

## ABSTRACT

Role of small states in international relations is limited due to considerable power disparities in comparison to bigger states. However, these states can and do intervene in international relations, even if they might not be able to change them. This is of particular concern in the current post Cold War era, because chances of small states to make themselves internationally visible and defend their national interests are higher than at any other time in history.

In particular, international organizations offer a high potential for small states to reduce power disparities in comparison to bigger states and strengthen their significance in the international arena. Even the United Nations Security Council (SC), despite its disproportionate composition (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members), provides small states substantial space to influence decision-making on issues that concern global peace and security. Changes towards these tendencies in the Council occurred after the end of the Cold War, when the bipolar division of the world that influenced the Council's functioning ceased to exist. Thus, the Council's new working procedures based on collective security, consensual or even unanimous decision-making strengthened the role of small states in this UN body.

These tendencies can be followed on the case of Slovakia, a country, which was a non-permanent member in the SC in 2006 – 2007. Slovakia despite its smallness and minor international significance made use of the Council's new working procedures and achieved tangible international success during its membership. It filled the missing coherent and comprehensive UN policy framework towards Security Sector Reform, which is a far-reaching and crucial issue for peacekeeping operations in crises regions targeted towards controlling the security institutions. Slovakia's efforts to succeed as a small state were driven by the country's attempts to contribute to global peace and security and increase the country's international prestige and visibility.

Several factors such as leadership and issue specificity are perceived as preconditions for the successful role of Slovakia in the SC. Besides this case, other countries including Belgium, South Africa, Indonesia, which are current members of the SC, demonstrate the fact that even small states can exert an impact on issues of international concern through the SC's mechanisms. At the same time these states contributed to higher credibility and effectiveness of the SC, which provided them the space for an autonomous approach.