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Europeanisation and 'Internalised' Conflicts: The Case of Cyprus

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George Kyris [#]

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the role of the EU in conflict resolution, taking Cyprus as a case of an 'internalised' conflict, whereby a side of the dispute has become a member state (Greek-Cypriots), while the rest of actors (Turkey, Turkish Cypriots) remain outside but are still developing relations to the EU. In exploring the impact of the EU on Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and Turkish policies towards the dispute, this work engages with the Europeanisation debate. The argument advanced is that internalisation of the conflict limits the ability of the EU to act in the dispute and triggers inflexible policies, which are counterproductive to resolution. This work contributes to the Europeanisation discussion and the impact of the EU on domestic policies, especially in conflict situations. With a series of conflicts in the European periphery but also disputes within the EU (e.g. separatists tensions), this is an important contribution to the understudied topic of 'internalised conflicts'.

Keywords: European Union, Conflict Resolution, Europeanisation, Cyprus, Turkey

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Europeanisation and 'Internalised' Conflicts: The Case of Cyprus

1. Introduction

This article seeks to investigate the role of the European Union (EU) in conflict resolution, taking Cyprus as a study case of an 'internalised' conflict, whereby a side of the conflict became a member state during the dispute (Greek Cypriots), while the rest of actors (Turkey, Turkish Cypriots) remain outside but still developing their relations to the EU. In exploring the role of the EU in internalised conflicts, this work engages with the debate on Europeanisation, which contemplates the impact of the EU on its partners. Discussing the example of Cyprus, research draws extensively on how conditionality impacts the domestic scene and policies of the sides of the dispute.

The accession of Cyprus into the EU failed to become a catalyst for the resolution of the conflict. Just before the country's EU accession and after years of inflexibility, Turkey supported then UN-proposed 'Annan Plan' for the reunification of the island. This was a strategy that aimed at advancing Turkey's own EU accession, which was conditioned on the resolution of the Cyprus dispute. Similarly, Turkish Cypriots approved reunification, as the only way to join the EU as partners of a new, federal Cyprus. But Greek Cypriots, whose accession as the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) was not conditioned on the resolution of the dispute, rejected reunification and Cyprus entered the EU still a divided island. These developments raise a crucial question: how does furthering relations to

the EU for one side of the conflict, such as in the case of EU accession of the Greek Cypriots, impact the dynamics of the dispute and the chances for its resolution?

The paper advances the argument that EU internalisation of the conflict is counterproductive to resolution and, instead, causes more friction between the sides of the dispute. Based on the example of Cyprus, the internalisation of the conflict is suggested to offer one side of the dispute the chance to use EU decision making to promote their policy preferences. In turn, this leads to friction with those sides of the conflict that are outside the EU, whose relations to 'Brussels' also deteriorate and cause less compromising policies in the dispute. In this regard, the EU internalisation of the conflict does not push towards resolution but it does impact the dynamics of the dispute in a unique way. In investigating this process, this paper begins with a discussion of Europeanisation and conflict resolution before the investigation of the example of Cyprus in the main body. The paper draws on qualitative analysis of policy documents and discourse and a series of interviews with local and EU elites.

Along these lines, this work contributes to the discussion on Europeanisation and the aptitude of the EU to impact domestic matters and policies, especially in conflict situations. This is indeed a continuously important issue in European affairs because of the EU's engagement in a series of conflict-ridden regions, including the Balkans, Caucasus or the Middle East. In addition, separatist tensions within existing member states (like Spain or Belgium) also raise a series of questions on 'internal' disputes and the role that the EU plays in this

context. On the side, this paper offers an empirical investigation of post-accession years in Cyprus and the new dynamics of the conflict, which remain comparatively neglected in a literature that has focused more on the pre-accession period in the island.

2. Europeanisation and Regional Conflicts: Inside and Outside of the European Union

What is Europeanisation is still at the centre of a heated academic debate. Yet, a good part of the Europeanisation literature has reflected on the process through which the EU impacts domestic dynamics of its partners. Ladrech (2010, 2) summarises different conceptualisations and approaches Europeanisation of EU member states as a change 'whose motivating logic is tied to EU policy or decision-making process'. As a result, Europeanisation studies have looked at how the EU impacts domestic politics, policy and polity (Ladrech 1994; Börzel 1999; Wallace 2000; Hix and Goetz 2001; Buller and Gamble 2002; Töller 2010). This work seeks to investigate EU-induced changes in Greek Cypriot, Turkish and Turkish Cypriot policies towards the Cyprus conflict.

But each side of the Cyprus conflict relates to the EU in different ways: the Greek Cypriot-led RoC started as a candidate for EU membership but is now a full EU member state. On the other hand, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots are outsiders but still developing their relation to the EU: Turkey is a candidate for EU accession. Turkish Cypriots can also be seen as an 'acceding' part: at the moment, their territorial and administrative separation from the RoC means that, although the entire island is an EU territory, EU law does not apply in the self-declared

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Yet, EU's endeavour in north Cyprus resembles a lot the practise of enlargement because it focuses on the assistance of a third party (Turkish Cypriots) towards development and alignment to EU law, before entry into the EU in the event of a reunification and replacement of the RoC by a new federation of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. These fundamental differences between Greek Cypriots and Turkey/ Turkish Cypriots can be expected to mediate the process of Europeanisation in each instance and how the impact of EU integration is investigated.

In cases of enlargement, such as Turkey or the Turkish Cypriots, the Europeanisation debate has focused on the comparative domination of the EU in setting the terms of entry into the EU during the process of accession. Candidate countries, though free to decide how to respond to the terms of accession, lack any power in affecting EU decision-making or the content of accession conditionality, which becomes the channel of their 'Europeanisation'. In this regard, the literature has elaborated on the reward of accession (Sedelmeier 2011) and how it provides external incentives for change (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004) and has suggested that Europeanisation pressures gain where a) candidates are certain that addressing conditionality will result in a certain reward (the ultimate reward being EU accession) and where b) 'Brussels' are adamant in their threat that failure to meet conditionality equals suspension of this prize. Besides, the degree of change is also conceptualised as depending on the associated costs for political elites (Schimmelfennig and Seldemeier 2004). In this context, the credibility of the reward is also very important for the public support of European integration, which has provided national governments with additional

room for reforms towards EU accession (Agh 1999: 841; Lippert et al. 2001: 1001-1002).

In this sense, EU conditionality has been viewed as a particular motive for change of policies towards conflicts in specific¹. Due to the relative lack of cooperation amongst EU member states in external affairs, conflict-related conditionality is often case-specific and refers to instances where there is an on-going dispute between states that relate to the EU in different ways (EU members, candidates or third states)². While conditionality can be challenging to work in cases that maintain relatively loose relations to the EU beyond enlargement framework (e.g. European Neighbourhood Policy- see Whitman and Wolff 2010: 16), EU-provided rewards seem to increase the effectiveness of conditionality in candidates for EU membership. Indeed, there exist many works on the role of prizes that EU can offer, like accession, in incentivising change of policies towards conflict resolution (e.g. Noucheva 2004; Tocci 2007: 13), some of which concentrate on the example of Cyprus during its early accession period (e.g. Christou 2004; Tocci 2004).

But the recently acquired EU membership makes Greek Cypriots a rather different actor in the conflict. For once, the entry into the EU is synonymous to the expiration of any EU-inflicted conditionality, since the balance of power in favour of the EU dramatically changes. At the same time, the literature has focused on the avenues that membership

¹ The EU has also attempted mediation (e.g. Nouchenva et al. 2004) or change the general environment of the conflict and facilitate resolution (e.g. Whitman and Wolff 2010), rather than explicitly ask for a change of policies.

² Beyond Cyprus and Turkey, other prominent examples include: Greece and Former Yugoslavic Republic of Macedonia; Serbia and Kosovo; Estonia and Croatia.

opens for states to 'upload' their policy preferences at the EU level (e.g. Börzel and Risse 2002, Dyson and Goetz 2003). In this context, the EU accession pending resolution of the dispute makes Cyprus a case that is different to other prominent examples, where conditionality relates to a conflict that arose between an already existing member state and a candidate (e.g. Greece and F.Y.R.O.M. or Slovenia and Croatia) or between two candidates, which both have to overcome the 'barrier' of the conflict before advancing their EU prospects (e.g. Serbia and Kosovo). It is indeed this 'internalisation' of the conflict, where one side of the conflict is a member state while the rest of actors are outside but still developing their relations to the EU, that makes Cyprus a particularly interesting example of Europeanisation. This is not to suggest that disputes between EU and non EU member states is a new phenomenon. Yet, what makes Cyprus case different is that the accession of one side of the dispute (RoC) took place *during* the conflict and while the rest of actors (Turkey, Turkish Cypriots) were left outside, in compare to cases where conflict is between an already EU member state and a candidate or between two candidates.

This accession of one side of the dispute in the EU raises a series of new questions: how do new EU members try to influence EU policy towards the conflict? and how does the accession of one side of the dispute (here, Greek Cypriots) impacts the ability of the EU to trigger changes in the policies of the other sides of the conflict (Turkey, Turkish Cypriots)? In answering those questions, analysis focuses on the how different forms of relationship to 'Brussels' (i.e. EU membership, candidacy for EU membership) shape the Europeanisation of policies and the conflict in reference to three mediating factors:

1) clarity of rewards

Firstly, the internalisation of the conflict is expected to reduce the credibility of conditionality for the part(s) of the conflict that join the EU, which, having captured the ultimate 'reward' of accession, remain with no EU-induced incentives to change policy towards the dispute. For those outside the EU, their friction with the side(s) of the conflict within the EU is counter-productive to their overall relations to 'Brussels' and, therefore, the clarity of rewards, like full integration into the EU, which becomes a less realistic scenario.

2) clarity of threats

As with rewards, the EU no longer holds any credible threats to incentivise parts of the conflict that are member states towards a certain policy on the dispute. In contrast, the clarity of threats is now higher for those outside the EU: the access of opposing side(s) of the conflict to EU decision-making mechanisms means that the EU is unlikely to show flexibility and offer rewards without compliance with conditionality, especially in relation to the conflict.

3) legitimacy of the EU

Legitimacy of the EU has been discussed before as a factor that affects conditionality (see also Sedelmeier 2011). So far mostly discussed in sociological and constructivist terms (Sedelmeier 2011, 13), this paper takes a more 'rational' road and reflects on a) how less public legitimacy of the EU limits the government's ability to comply with EU conditionality and b) how national elites instrumentally reflect on the

EU's limited legitimacy to justify less compliance with conditionality and, therefore, inflexible positions in the conflict.

In this context, the argument advanced in this paper is that the 'internalisation' of the conflict into the EU reduces the credibility of conditionality because a) the acceding part remains with no motives to change policy towards the dispute and b) part(s) outside the EU experience a slow-down in their relations to 'Brussels', which offers less incentives to meet conditionality. In addition, the paper introduces legitimacy of the EU as yet another mediating factor of the Europeanisation of policies towards the conflict: for the parts outside the EU, the accession of one side of the conflict means that they can develop a rhetoric that paints the EU as a rather illegitimate actor in the dispute and by that justify less compliance with conditionality and compromised positions and, instead, maximise gains in the context of the conflict. Besides, the less public support of the EU means less space for meeting conditionality criteria, especially in sensitive issues, like conflict resolution. As a result and contra conditionality, this paper suggests that the internalisation of the conflict causes renewed tensions in the dispute and limit the ability of the EU to promote conflict resolution.

3. Greek Cypriots: The State Within

The EU Enlargement of Cyprus during the nineties was seen by many as an opportunity to resolve the island's dispute before accession. For that reason, the UN embarked in yet another mediation effort, which cultivated in the so-called 'Annan Plan', a proposal for the establishment

of the 'United Cyprus Republic', a loose federation of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots that could accede to the EU. While the EU played an important role in influencing the policies of the three different sides of the conflict, it was not always towards resolution: On the one hand, the government of Turkey supported the UN-proposed plan and the same did the Turkish Cypriot pro-solution leadership, which was elected by the community in north Cyprus, who also voted 'yes' in the referendum on the Annan Plan. Yet, the Greek Cypriot leadership did not support reunification and Greek Cypriot people followed and rejected the UN blueprint, a few days before accession.

Interestingly, the EU gave Greek Cypriots motives to actually reject reunification: since the very early stages of the accession process, Greek Cypriots thought that entering the EU under the RoC and not as a reunited country (according to the UN plan) will increase their diplomatic position in the dispute and vis a vis both Turkish Cypriots and Turkey (see also Nugent 2003, 10). After rejecting the Annan Plan and joining the EU alone, Greek Cypriots have indeed tried to 'upload' their policy preferences at the EU level and secure concessions from the candidate Turkey. For example, shortly after gaining EU member status, the RoC listed a series of demands for Ankara to address before Turkey's accession negotiations begin. This agenda did not win the full support of EU partners (see also Faustmann 2011) and, eventually, the RoC had to abandon the list. Nevertheless, the opening of Turkey's accession negotiations was conditioned on the ratification of the Additional Protocol (Turkey's custom union with all EU member states, Council of the EU 2006). The Turkish government signed the protocol but declared that ratification did not imply recognition of the RoC or opening of

Turkish ports to it. For that reason, although Turkey's accession negotiations commenced, full implementation of the protocol is still part of conditionality. Indeed, the RoC continues to be immovable about the need to implement the protocol and its officials often cite this issue as an example of how Turkish intransigence damages the country's own accession prospects (interview with Greek Cypriot diplomat 2013).

But the internalisation of the conflict means that Greek Cypriots have been able to take advantage of their EU membership in a series of other diplomatic fronts that relate to Turkey, beyond its strictly speaking accession process. For example, the RoC tried to veto Ankara's involvement in EU-Syria talks over the crisis in the Middle-East country (*Today's Zaman*, 30 November 2011) or to limit Turkish opposition to Greek Cypriot attempts for gas exploitation (*Reuters*, 14 September 2011). These diplomatic efforts did not bring fruits and instead increased the friction with Turkey, which unilaterally moved to exploratory oil drills in north Cyprus (*BBC News*, 26 April 2012). All these developments have naturally increased the hostility between the sides of the dispute.

Most importantly, renewed friction has been caused by the Greek Cypriot opposition to the EU's engagement in north Cyprus. When in April 2004 the Turkish Cypriots approved the Annan Plan for reunification but remained outside the EU due to the Greek Cypriot rejection, the EU sought to reward the community's stance and proposed measures to 'end [its] isolation and encourag[e its] economic development' (General Affairs Council, 2004). Few days before Cyprus accession in May 2004, the EU approved the Green Line Regulation (Council of the EU 2004), which controls movement of goods and

persons through the border that separates the two communities and also aims to support the Turkish Cypriot economy through trade with the Greek Cypriots. In the aftermath of the aborted reunification, the European Commission proposed two additional regulations that hoped to address the peculiar accession and help Turkish Cypriots: the Direct Trade Regulation (European Commission 2004), a trade agreement between the EU and the community, and the Financial Aid Regulation (Council of the EU 2006b), which aims at development and preparation for implementation of the EU law in north Cyprus in the event of a reunification. After many tribulations, coming especially from Greek Cypriot objections, the Financial Aid Regulation was adopted in 2006 but its effective implementation is seriously compromised by the unique political and economic situation in the island³. Most crucially, the Direct Trade Regulation was never materialised, mostly because Greek Cypriots block it, based on the rationale that implementation would amount to the recognition of the self-declared Turkish Cypriot state.

In this regard, Greek Cypriots remain with no EU-informed *rewards* or *threats* to change policy towards the conflict. But this is not to suggest the absence of an EU impact. In contrast, the decision to welcome the RoC into the EU has allowed Greek Cypriots to deploy their EU membership vis a vis both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots and this is indicative of how they view the EU as an avenue through which they can promote their preferences in the context of the conflict. Indeed, the actual EU accession while the conflict is still ongoing seems to have added to the Greek Cypriot rationalisation of the EU as a strategic tool

³ The European Commission underlines the problems posed by the unique political and economic context in north Cyprus, such as the lack of a recognised beneficiary because of the non-recognition of Turkish Cypriot authorities (European Commission 2012, 10)

via which they can advance their interests in the dispute- this represents an important difference to how old EU member states might utilise their membership in the context of a conflict. Along these lines, it is important to distinguish between EU-induced changes in general and change towards meeting conditionality in specific: relations to the EU can be conceptualised as carrying a significant impact on domestic policies, but not always towards meeting conditionality.

4. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots: The End of Credible Conditionality?

Of all the factors that shape Turkish policy towards the Cyprus issue, the EU represents perhaps the most interesting one. The recognition of the country as a candidate for membership in 1999 signalled the beginning of a strong EU impact on Turkish policies towards the Cyprus issue: in order to win the reward of membership, Turkey was asked by the EU to normalise relations with the RoC and this made the resolution of the Cyprus dispute a condition of its accession. Following from this, an EU-induced transformation of Turkish policy took place and soon Ankara openly supported reunification based on the Annan Plan. Compliance with EU conditionality on the Cyprus issue was also helped by the new, pro-EU Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi –AKP) government in 2002 and the extensive public support of European integration at that time (European Commission 2004b). The strategic preference to stop a Greek Cypriot-only state to enter the EU (Suvarierol 2003: 66) but also growing Turkish Cypriot pro-solution/EU attitudes (see also later) also played a role. This EU impact on Turkey was a stark contrast to the previous and long-standing Turkish inflexibility towards

reunification (see also Kazan 2002). In more recent years however, and also as a result of the internalisation of the Cyprus dispute, the Europeanisation of Turkish policy has taken a rather different turn.

Post-2004 Turkish rhetoric on Cyprus emphasises the limited *legitimacy* of the EU, because of the presence of Greek Cypriots through the RoC. Indeed, attacks on the EU's legitimacy also draw on the fact that the EU allowed the accession of the RoC, regardless of the Greek Cypriot rejection of reunification (unlike Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, where European integration had always been linked to the resolution of the dispute). For example, Turkish officials underline the impartiality of the EU in the Cyprus issue (interview with Turkish diplomat 2013), while others (interview with Turkish official 2013) suggests that the accession of the RoC was a major mistake of the EU, which undermined Turkish trust, and that EU membership of Greek Cypriots is the most important challenge in finding a solution to the Cyprus issue.

What is more, the Greek Cypriot efforts to promote their interests via EU decision-making has pushed Turkey towards less flexibility in the dispute and compliance with EU conditionality. For example, the Greek Cypriot opposition to the EU assistance of the Turkish Cypriots has displeased both north Nicosia (interview with Turkish Cypriot official 2009, interview with Turkish Cypriot official 2009) and the 'motherland' Turkey, which has linked the fulfilment of its conditionality and the implementation of the Additional Protocol to the approval of EU trade with the Turkish Cypriots (*BBC News*, 13 September 2006). In addition, Turkish political rhetoric increasingly draws on the self-determination of the Turkish Cypriots, which contradict the agreed parameters of a

solution based on a federation. In this context, a statement of the Turkish Foreign ministry is indicative:

Turkish Cypriots, as a people who organized themselves under their constitutional order within their territorial boundaries, exercise governmental authority, jurisdiction and sovereignty. Turkey's recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will remain unchanged (*Anatolia*, 1 May 2005).

This internalisation of the conflict has naturally led to the slow-down of the European integration of Turkey, as a party of the dispute that stays outside the EU. The awaiting resolution has created a hermetic barrier in Turkey's road to membership, most vividly depicted in the pending implementation of the Additional Protocol and the freeze of a number of negotiation chapters. True, the accession of the RoC into the EU has increased the clarity of the *threat* of suspending Turkey's accession: it is now very clear that, in absence of a compromising position towards the dispute, Turkey will not be allowed into the EU. At the same time, the clarity of the *reward* has been seriously undermined by an accession process that has deteriorated, also because of the internalisation of the conflict and the many blockages that Greek Cypriots create. Last but not least, the *legitimacy* of the EU has been attacked by Turkey, which reflects on the EU as nothing but a neutral actor in the dispute. In the words of senior Turkish official (interview 2013) 'the EU's leverage in Turkey's political reform process and its credibility have been weakened as a result of increasing politicisation of the negotiations'.

As for the Turkish Cypriots, the EU has also impacted their policies towards the Cyprus issue in recent times. Especially in the years leading

up to the EU accession of the island, north Cyprus experienced a sweeping public trend in favour of the EU and reunification based on the Annan Plan (Kyris 2013). This was also because European integration (through reunification) was regarded as the exit from the international isolation of the Turkish Cypriots and, essentially, a series of economic, social and political benefits. In the end, the EU motivated Turkish Cypriots to elect new, pro-solution leadership (elections 2003/2005- see also Kyris 2012) and, most importantly, approve the Annan Plan by 65 per cent.

But after the EU accession of Cyprus, the internationalisation of the conflict has compromised the *legitimacy* in the eyes of the public of the EU and has therefore caused less pro-EU attitudes and a shift towards policies and elites that are inflexible vis a vis the dispute. Indeed, the decision to allow Greek Cypriots to enter the EU despite their rejection of reunification, while Turkish Cypriots who supported the Annan Plan remained outside, caused a lot of frustration in north Cyprus. Annoyance grew even bigger when the promises of the EU to develop relations with the Turkish Cypriots and address their isolation (see before) were not materialised due to Greek Cypriot objections (interview with Turkish Cypriot party leader 2009, interview with Turkish Cypriot official 2009). Consequently, the appeal of the EU amongst Turkish Cypriots, although still high (European Commission 2013), is constantly decreasing. In political matters, it has made pro-EU rhetoric and positions more costly and indeed parties which are eurosceptic and 'hardline' towards a compromised solution have increased their vote share and scored a comeback at the helm of the community between 2009 and 2013. Crucially for the Turkish Cypriot policies towards the dispute, this

'hardline' leadership has focused more on the separate existence of the Turkish Cypriots and the support of their self-declared administration. But, despite all the loss of EU appeal and slower negotiations, it seems that the EU continues to be a sought-after *reward* for the Turkish Cypriots who most of them view the EU in a positive light (European Commission 2013), also due to their ongoing international isolation (interview with Turkish diplomat 2013).

All in all, the internalisation of the conflict into the EU has brought more inflexible Turkish and Turkish Cypriot policies towards the Cyprus issue. The accession of the RoC amidst the conflict has led to a decrease of EU appeal and *legitimacy* amongst the Turkish Cypriot public and has empowered less flexible elites and similar policies in the dispute, similarly to Turkey. In this sense, the accession of one side of the conflict despite its inflexible policies and, on the other hand, the lack of progress in the EU relations of those parts that displayed more reconciliation tactics has seriously damaged the image of the EU. This represents a specific difference of this study case to other examples of conflicts between states inside and outside the EU. At the same time, the *threat* remains clear also for Turkish Cypriots, because no resolution of the dispute equals no integration into the EU. As far as the clarity of the *reward* is concerned, this is compromised by the internalisation of the conflict, yet not as much as in the case of Turkey: the EU integration of the Turkish Cypriots depends only on the resolution of the Cyprus issue, unlike Turkey's accession, which has various other challenges to

overcome that are beyond the scope of this paper⁴. As a result, the decreasing ability of the EU to promote specific changes of policies in absence of clear *rewards* and *threats* is suggestive of the importance of conditionality's credibility for the process of Europeanisation, especially in sensitive matters like conflict resolution. This is indeed a striking contrast to earlier years, marked by widespread pro-EU attitudes in both north Cyprus and Turkey.

5. Conclusion

Before accession, the reward of EU integration combined with a credible conditionality led Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to support reunification, as the only way to progress in their European path. Nevertheless, the EU did not manage a credible conditionality for the Greek Cypriot side because support of reunification was never an explicit condition for admitting the RoC into the EU. As a result, Greek Cypriots remained with no motive to change their policy and, after their rejection of the Annan Plan, Cyprus entered the EU pending the resolution of the dispute.

This 'internalisation' of the conflict has fundamentally changed the dynamics of the dispute's Europeanisation. EU membership has offered Greek Cypriots the change to promote their interests in the conflict⁵, through EU decision making. This Greek Cypriot strategy but also their

⁴ According to Turkish diplomat (interview 2013), Cyprus represents a 'virtual' problem for Turkey's accession, in compare to more 'real problems', like reservations of EU member states that relate to cultural differences between the two sides or the accession of such a large country.

⁵ In more recent years, there are signs that Greek Cypriots try uploading their preferences at the EU level in a more constructive way, in order to stop accusations of being an 'one-issue' country (interview with Greek Cypriot diplomat 2013) but they still manage to keep a very strict conditionality as far as the conflict is concerned.

accession into the EU despite rejection of reunification has reduced the public appeal of the EU in north Cyprus and Turkey, where leadership has drawn on the EU's limited *legitimacy* to act as a neutral actor to secure gains through less compromising position and justify incomppliance with conditionality. Interestingly, this Greek Cypriot 'uploading' of preferences has increased the clarity of the *threat*, and therefore credibility of conditionality, for those outside the EU: it is now very clear that, without normalisation of relations with the member state RoC, Turkey won't be accepted into the EU and this is something acknowledged by Turkish officials (interview with Turkish diplomat 2013)- the same goes for the Turkish Cypriots. But, other factors work count-productively to a credible conditionality: the clarity of EU *reward* is compromised for Turkey because the internalisation of the conflict and the EU membership of Greek Cypriots has caused a loss of momentum in its relations to the EU. Similarly, slow-paced negotiations on the Cyprus issue after accession make EU integration a more distant reality for Turkish Cypriots too.

In tune with previous Europeanisation observations, Cyprus testifies to the power that the combination of conditionality and the reward of EU membership has in triggering changes in policies towards disputes: it is through clear rewards and convincing threats (e.g. Turkey, Turkish Cypriots before accession) that the EU can impact policies towards conformity with conditionality in the dispute. Where conditionality is softer (e.g. Greek Cypriots), the EU has limited ability to influence policy towards a certain direction. In this sense, this case study shows that internalisation of the dispute is expected to cause deteriorations of relations between the sides of the conflict and overall reduce the

credibility of conditionality: for those within the EU, membership is strategically seen as a tool to push the other sides of the dispute towards concessions. Indeed the difference of the RoC to other member states is that accession took place *during* the dispute, thus adding to rationalisation of membership as a tool in promoting interests in the conflict. Oppositely, the accession of one side of the dispute during the conflict and regardless of their inflexible policies allows those outside the EU to attack the legitimacy of the EU and try secure more gains in the conflict, which means less compromising policies and compliance with conditionality. Besides, it is expected that the internalisation of the conflict will lead to a loss of EU appeal amongst the public in those outside the EU, which could make flexible policies more costly, while less clarity of rewards also offers fewer incentives for compliance with conditionality. Yet, and perhaps in the longer term, the clarity of the threat becomes greater, exactly because the presence of one side of the dispute within the EU renders unimaginable the possibility of accession in spite of the conflict.

In this sense, this paper introduces the EU internalisation of the conflict as a factor that works against compliance with conflict resolution conditionality and towards more friction between the evolving parties. The accession of only one side of the dispute while the rest of actors remain outside makes Cyprus a distinctive case of an 'internalised' conflict and adds to the Europeanisation discussion, which has so far focused on conflicts between candidates or between candidates and old EU member states. In this regard, the case of Cyprus offers crucial lessons for conflicts in the context of EU enlargement. For example, the case of Serbia and Kosovo, which both are on their path towards EU

integration, is very relevant here and the EU seems to draw on lessons from Cyprus and condition the European integration of both parts on the resolution of their conflict. But observations of this paper can also be helpful for exploring the EU's role in conflict resolution, beyond the policy of enlargement. For example, the EU's relations to its neighbours through the ENP and other more tailored instruments (like the Eastern partnership) come across a series of regional conflicts, such as in Caucasus or the Middle East. In this context, reflections on how the EU's relations to each part of the conflict can impact the positions towards the dispute become important in understanding the opportunities and limitations of the EU's role. Indeed, a series of disputes that exist, can develop or transform within the EU, particularly in the framework of separatists tensions in states like Spain or indeed the UK, make the issue of 'internalised' conflicts a rather interesting reality of contemporary EU affairs.

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