

MEDIATING INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS: CAN THE EUROPEAN UNION DO
IT EFFECTIVELY?

Institutional Reform and its Impact on the Wars in the
Former Yugoslavia between 1991-2001

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ABSTRACT

Exactly ten years ago the first war broke out in the Balkans with Slovenia's declaration of independence. One decade later this region on the doorstep of Europe has not yet found stability. To the contrary, today a violent ethnic dispute endangers Macedonia's security and its economic development. The fact that conflicts occur and the international community is often incapable of preventing large-scale wars makes the study and analysis of international conflicts very challenging.

I chose the European Union as one of the most powerful actors on the international scene to find out what the difficulties of such an institution are with respect to conflict management.

This paper will thus analyze the effectiveness of the European Union to intervene in the wars in the Balkans. I will argue that in 1991 the Union was not yet ready for an efficient and effective crisis management. This was the case, because the legal structure did not provide the necessary powers for the Member States to take appropriate action. The major constraints were, therefore, inherent to its institutional nature. I will illustrate these problems with the wars in the Former Yugoslavia. Gradually, from war to war and from new legal structure to new legal structure the Union evolved and as a positive result became more effective. Nevertheless, the processes of reform is slow,

and I will elaborate the institutional inefficiencies that still impede rapid action in 2001.

The methodology I used is based on extensive literature in the areas of European Union and the CFSP in particular, of general conflict resolution and international mediation as well as on the wars in Yugoslavia. Because of the tragic actuality of my paper, I also analyzed newspaper articles in order to follow the conflict in Macedonia.

I will conclude with recommendations for future reforms and hope to see them implemented soon.

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