similar, ranging from confidence-building and reconciliation projects to humanitarian ones aiming to counter stereotyping and prejudices between the confronted parties.

The EU's support for the civil societies in the target countries is twofold: (1) assistance to the process of economic liberalisation and democracy development, as well as encouraging the third sector to participate in the governance process, like in the harmonisation of the national legislation with that of the EU in the BiH case, and the implementation and enforcement of the acquis communautaire in the Cyprus case; and (2) the direct funding for local civil society organisations. Over the years, the EU has financed numerous projects designed for confidence-building purposes as well as for improvement of the living conditions of the conflict-affected people. In the Cyprus case, this funding, however, has caused some resentment in the South as it has been directed solely to the North adding to the already existing conflict.[95] That ties in with the generally ambiguous view of the EU. Likewise Abkhazia has been deprived of the international funds, insofar as international law has fallen on the side of Georgia's territorial integrity.

By focusing on democracy development in the conflict affected societies, the EU echoes the logic of the liberal peace paradigm. However, as far as the EU civil society assistance in conflict resolution is concerned, the liberal peace hypothesis seems to have little validity. In the Bosnian case, the Union's temptation to promote the involvement of the CSOs in the development of the legal and institutional framework brought no tangible results. The EU has largely failed to empower several grassroots initiatives that ended up being marginalised. While conflict resolution was not the primary aim of these initiatives, supporting them could have contributed to this objective as well. In Georgia, as well as in Cyprus, a number of youth and grassroots organisations – if not complying with liberal paradigms – (regional ones largely bordering conflict zones in the Georgian case and left-oriented ones in the Cypriot case) have been deprived of EU funding.

This EU approach rather echoes the hollow and/or vibrant hegemony hypothesis, when preferences are given to the same so-called elitist organisations with well-developed administrative capabilities and English speaking staff. In the Bosnian case, many of the grassroots organisations are not even trying to participate in the selection process to get funding for their projects. In this way, the genuinely bottom-up initiatives have at best been limited. Furthermore, the EU supports only certain types of projects and initiatives in line with the EU's priorities.

In the Georgian case, the EU has decided to finance pro-European organisations, closing its eyes to the fact that in some cases this funding has been used for the political purposes of certain CSOs. This, in turn, increased the already enormous gap between the CSOs and ordinary people. The same story applies to the Cypriot and Bosnian cases, where the peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities always are concentrated on the same type of NGOs, contributing in such way to the detachment of the third sector form the larger society.

Summing up, one can conclude that in the Georgian case the EU is engaged only with organisations that are sympathetic to its political orientation and priorities as defined in the communication mentioned above. On the one hand, it is thereby true that the EU promotes a liberal peace, but on the other it ends up contributing to the creation of an elitist NGO sector highly detached from broader society. The EU surely lacks context sensitivity when financing only Tbilisi-based organisations and neglecting regional ones, more precisely those located near the administrative borders of the conflict zones. Civil society organisations including grassroots ones are donor-dependant. This means that their survival depends on foreign assistance. Therefore,

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[95] Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Third Report Visit to Cyprus', *House of Commons Publications* (21 January 2009), http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmfaff/196/19604.htm#a10 (accessed 3 June 2013).

instead of promoting their own ideas regarding the peace process, sometimes they have to adjust them to the guidelines of the EU's call for projects. In such a way, many valuable ideas in the peacebuilding process turn out to be lost.

COBERM is playing a valuable role in the conflict resolution process. Due to the isolation of the de facto states, it was instrumental in guaranteeing the interaction between the various parties. However, the criteria, modalities and approach they usually use towards the selection process raise some doubts about the EU/UNDP's real motivations behind COBERM. As said, the decision to finance different organisations and projects every year will hardly create effective conditions for confidence-building. As it was noted it has little to do with confidence-building, but rather with the political motivations of the EU itself. Therefore the EU's engagement with local Georgian and Abkhaz civil society organisations seems to be more of an instrument to control effectively the political situation inside Georgia and prevent a renewal of hostilities between the confronted parties than engage in a process of conflict resolution. However, if the only goal is to contribute to the stabilisation of Georgia in order to pacify its neighbourhood and ensure European security, then the EU's policy towards the CSOs makes sense, as it manages to control the tensions and avoid escalation through its projects.

In public opinion, UNDP is the more influential civil society donor in Cyprus and most projects that are aimed at peacebuilding are executed jointly. International actors have gradually pulled away from a general NGO support to exclusively fund peace-orientated civil society that is in favour of their solution to the Cyprus problem.[96] Today only a few key 'compliant' players obtain most of the funding available. These NGOs further allocate small grants to other initiatives replicating the funding requirements they are subject to. Those criteria include inter-communalism, public visibility, and the assumed long-term effect. The change in funding policies and the close relationship between bottom-up initiatives and international donors have forced the former grassroots projects into institutionalised forms. A professionalisation on matters of writing funding applications and adjusting programmes and agendas to donor priorities was necessary to obtain funding. A recent report concluded that 'here is a stratum within Cypriot society within both communities that has become dependent on the division for its livelihood and status the sheer volume of uncoordinated aid gets in the way of progress or incentives to move forward'.[97]

The CSO community is a small circle of well-educated, English speaking activists. To overcome the isolation they experience in Cyprus, the EU and UNDP are trying to foster the regionalisation of NGOs.

In Cyprus, it is often hard to distinguish between the EU and UNDP projects. Often UNDP has the lead and the EU is a junior partner. The development of CS driven by the EU is rather dominated by legal and right-based approaches (as preparation of the acquis and integration via trade). Due to the complex and difficult political situation on the ground the EU engages differently with civil society in the Turkish and Greek Cypriot entities. The approach within the Greek Cypriot Republic of Cyprus can be best categorised as liberal peace. Support for civil society organisations in the North are rather characterised by elements of statebuilding. The preparation for the implementation of the acquis is just one example.

CS in Cyprus must find a way to retrace its roots of bi-communal activism that has achieved something impressive regarding the ethno-nationalist and repressive condition it had to operate in. The space is still there, but it has been partly co-opted by internationals and tends to be

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[96] *Ibid.*

[97] M.K. Flynn, Tony King, Derek Braddon and Christian Dadomo, ''Reconciliation and Peace Economics in Cyprus. Summary of Findings', *Report to the European Commission*, Europe Aid Cypriot Civil Society in Action II Programme. (University of the West of England: 2012), http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/17538/2/report_feb_2012_EU_RO.pdf (accessed 8 June 2013).

marginalised by state elites. Rather than providing core funding to NGOs, however, and leave the decision about the best possible use of these funds with the local activists, donors provide project funding. This impacts on the long-term stability of NGOs as they can hardly plan ahead of the next project.[98]

Bosnia and Herzegovina is the most prominent example in recent years when it comes to the amount of foreign aid received. A large part of it has gone to the development of a liberal democratic order and, as an essential element thereof, the development of civil society. The civil society sector has been expected to complement the state in providing services, but also in being the main driver behind the recreation of the social fabric and reconciliation. This, however, has not materialised. Instead of becoming the voice of the citizens and the one overseeing the work of the governing structures, civil society is seen by the majority of the citizens as a profit-making industry and by the state officials as a potential ally, whose involvement would legitimise certain initiatives.

At the same time, not only has the international funding of the civil society in BiH been reduced, whatever is still available is poorly coordinated from the donors' side. The EU remains the single largest donor in this domain. Nonetheless, the funding requirements of the donors, along with the mental matrix of most of the civil society actors to develop initiatives not in terms of the population's needs, but in terms of donors' funding priorities, have reduced the civil society to organisations that are by and far donor-driven.

From this comparison, we see that while the objectives of EU CSO support are in accordance with the liberal peace perspective, the effects rather involve various combinations of the hypotheses derived from the three other perspectives. Concerning the impact on the relationship between the supported CSOs and the states in which they operate, the 'post-liberal' perspective may nonetheless be most accurate in describing how new political dynamics are created through the support, dynamics that are neither reducible to foreign objectives nor local initiatives. In Georgia, building political/social/economic institutions with the EU's assistance came with serious shortcomings in the rule of law, freedom of media, and the respect of private property domain, with an ensuing sense of injustice and frustration amongst the population. All this had negative effects on the peace process. Because of serious democratic shortcomings in Georgia, the Abkhaz did not consider Georgia as a state worth reintegrating into and where their rights would be respected. What we have from the EU's side towards the above described statebuilding process in Georgia is the 'accommodation of local cultures of governance'.[99] In Cyprus the state keeps marginalising peace-orientated civil society as a possible threat to national elite scripts. Pro-reunification CSOs partly challenge the way the current Cypriot state is constituted and therefore tries either to ignore or actively delegitimise those initiatives. The support by the EU can only partially help to overcome the isolation of inter-communal pro-peace actors. While the EU can confer some legitimacy on selected actors, it simulatiously sidelines, co-opts and selects CSOs as a tool to implement liberal peacebuilding. And in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EU CSO support is mainly co-opted and there is little to no real resistance from the CSOs, which in turn does not change the dynamics in terms of the already established hegemonies of power and-or changes in the existing political orders. The lack of resistance comes primarily as a result of the EU being the biggest donor in this domain and the CSOs being donor-dependent, as explained above.

With regard to the relationship between the supported CSOs and other societal actors, these dynamics were accounted for in the comparison above. Here, the three cases demonstrate a variation between the relevance of the three perspectives from case to case. In Georgia, the

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[98] Interview with a Cyprus Community Media Center representative, Nicosia, 25 October 2012.
[99] *Ibid.*

strengthening of EU friendly CSOs versus other social and political actors resonates most with the vibrant hegemony model. In Cyprus, the most accurate perspective might be in between the liberal peace and hollow hegemony perspective. While accountability for NGOs has long been shifted to the level of the EU and their other external donors, the basic idea behind the support remains in the sphere of the liberal peace approach. And in BiH, both the hollow and the vibrant hegemony perspectives find applicability. Namely, the EU assistance perpetuates of foreign assistance and even though they have tried to shy away from this in recent years, the accountability has long been shifted from the local, domestic, to the international scene, as described in the hollow hegemony perspective. At the same time, however, there is no real distinction in terms of genuineness between the CSOs that are foreign-funded and grassroots initiatives that are not, which corresponds to one of the vibrant hegemony hypotheses.

The three cases thereby demonstrate that there is a need for further research on the determinants of this variation, and that rather than sweeping statements on hegemony or resistance, a more comprehensive and nuanced account of the political character and effects of EU CSO support is needed.