

Small States and Diplomacy: An Indispensable, though Much Diversified Relation

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the way the relation between small states and their diplomacies is changing in times of crisis. Findings are generalized, focusing on the comparison between Slovenia and the three Baltic states. The relation discussed is not in question, but heavily diversified. New players take up diplomatic activity, and new topics appear on the agenda. Diplomacy remains an indispensable tool for a small state, but the way it operates and the substance it transfers, have changed significantly. Diplomacy as a part of public administration is changing its institutional set-up and modifies the way it approaches complex challenges. Small states need their diplomacies to upgrade engagement in solving global questions, but they also have to encourage the inclusion of non-state actors in pursuing diplomatic activities. Therefore additional organizational flexibility and the inclusion of experts, combined with active engagement in the integration process, are essential.

Key Words: small states, diplomacy, organization, flexibility.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present the relation between small states and their diplomacies in times of turbulent global crisis, which in our opinion deepens and diversifies the challenges of the changed international environment that appeared in the period after the end of the Cold War. The paper will focus on presenting, analyzing and contemplating the relation between a small state and its diplomacy, as well as attempting to generalize findings for small states as a whole. We understand diplomacy as that part of public administration, which deals with carrying out the foreign policy of a certain state.

Our starting point is that diplomacy is necessary as a tool for a small state to carry out its foreign policy and to be present as well as active in globalized international politics. However, this relation has changed much in form and substance during the last two decades. Diplomacy is not the only instrument for carrying out this

activity anymore. Also, traditional diplomatic topics are no longer the only ones that fill up the diplomatic agenda. New players take up diplomatic activity, and new topics enter the diplomatic agenda. These players are primarily non-governmental by origin, and these topics are not political in the core meaning of the word. They have been barely noticeable on the diplomatic agenda in previous periods.

Furthermore, we think that this does not put the relation between the state and its diplomacy in question, but diversifies it. This would mean that diplomacy remains an indispensable tool for carrying out the foreign policy of a small state, but the way it operates and the substance it transfers have both changed significantly. Therefore, we focus on explaining and analyzing the nature of this relation, having in mind the institutional set-up of diplomacy as well as its function. Referring to the recent global financial crisis, we would argue that to a certain extent, and in some areas, the role of the state is getting back to its traditional concept, while it is not the same with diplomacy. There is the impression that, on the contrary, it moves away from its traditional concept.

Theoretical findings will be supported by an empirical comparison between Slovenia and the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania).¹ The comparison focuses primarily on the size and structure of the diplomatic organizations of the discussed states, in particular searching for possible hints about organizational flexibility, which is necessary for a smooth and operational dealing with complex issues on the diplomatic agenda. The need for this has been upgraded because of the current global crisis.

2. A Twenty Years Matrix

The two decades after the end of the Cold War have witnessed radical and dramatic changes in the international (security) environment, players and threats.² Stability, which was previously produced and maintained by bipolar tensions, has been watered down, new countries emerged or regained their statehood, the number of interstate conflicts increased and marked the security environment, the European integration process spread around the continent as a whole, and the structural interdependence of the international community was globalized, which also extrapolated the question of its survival. Enlargements of both NATO and the EU, accompanied by the ongoing output of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, increased the networking effect and spread the stabilization and democratization across what used to be a divided continent.

Generally speaking, one could say that the contemporary international community is marked by the following changes, which have become more pronounced during the last decade and a half:

¹ Here, the author is adding to his research presented in *The Diplomacies of New Small States: The Case of Slovenia with some comparison from the Baltics*, 2001. Referring to this study, it is interesting to note that, as far as the organizational approaches, dilemmas and solutions are concerned, Braveboy-Wagner analyzes the Caribbean states, i.e. their foreign ministries, in a methodologically rather similar way and also comes to similar conclusions (2008, 203-229).

² For more on this compare Jazbec 2002 and 2005, Mautner-Markhof 2005, and Reiter 2003.

- a) The contemporary international community is a global one – geographical borders no longer play an important role.
- b) Contemporary international phenomena are global phenomena, linking various dimensions – political, military, economic and others – and within them, a very important role is played by the linking and mutual dependence of the internal and the external.
- c) Contemporary international relations are characterized by their heterogeneity, i.e. in the existence of states with different socio-economic systems and at varying levels of social development.
- d) This can on the one hand be seen in the discrepancies between the developed and undeveloped parts of the world and in the co-existence of varying degrees of intensity of international activity, as well as in the choice of instruments (which correspond to the stage of economic development of individual subjects, particularly countries) and ways in which they make their appearance in the increasingly complex structures of the international community.
- e) The contemporary international community is, for the first time in the history of international relations and the human race generally, faced with the question of survival, which is a consequence of the development of weapons technology as well as the neglect of the planet's ecology. Both of these serve as distinct warnings of the growing importance of the structural interdependence of the contemporary world, at the same time indicating the increased difficulty involved in working on the international stage.” (Benko 1997, 18-21)

If we have a look at the contemporary security picture, referring to the UN High Panel Report (2004), we must concern ourselves with six clusters of threats now and in the decades ahead. They comprise economic and social threats (including poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation), inter-state conflict, internal conflict (including civil war, genocide and other large-scale atrocities), nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons, as well as terrorism, and transnational organized crime.

This would also directly mean that today's security threats are connected, combined and unpredictable. This all is reflected in the structural complexity of contemporary societies that derives from technological progress (media and transport in particular) and its consequences, which has made these societies highly vulnerable to simplified means of threats.³

We could sum up this portrait of the contemporary international community with the already presented finding that new players and new topics enter the political, and hence also the diplomatic, agenda. These players are primarily non-governmental by origin, like civil society, the media, NGOs, individuals, the private sector, and these topics are primarily non-political⁴ in the core meaning of the word, like climate change, migration, food and energy security etc. This all does not mean that tradi-

³ Compare also Braveboy-Wagner 2008, 1-2 and 25-54.

⁴ This is, of course, conditionally speaking, since each topic we face or deal with is basically political.

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tional players and topics have disappeared from the agenda; they have only been significantly complemented and to a certain extent also dominated by the new ones. The main reason is the highly upgraded structural complexity of the contemporary international community, where such security threats dominate, which cannot be dealt with only by means of traditional instruments. These threats derive mainly from environmental degradation and its influence on the international security (not only societies as a whole but also individuals as such)⁵, therefore a strictly governmental approach and instruments are not sufficient anymore – the inclusion of various other players outside the narrow governmental spectrum is necessary and has to be taken into account. Consequently, also the diplomatic agenda and activities are broadened and enriched.

What has been presented so far can be illustrated by the following table (Table 1).

Table 1: New Players and New Topics in the Diplomatic Arena

<i>New Players (non-governmental)</i>	<i>New Topics (non-political)</i>
NGOs	Climate Change
Civil Society	Energy Security
Media	Food Security
Private Companies	Migration
Individuals	

During the discussed period, also the number of states, among them small ones in particular, has increased: from 163 at the end of the 1980s to 191 (185 members of the UN) merely a decade later: “The increase in the number of new states in the second half of the 20th century can be observed at a glance: in the two decades after the Second World War (1945-1965) 60 states were formed, which is almost a third of all the present states. If we add to this the states which have formed since, we can conclude that in the last 50 years just over 120 new states have been formed, which represents two thirds of all the existing states.” (Jazbec 2001, 48) Out of 237 jurisdictions listed in the CIA World *Factbook* (2007), 158 have populations of less than 10 million, confirming that the so-called small state is the typical state size, as it has been for most of recorded history. (Baldacchino 2009, 23) As is broadly known from the research on small states so far,⁶ territory is, along with the size of population, one of the basic criteria for a possible definition of a small state. Anyway, “research on

⁵ This affects small states additionally: “At the end of the first decade of the new millennium it is increasingly recognized that human and ecological resources are becoming more salient than traditional primary products in a relentless era of globalisation.” (Cooper and Shaw 2009, 15) The “notion of ecological vulnerability” (Payne 2009, 281) adds significantly to the understanding of the concept of vulnerability of these states.

⁶ Compare Amstrup 1976, Braveboy-Wagner 2008, Christmas-Møller 1983, Fox 1969, Jazbec 2001, Thorhallsson 2000 and 2006, Väyrynen 1983 etc.

small states in the international system has been hampered by the problem of a definition of its own subject matter, the 'small state', and a substantial part of the literature is concerned with this problem. Nevertheless, no satisfactory definition has been presented.⁷ (Amstrup 1976, 165)

3. The State and Diplomacy: A Structurally Changed Relation

The relation between the nation state and its diplomacy is of fundamental importance for carrying out foreign policy and shaping the appearance in international relations (Benko 1997, 257). This link spans from the mid-17th century, when it was established upon a territorial understanding of the nation state, till nowadays, when – at least within the framework of the European integration process – “territory” is losing part of its traditional importance (Mlinar 1995). This characteristic certainly started to appear with the introduction of the free passage of goods, capital, people and services and has been strengthened by the advancement of the integration process as a whole. The end of the Cold War primarily supported this stream of change and its influence on both the evolution of the nation state and on the nature of its relation with diplomacy.

We could claim that so far, the period of the Cold War (and the corresponding environment) was the peak of the traditional understanding of the relation between the nation state and its diplomacy. This would mean that diplomacy was a means of conducting formal, indirect and primarily politically oriented dialogue between states, be it either (and foremost) on a bilateral or multilateral level. The nation state was strictly bound by territorial determinacy, with a characteristic prohibition of interference in domestic affairs (Horsmann and Marshall 1994, 45). There were hardly any topics on the diplomatic agenda other than those primarily political in a narrow meaning of the word, and hardly any other players existed other than diplomats – be it career ones or those on an ad-hoc basis – involved in the implementation of that dialogue. This was sufficient; also because public opinion had much less space and possibility to seriously and continuously influence the policy-making process. The role and the position of both the state and its diplomacy were traditional, originating from the historically proven experience and framework (Benko 1998).

After the global and structural changes in the late 80s and early 90s of the 20th century, the role and the position of the state and its diplomacy as well as the nature and the structure of their relation started to show obvious and important evolutionary signs. A radically changed security environment, which brought along, as mentioned, new players and new topics, also affected the nature of the nation state by pooling part of its sovereignty both to the sub-national regions and to supranational entities (Kennedy 1993, 173). In the latter, they find themselves in a structurally new environment, which basically offers them new approaches, possibilities and tools for their positioning. (Thorhallsson 2000, 12-21)

⁷ Since we do not deal with small states' behaviour, but with structures of their diplomacies and topics on their agenda, we take for the purpose of this paper 10,000-100,000 km² for territory and 1.5-15 million for population (in both cases variation up to 10 per cent), while having in mind basically three categories of states: large, small and micro. (Jazbec 2001, 42)

Intensified globalization, accompanied and driven by the unprecedented technological revolution (Rosenau 2006, 43), proliferated both the scope of the individuals' needs and aspirations and the endangering of man's environment and the whole planet. This all started to melt down the nation state's principle of non-interference in traditionally domestic affairs, since with the participation in the integration process, the majority of these issues become part of the integration's own agenda (Cooper 1996, 24-25). Furthermore, this also started to decrease the importance of the territoriality of the nation state as the main criteria for determining the whole spectrum of social, political, economic, private and other forms of life within a state's borders (Rosenau 2006, 133-139). Political and diplomatic agendas have been increasingly composed of traditionally non-political topics (Jazbec 2007b). Both the nation state and its diplomacy started to move away from their traditional roles since the Cold War era (and the corresponding environment) towards a clearly recognizable and different post-Cold War era (and a correspondingly different environment).

However, with the appearance of the current and unexpected global crisis (firstly financial, now ever more all encompassing) the already presented trend of change seems to be losing steam and partially altering direction. From one point of view, the state as an institution is back on track, which can be primarily seen through various ways of interventionism on national markets. This is again strengthening its traditional role in the current post-Cold War era. But from another point of view, it does not look like diplomacy will also return to its previous, more traditional role. One can hardly see any possibility for new players to retreat from the diplomatic arena and for new topics to disappear from the diplomatic agenda, although they use diplomatic tools and methods, which were developed during previous periods. For example, the necessity for climate change management will rely to an even larger extent on experts in the diplomatic profession dealing with this security threat and on the participation of various NGOs as well as business companies (Jazbec 2007a). Without experts, there would be far less know-how about this complex structural change; without NGOs, there would be far less public pressure and control over governmental policies; and without public enterprises, there would be hardly any change in reducing emissions etc. I.a. this opens up maneuver space for new approaches and methods in carrying out diplomatic activities, like e-Diplomacy and public diplomacy.⁸ The former is a direct consequence of the huge development of media technology and the increased need for almost permanent communication between not only political leaders but also among diplomats (Rosenau 2006, 159-167). The latter illustrates a strong tendency also in diplomatic work, namely to go public: what used to be typically off-stage activity appears lately increasingly to be on-stage activities. Both tendencies also strongly influence the further development of diplomatic methods as well as the way policy has been created and implemented.

⁸ For more on the impact of technology development and new ways of approaching diplomacy, including e-Diplomacy and public diplomacy, see Kurbalija, 1999 as well as Rana and Kurbalija, 2007 (particularly sections II and VI). The publisher in question, DiploFoundation (www.diplomacy.edu) is known as perhaps one of leading institutions in researching and teaching e-Diplomacy.

Therefore it is our strong impression that the previous post-Cold War-era stream of change has been split in the current phase. From one point of view, the state is coming back to its previous traditional role (however seemingly still narrow at the moment, it is influencing an increasingly broad social spectrum), while from another point of view, diplomacy continues with its change, increasingly moving away from its rather narrow traditional role. Still, this get-away rests on a few strong traditional elements, which have constituted the foundation of diplomacy since the late Middle Ages and at the same time further support its current trend of change.⁹

We try to present this general overview and trend in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2: State and Diplomacy and their Role in Different Environments

<i>Cold War</i>			<i>Current Post-Cold War</i>	
<i>Nontraditional</i>	<i>Traditional</i>		<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Nontraditional</i>
–	+	State	+	–
–	+	Diplomacy	+ –	+

It is our impression that, for the time being, both trends that originate from the mentioned split will continue. We expect to see a further strengthening of the role of the state in the current global crisis; that is, we expect the state to – partially strongly – enhance its traditional role. It is an efficient way of trying to fulfill the expectations of its citizens in the time of crisis. But at the same time, we do not see any possibility for diplomacy not to continue with the elaborated trend of change, which will bring it away from the traditional perception of a state (and *via facti* from the traditional perception of diplomacy) if it is to fulfill the expectations in time of crisis. This is perhaps the only way it could contribute to the management of global security threats (climate change etc.), which are by no means less dangerous because of the current crisis. Contrary to the state, diplomacy is to strengthen its nontraditional role and the state, as an institution, shall support it.¹⁰ By backing up the way diplomacy changes, it will be able to carry out its activities with the aim of fulfilling the needs and expectations of its citizens. However paradoxical it may already sound, this does bring diplomacy away from being a traditional and typical state institution. Nevertheless, only the continuation of this trend would enable diplomacy to remain successful in a different, nontraditional environment and in fulfilling its traditional role, but with nontraditional content.

After all, a small state in particular needs its diplomacy to upgrade its engagement in solving global questions, which – as a result of intensified globalization – target the whole international community. It also has to encourage the inclusion of nonstate actors in pursuing diplomatic activities if these activities are to be success-

⁹ The most important are residential diplomatic missions and two-way communication between the emperor (i.e. the foreign ministry) and its diplomat. Compare Berridge 2005, Jazbec 2002 and Satow 1994.

¹⁰ This could also be seen as one of the consequences of the advanced complexity of the global international community and its further fragmentation at the same time (compare Rosenau 2006, 96-153).

ful.¹¹ Otherwise it would not be possible to tackle complex and interconnected non-political issues, which refer to the survival of the contemporary international community. This is, from one point of view, an increasing opportunity for diplomacy as a part of public administration. From another point of view, the most obvious constraint of the diplomacy of a small state within this framework is its lack of resources. This could be solved by the inclusion of experts (non-diplomats) in diplomatic activities, as well as by a certain degree of outsourcing, both within the domestic and within the international frameworks. Also, a diversified institutional set-up is important for efficiently facing those challenges: apart from organizational changes within national diplomacies, we have in mind here in particular the forthcoming establishment of EU diplomacy (European External Action Service), after the expected ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. It would have a strong potential to complement the national diplomacies of the member states, among which the small ones prevail.

This would mean that the “state is squeezed by the global and regional processes of international integration, and is still under the pressure of expectations and demands from its citizens for the fulfillment of their numerous needs, especially in the newer states, but those same citizens feel a critical attitude to this very same state.” (Jazbec 2001, 35) Both the expectations and criticism of the state have increased due to the current crisis. But on the whole, this also increases the importance of the nation state, since “even if the autonomy and functions of the state have been eroded by transnational trends, no adequate substitute has emerged to replace it as the key unit in responding to global change.” (Kennedy 1993, 177)¹²

Consequently we could also say that this does not put the relation between the state and its diplomacy – although it is gaining in distance – in question, but only heavily diversifies it, while both of them pursue their traditional roles in a nontraditional environment with evolving means, new topics and new players.¹³

4. Organizational Output and its Adaptation

For efficient cooperation and also competition in the globalized international community, national diplomacies, i.e. diplomatic organizations¹⁴ have to be appropriately organized. This should be determined by the fact that they are those “institutions in each state that were developed to manage the conduct of foreign affairs” (Steiner

¹¹ Here we have in mind the concept of multi-track diplomacy (compare Davis and Kaufman 2003, Diamond and McDonald 1996, Langhorne 2005).

¹² Here, however, the importance of the EU has to be picked up. We could assume that after the Lisbon Treaty is ratified, the role of the EU will to a certain and important extent substitute the role of its member states.

¹³ Having in mind a rather broad spectrum of the change and its elements contemplated in this part of the text, which target the concept of modern diplomacy, the author is of the opinion that the postmodern concept of diplomacy could be developed further (for more on this compare Cooper 1996, Jazbec 2007a and 2007b).

¹⁴ The term “diplomatic organization” denotes that kind of an organization within which “social processes are managed and enforced, facilitating the implementation and the conduct of the foreign policy of a particular state.” (Jazbec 2001, 147) It consists of two elements, namely a foreign ministry and a diplomatic network (missions). The concept was developed with theoretical backing from Aldrich 1979, Girschner 1990 as well as Morgan 1989.

1982, 10). This means that they share certain specifics in comparison with other governmental departments: “Bureaucratic historians have excluded departments of external affairs because they do not fit easily into general patterns of administrative developments.” (ibid.) The way they are organized enables them to be capable to react to the changes in the international (security) environment as well as to form and exercise their active approach towards these external dynamics. Since the external environment gets more structured (i.e. complex and complicated) and constantly produces increasing output, principles of organizing diplomacies should tend to be simple, transparent and easy to manage. Experiences from management as far as methods and organizational approaches are concerned could be rather easily and usefully transplanted to diplomatic organizations (Drucker 2001, 69-94, Rana and Kurbalija 2007, 60-74). This is even more obvious and necessary for small states, since in comparison with large states, “their administrations are considerably smaller” (Thorhallsson 2000, 3), and consequently they “do not have enough staff, expertise and other resources.” (ibid., 232) This additionally illustrates the fact that among the most typical characteristics of small states are their limited human resources (Jazbec 2001, 53-56), which directly influences all their activities, including organizational approaches and solutions in conceptualizing their diplomatic organizations.

In this part of our paper, we have a look at the way the diplomatic organizations of four countries – all EU member states – adapt their organizational approach to face and manage challenges of the contemporary international community. We compare the size and the structure of diplomatic networks as well as some selected aspects (number of employees, players at the second and third levels and number of bilateral and horizontal departments) of foreign ministries. The comparison spans from December 1998¹⁵ to December 2008; at the former point in time, the compared countries were advancing in the EU association process, at the latter, they had already been members for more than four years (since May 2004).

We try to find out two points on a general level. Firstly, has the EU membership influenced, simplified (as a reaction to the highly increased information workload) and partially unified (as a reaction to the increased number of shared topics on the political and diplomatic agenda) organizational charts, and secondly, are there any signs of organizational flexibility, which is necessary for a smooth and operational dealing with complex issues on the diplomatic agenda? With reference to the EU membership and the consequent organizational flexibility and efficiency of the diplomatic organizations of the member states, three remarks have to be added. Firstly, as far as the protection of interests (private persons and corporate bodies) is concerned, a mission of each EU member state can and has to offer this service to all EU citizens. Secondly, the representations of the EU Commission in more than one hundred countries can to a certain extent also serve the interests of member states.¹⁶ And thirdly, the formation of the future European diplomatic service will again be of benefit to smaller member countries, which do not and will not have their missions accredited to all states.¹⁷

¹⁵ For the period 1992-1998, compare Jazbec 2001, 151-162 and 186-189.

¹⁶ For more on this compare Čelofiga 2007.

¹⁷ For more on this compare Gruban 2007.

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During the mentioned period, diplomatic networks of four compared countries have grown in size, i. e. in numbers of missions.¹⁸ During the last decade, networks have expanded by approximately one fourth, spanning from 40 to 56 missions: Slovenia and Lithuania, which respectively had 21 and 20 in the year 1992, are now over 50 (52 and 56 respectively), while Estonia and Latvia remain at around 40 (40 and 44 respectively). One can find that the majority of missions are accredited to the EU member states (in no case to all member states), with an emphasis on the closest neighbourhood and bigger and older members. The rest are dispersed around the northern hemisphere as well as selected countries around the world. Having in mind the proportion between the number of missions and the number of employees (1:10)¹⁹, one can assume that the diplomatic networks most probably no longer grow significantly. The current global financial crisis as well as the previously presented three benefits of EU membership speak in favour of this assumption. The discussed growth of the four networks is comparatively presented in the following table (Table 3).

Table 3: A Comparison of the Size of the Diplomatic Networks (No. of Missions)

<i>Country</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2008</i>
Slovenia	21	42	52
Estonia	15	34	40
Latvia	19	34	44
Lithuania	20	46	56

Following the discussion about the size, we also have a brief look at the current structure of the networks compared. The majority of missions are embassies, accredited to the receiving states: four fifths in the cases of Slovenia (40 out of 52) and Lithuania (44 out of 56) and three fourths in the cases of Estonia (29 out of 40) and Latvia (36 out of 44). Half of the rest are permanent missions to international organizations in the cases of Slovenia (6 out of 12) and Lithuania (7 out of 12) and the majority of the rest in the cases of Estonia (5 out of 8) and Latvia (6 out of 8). What remains are consulates: around one tenth in the cases of Slovenia (6 out of 52) and Lithuania (5 out of 56) and almost one half less in the cases of Estonia (3 out of 40) and Latvia (2 out of 44). It is our impression that the countries compared have reached the internal proportion in the structure of their networks, which enables an efficient combination of bilateral and multilateral aspects of diplomatic practice (in particular in following their interests vs. individual countries and groups of countries within international fora). Such an impression can be additionally tested empirically if we have a look at the fact of how many bilateral topics these countries discuss within multilateral fora and how many multilateral topics find a place on a bilateral

¹⁸ With the term “diplomatic missions”, we follow the understanding of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, meaning all career diplomatic representations of a certain state (embassies, missions to international organizations and consulates), unless otherwise specified.

¹⁹ See Jazbec 2001, 189-195.

agenda. The result of such an examination would show us if the focus of foreign policy remains on primarily bilateral issues (like relations with neighbouring countries) or on primarily multilateral topics (like climate change) or on a possible combination (like energy security).

Having in mind again the current global financial crisis and the countries' EU membership, one could assume that the priority goes to topics of common interest – i.e. global survival – and not to purely individual questions. The structure discussed of the four networks is comparatively presented in the following table (Table 4).

Table 4: A Comparison of the Structure of the Diplomatic Networks

<i>Country</i>	<i>Embassies</i>	<i>Missions</i>	<i>Consulates</i>	<i>Together</i>
Slovenia	40	6	6	52
Estonia ²⁰	29	5	3	40
Latvia	36	6	2	44
Lithuania	44	7	5	56

We move at this point of our observation from the external diplomatic outreach to contemplate some selected aspects of the internal organizational approach, following the same general goal, namely, to try to find out the effect of the organizational approach on policy tackling of global issues from the small states' point of view. As indicated, we comparatively touch upon the following aspects (in numbers) of the foreign ministries: employees, players at the second and third levels, as well as bilateral and horizontal departments.

All four ministries have grown in numbers of employees during the last decade: the Lithuanian, so far the largest, grew only slightly, the Estonian grew by one fourth, the Slovenian by one third²¹ and the Latvian by one half (the largest one in 2008). We presume that the overall number of employees will most probably not increase significantly, for the same reasons as before: the current global financial crisis and the EU membership. If this is the case, it corresponds to our speculation “whether it is necessary and possible to increase the number of employees in diplomatic organizations of the new small states above a half of the number in the other six small states²².” (Jazbec 2001, 193) This would lead us to “define the upper limit in the number of employees in diplomatic organizations of the new small states as 700-800.” (ibid.)

The composition of players on the second and the third levels is important, because its size and structure can contribute significantly to the way ministries (and diplomatic organizations) are run daily as well as in the short and medium term. In 1998, the number of players on the second level was quite extensive in all four compared ministries (Slovenia 4, others 5), but has decreased significantly a decade later

²⁰ Estonia also has 3 special missions: in Afghanistan, Egypt and Israel (included in the number).

²¹ Primarily due to the EU Presidency in the first half of 2008; it will partly decrease in 2009.

²² These states of comparison were Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Austria and Portugal. (ibid.)

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(Lithuania 2, others 1). In our opinion, this corresponds to the changed agenda and the broader scope of issues dealt with after the EU membership was gained as well as the increased intensity of meetings, above all on the ministerial level. The current global financial crisis only accelerates this. Having one deputy minister enables more efficient coordination between the first and second levels, although it increases the workload of the second level, since there is only one member (but there is no need of coordination among more members on the second level, which could be demanding). However, also a variety of tasks are regularly being transferred from the minister to the deputy, both at home (parliament, government) as well as abroad.

The number of players on the third level has decreased slightly (from 17 to 16 all together) during the discussed period and remains between 3 (Lithuania) and 5 (Estonia), with Slovenia and Latvia in the middle (4). This could primarily be a reflection of having a few bigger organizational units within ministries, where policy making is on the way, in particular while coordinating and discussing issues among players of the second and third levels. From this point of view, the player on the second level coordinates, transfers and distributes, which relieves the minister and contributes significantly to the policy-making within the ministry. Additionally, it proves the key internal role of the player on the second level, in particular concerning “the co-ordination between, respectively, the first and second, and the second and third levels.” (Jazbec 2001, 158) It has potentially also contributed to slightly simplified organizational charts and the more efficient distribution of information and process management within diplomatic organizations.

A comparison of the number of bilateral (geographical) and horizontal (topical) departments would expectedly show us an either bilaterally or multilaterally focused policy approach and consequently the way of running daily business. Out attention focuses on only political departments and not those dealing with supporting activities (like finance, information, personnel etc.)²³ We assume the multilateral approach to be on the rise primarily because of new players and new topics on the diplomatic agenda (which is additionally backed by the current global financial crisis). This would expectedly also strengthen the presence of multilateral topics on bilateral agendas.

Generally speaking, the number of bilateral departments in the four ministries compared has increased during the observed period, as has the number of multilateral departments. Additionally, the number of bilateral departments was smaller both in 1998 and in 2008, compared to multilateral ones, and the number of multilateral departments has increased further. It looks as if the increase was the biggest in the case of Slovenia.

The selected aspects discussed of the four ministries are comparatively presented in the following table (Table 5).

²³ Consular departments are also excluded since their role does not correspond to political departments, and their importance remains high in any case.

Table 5: A Comparison of the Structure and Size of the Foreign Ministries (Selected Aspects)

Country	No. of Employees		No. of Players at the 2 nd and 3 rd Level		No. of Bilateral Departments		No. of Horizontal Departments	
	1998	2008	1998	2008	1998	2008	1998	2008
Slovenia	450	630	4 + 6	1 + 4	3	6	3	7
Estonia	480	600	5 + 3	1 + 5	1 (6)	2	2	4
Latvia	500	715	5 + 5	1 + 4	2 (6)	3	2 (4)	5
Lithuania	580	600	5 + 3	2 + 3	1 (6)	3	2 (0+2)	6

Three methodological remarks should be added to the above.

Firstly, as far as the third level is concerned, we have to bring our attention to the fact that it is not possible to detect from the charts what the position of the political director is, and if there are any. However, we assume (but do not include in the number of players) that each ministry of foreign affairs has one. This could be at least speculated from the simple fact of regular monthly meetings of political directors of the EU member states.

Secondly, sometimes it is difficult to precisely define, detect and generalize the term “department”, which we use in the comparison. In some ministries (apart from the Slovenian one), it is the third organizational level for the year 1998 and in some cases the fourth, which creates certain problems while comparing. Hence, to a certain extent, the exact number is a matter of generalization. There are cases of having political departments as bigger units, within which there are clearly recognizable geographical units (bureaus or divisions), but vertical levels are different.²⁴ In these cases, the numbers of the geographical units, recognizable by their name, are in brackets. Nevertheless, we think that an impression about the relation between bilateral and multilateral departments and their proportion could be achieved from our comparison.

Thirdly, the organizational charts for the year 2008 are more transparent. Obviously ministries also grew in structural simplicity, which is becoming an important organizational principle. Hence, it is our guess that this is primarily important for the efficient and smooth distribution of information as well as for an efficient and timely decision-making process.

Having in mind the organizational output and its adaptation, we still could remark that “great variations in the various combinations of organizational approaches are thus obvious.” (Jazbec 2001, 153) Foreign ministries of the compared countries moved during the discussed period from rather bilaterally based organizational charts to rather multilateral ones. This could be to a significant extent the consequence of the EU membership and the dynamics as well as the content, which it places upon the diplomatic organizations of the member states. One could guess that it is only a matter of time when the functional approach in the organizational sense will start to dominate clearly.

²⁴ In the Slovenian case compared, in the year 2008, this would correspond to a directorate general (within which various departments are located).

5. Conclusion

We discussed in this paper the relation between small states and their diplomacies in times of the current turbulent global crisis, which in our opinion deepens and diversifies the challenges of the changed international environment after the end of the Cold War. Our ambition has been to analyze the scope and structure of this relation on a theoretical level, with some empirical aspects, between Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

We found out that the relation between the national state and its diplomacy has changed much in form and substance during the last two decades, in particular due to the changed international security environment. Consequently, new and primarily non-governmental players take up diplomatic activity, and new and primarily non-political topics enter the diplomatic agenda. We argue that this does not put the relation between the state and its diplomacy in question, but heavily diversifies it.

This would also mean that diplomacy remains an indispensable tool for carrying out the foreign policy of a small state, but the way it operates and the substance it transfers have changed significantly. Diplomacy itself cannot carry out its functions as it used to, but has to adapt to new conditions. It has to modify its institutional set-up, such as upgrading flexibility, decreasing vertical levels in the hierarchy and simplifying the organizational approach. It also has to modify the way it approaches complex topics (such as the inclusion of experts – non-diplomats, educating diplomats in non-diplomatic skills). And the small state has to support the way diplomacy changes to be able to carry out its activities with the aim to fulfill the needs and expectations of its citizens. This trend brings diplomacy away from a traditional and typical state institution, to which it has been historically linked. Only the continuation of this trend would enable diplomacy to remain successful in a different, nontraditional environment and in fulfilling its same, traditional role. Therefore, the main precondition for a small state and its diplomacy to achieve this goal would be to operate within a multilateral framework. Having in mind the recent global financial crisis (with its consequences in a variety of other areas), we could say that to a certain extent, and in some areas, the role of the state is getting back to its traditional concept, while it is not the same with diplomacy. It continues to go away from its traditional concept. This relation is expanding, but still decisively connects both subjects.

From one point of view, this presents an increasing opportunity for diplomacy as a part of public administration. But from another point of view, the most obvious constraint of the diplomacy of a small state within this framework is its lack of resources. Perhaps the most obvious policy implication of such an approach is cooperation and coordination within the EU, which to a certain extent compensates for the shortages of small states and expands their opportunities. This upgrades the scale and reach of a small state's public administration, in particular of its diplomacy.

The empirical comparison shows that current organizational approaches are quite transparent due to the fact that the discussed foreign ministries grew in structural simplicity. Here comes also our guess that this could be primarily important for the efficient and smooth distribution of information as well as for an efficient and timely decision-making process. Foreign ministries of the countries compared moved during the discussed period (1998-2008) from rather bilateral-based organizational charts to

rather multilateral ones. This could be to a significant extent the consequence of the EU membership and the dynamics as well as the substance, which it places upon the diplomatic organizations of the member states. Perhaps one could guess that it is only a matter of time when the functional approach in the organizational sense will start to dominate. This is becoming an important organizational principle, which, we believe, could be generalized for the common use of small states.

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