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DOI : 10.14746/ps.2023.1.11

## **THE ROLE OF SMALL STATES IN PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL SECURITY: LITHUANIA STRATEGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The subject of this article is an analysis of the actions taken as part of Lithuanian foreign policy in the era of the Russian invasion on Ukraine in 2022. This article seeks to demonstrate that states without significant military and economic resources, including those that are small in terms of demography and geography, may contribute to regional confidence and predictability, and that with goodwill and perseverance, even great powers and small states can come to an agreement on issues concerning their individual and common interests. This paper attempts to assess the key decisions and actions taken as part of the foreign policy of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as to evaluate their importance and direction. This approach has, in effect, provided insights into Lithuania's foreign policy stances and priorities in building its position and role in the international system.

What was an important research step was the use of sources such as expert reports, official statements, public speeches and previously published interviews in the Lithuanian or foreign press, which enabled an identification of stances, attitudes and values represented by Lithuanian foreign policy decision-makers. In order to realise the research objective, the analysis was based on a case study, which made it possible to look at a specific case in detail and draw conclusions as to the causes of changes, course and effects of the foreign policy pursued by Lithuania. This also made it possible to show how Lithuania is contributing to its position (role) as a regional leader and which instruments (e.g. political, diplomatic, economic, energy ones) it is employing to this end. Previous research has shown that the annexation of Crimea by Russia prompted the Lithuanian authorities to devote even more attention to security issues. In its security perspective, Lithuania has decided to increase defense spending, including: in order to accelerate the modernization of the armed forces and increase the potential of military-civilian and allied cooperation within NATO. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea led to a real change in the perception of Russia as a threat to its own security and that of the other Baltic states (Gritėnas, 2017; Vilson, 2015, Kojala, Ivanauskas, 2015).

The starting point of the considerations carried out is a hypothesis that 1) small states are able to initiate a process that can benefit the entire region and thus contribute in their own way to building international peace and security; 2) Lithuania, by pursuing an ac-

tive and effective foreign policy that is based not only on its national interests but also on regional and broader common interests, contributes to international security; 3) by acting as the main advocate of Ukraine in the international arena, Lithuania is proving that a small state is able to put pressure on large states and powers to take the necessary steps towards shaping the region's security strategy and becoming crisis-ready; 4) Lithuania's efforts aimed at attracting the attention of the international community and putting pressure on it to take more decisive action on the issue of Ukraine are yielding tangible results. In research on the Lithuanian strategy for building international security, a content analysis method was used based on the use of government documents, media content, scientific and expert studies. The use of this method allows you to demonstrate a systematic and comprehensive approach to analyzing and testing data hypotheses. The theoretical basis of the research is post-structural theory, from its perspective Lithuania accepts and actively shapes its identity as a small state, which is defined primarily in relation to its large and dangerous neighbor. This helps explain the small country's consistent pursuit of integration and being an active player in the international arena, which was supposed to help it break away from the Soviet past and "return to the West." Poststructuralism denies the objectivity and materiality of factors used by other theories. It focuses on the use of discourse analysis within which the concept of "smallness" is created. In this approach, the category of small states is only one of the perspectives of perceiving reality, which may carry different contents that translate into different strategies of action. Poststructuralism gives small states subjectivity and looks at their identity, shaped in the changing circumstances of international relations (Miliken, 1999). This means that the content contained in the concept of a small state may change over time, being associated not only with weakness and limitations, but, for example, with flexibility and extenuating circumstances. From the above considerations, the perspective of Lithuania as a small country due to the resources it possesses and in relation to its powerful neighbor, Russia, emerges. In the light of post-structural theory, Lithuania accepts and actively shapes its identity as a small state, which is defined primarily in relation to its large eastern neighbor. This allows us to explain the consistent pursuit of integration with NATO, Lithuania's firm position in the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the actions taken by Lithuanian political elites to build the security of the region, so it is currently a particularly current research topic, which will be analyzed in this article using a post-structural perspective.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF LITHUANIA VIS-À-VIS THE RUSSIAN INVASION ON UKRAINE**

Although few were aware of Lithuania's initiative, most international observers who followed Lithuania's foreign policy would agree that it was in Lithuania's own interest while contributing to stability and predictability in the region. On the other hand, there were also voices of concern and caution within Lithuania itself that such policy could negatively affect the country's relations with Russia and its allies.

Although this initiative was an important strategic foreign policy step at the time, Lithuania did not have a clear roadmap to achieve its goal.

In the first stage, the Lithuanian side decided to promote the cause by trial and error, understanding that much would depend on the degree of support from NATO and EU, although it decided to propose its own initiative. Therefore, the top priority was to clearly explain the importance of and to show the positive role of the initiative for the region and beyond.

The thinking of the Lithuanian leadership was that they saw direct as well as indirect threats from Russia in the short term after its aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Therefore, at an extraordinary meeting of the Lithuanian Seimas convened on 24 February, MPs adopted a resolution condemning the Russian invasion on Ukraine, then called on NATO and the EU to grant Ukraine an EU candidate status and include it in the NATO Membership Action Plan. They expressed immediate readiness to provide military, economic, political, humanitarian and legal assistance to Ukraine.

They also expressed their belief that the security of Lithuania and the other Baltic States is closely linked to stability in the eastern part of Europe. Therefore, immediate measures should be taken to support Ukraine with an implementation of political and economic reforms, provide it with humanitarian and development aid, and to raise the issue of Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity within NATO, the EU, the OSCE and the UN.

Hence, the thinking was to turn this possible risk into an opportunity to strengthen security and to ensure that engagement with Ukraine would allow Lithuania to strengthen its own international position. Briefly speaking, this was also a form of preventive diplomacy.

### **STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN THE REGION'S ENERGY SECURITY AND REGAIN ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY, AS WELL AS ACTIVITIES IN OTHER AREAS OF STATE POLICY**

The first concrete opportunity to spread the idea and work towards its realisation came soon, when the international community began preparing to condemn Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine.

Given the initial lack of a clear response and non-constructive stance of Germany or France, Lithuania decided to create a programme of being one of the most active initiators of sanctions against Russia and advocates of Ukraine's cause not only in the region but also worldwide. The Lithuanian political elite adopted the toughest stance towards Russia among world leaders, putting regular pressure on the Transatlantic allies in maintaining a tough stance towards Russia. On 14 March 2022, Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė argued in a meeting with Antony Blinken that the West should not only introduce sanctions but also gradually expand them (Dudzińska, 2022).

Moreover, there was pressure to support the Ukrainian cause, and for EU decision-makers to strive to regain independence from Russian energy imports as soon as possible. At the same time, Lithuania declared that it was ready to give up Russian gas. This strategy was based on the idea of being a pioneer in sanctions and being an example to other European countries in approaching the issue of energy security and dealing with the looming energy crisis.

Lithuania was also eager for the countries of the Baltic region<sup>1</sup> to resign from Russian gas and to open a gas interconnector as soon as possible and, therefore, it needed the support of other countries, especially those in the region – dependent on Russian energy resources. Lithuania adopted this strategy without any particular consultation. It did not consult any EU countries before taking the initiative in this regard. Judging by the EU's reaction to Lithuania's initiative, the EU initially did not take any high-level political decisions either to support or reject it. Also, judging by their reactions, the matter was dealt with at a medium level and maybe even at the departmental level of the EU countries. At the beginning of April 2022, Lithuania decided – without waiting for other countries to support it – to take an immediate decision to abandon Russian gas imports altogether. Moreover, Lithuanian decisions and manoeuvres were not limited to political declarations of support for similar initiatives to other countries seeking independence from Russian energy resources. Regardless of their importance, and the steps taken to obtain such assurances, Lithuania decided to address the issue through multilateral diplomacy. The result of such actions was the rapid Poland-Lithuania Gas Interconnector (GIPL), which was completed just in time to help Poland overcome the withholding of supplies imposed on it by Gazprom. In fact, on 27 April 2022, Gazprom stopped honouring its commercial gas supply contracts with Poland in retaliation for its refusal to use the Russian rouble as the payment currency – a sanction that was also intended as a warning to the pro-Russian policy of Germany, as the largest importer of Russian gas, and to all the other EU member states (CNN, 2022).

This policy led to the so-called domino effect, as at the end of April 2022, the other Baltic countries (i.e. Latvia and Estonia) following Lithuania decided to stop importing natural gas from Russia. This, in effect, increases the energy security of the entire Baltic region by connecting it to the European gas network (LRT, 2022a).

As noted by Christine Sturm, once the Baltic Pipe (i.e. a pipeline linking Norway and Poland that is being completed and scheduled to open in October 2022) is open, the GIPL connection can be used in reverse to fully supply Lithuania and other Baltic countries with Norwegian gas (LRT, 2022a). As already mentioned, in April 2022, Lithuania completely stopped importing Russian gas, becoming the first EU Member State to ban Russian gas. Furthermore, in June 2022, the Lithuanian Seimas passed a law that prevents “those countries that are considered a threat to national security” from accessing the Lithuanian gas network and its LNG terminal (Sturm, 2022: 867).

Although Lithuania had a significantly higher degree of dependence on energy imports from Russia compared to other countries<sup>2</sup> (cf. Figure 1: 91.6%), the country was better prepared for an energy crisis and it managed to reduce Russian energy imports in a very short period of time. This demonstrates that energy dependency

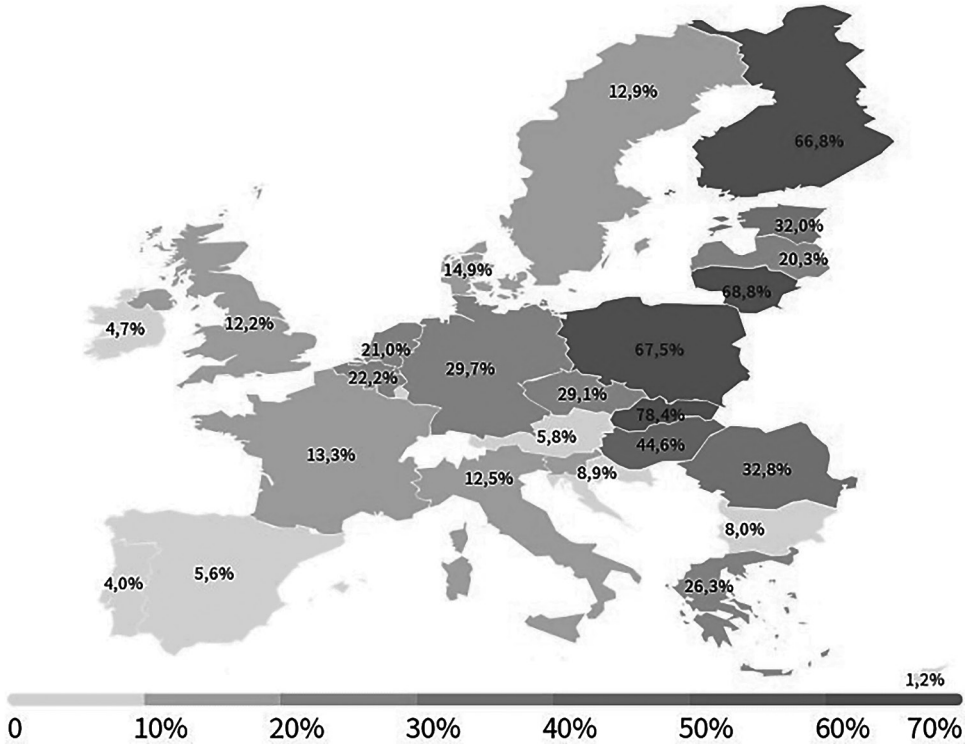
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<sup>1</sup> Przez region bałtycki należy rozumieć obszar Morza Bałtyckiego i państw nad nim położonych: Polski, Litwy, Łotwy, Estonii.

<sup>2</sup> The 2020 data shows that the largest share of oil and petroleum products imported from Russia was noted in Slovakia – 78.4 per cent, followed by Lithuania – 68.8 per cent, Poland – 67.5 per cent, and Finland – 66.8 per cent. See the graphic opposite for details. By contrast, the least dependent countries include Portugal with 4.0 per cent, Ireland with 4.7 per cent and Spain with 5.6 per cent.

ratios alone are inadequate for comparative vulnerability assessments, and it also proves that the role of one country may and does have a significant impact on its own and the region’s energy security strategy and its preparedness to deal with crises.

Figure 1. Cumulative dependence on Russian raw materials



Source: Eurostat (nrg\_ind\_id).

An important step in widening the base of sanctions on Russia was the Lithuanian government’s efforts to have Lithuanian and foreign companies limit or stop economic cooperation with this state. Linas Agro Group, which is the largest agri-food group in the Baltics, suspended trade with Russian and Belarusian companies. Agrokoncernas, owned by politician Ramūnas Karbauskis, who was at the same time leader of the 2016–2020 co-governing Lithuanian Union of Peasants and Greens, in turn refused to conclude new agreements with Russian businesses. In addition, the Lithuanian government issued a decision to freeze assets in Lithuania owned by Russian companies and oligarchs, as well as individuals linked to Kremlin oligarchs. Since 24 February, EUR 3.224 million, USD 1.368 million and RUB 645,000 have been frozen in Lithuania as well as eleven companies and five individuals have been sanctioned. Lithuania was followed by other Baltic countries. Indeed, while the freezing of funds in Lithuania went swiftly, it was more difficult for the EU countries to sanction movable and immovable property (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2022).

Therefore, such actions were not always fully supported and prompted other countries to join or extend the sanctions package for Russia. An example of this was when the EU resigned from imposing sanctions on the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kirill, Lithuania sought to blacklist him anyway as part of the 7th package of sanctions against the Kremlin or, disregarding Berlin's pressure to unblock transit to Kaliningrad and declaring that it would abide by Brussels' decisions, stood by its position of maintaining tough sanctions against Moscow. After all, Lithuania's unyielding stance continued to promote the idea of a unanimous implementation and extension of further economic sanctions against Russia, based on a comprehensive political approach (e.g. by introducing visa restrictions for Russians, dismantling of monuments from the communist period, as well as changes to the education programme and a ban on Russian and Belarusian radio and television broadcasts).

All these cases testify that the focus on trade interdependence, complex links and the geopolitical context led to Europe becoming vulnerable to Russian imports and to Russia threatening Europe. The example of Lithuania in this regard allows for a review of the measures implemented to strengthen Europe's energy or business sovereignty, thus also underlining that the measures implemented to impose sanctions on Russia must be placed above its national interest.

### **IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION ON LITHUANIA'S POLICY TOWARDS BELARUS**

Lithuania's efforts were also aimed at drawing the attention of the international community and putting pressure on it to take stronger action concerning Belarus, which allowed Russian forces to attack Ukraine from its territory. The first step in raising the issue of the entire package of sanctions not only against Russia but also against Belarus was President Nausėda's statement during the extraordinary summit of B9 leaders on 25 February 2022 in Warsaw.

With this in mind, on the first day of the substantive summit of EU leaders in Brussels, Lithuania presented a working version of a document formulating the concept of introducing another package of sanctions on Belarus, based on a consolidated and expanded list of new sectoral EU sanctions measures targeting Minsk (including the transport as well as banking and financial sectors). The working document sets out the principles for an introduction of such sanctions, which will include a ban on the transport of goods by road to and from Russia and Belarus, as well as a ban on Russian and Belarusian vessels entering seaports throughout the EU and an introduction of limits on the exportation of euro to Belarus and Russia (PolskieRadio24.pl, 2022).

Under pressure from Lithuania and Poland, on 8 April 2022, the EU Council introduced new sanctions on Russia's closest ally: Belarus, including a ban on the transportation of goods into the EU, including transit by carriers and other companies based in its territory. On 3 June 2022, the EU Council introduced new sanctions measures, which included an item concerning Lithuanian demands for a ban on the delivery of euro banknotes to Belarus (Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija, 2022).

In his talks with EU leaders, President Nausėda repeatedly sought to allay their potential fears, explaining that the idea of extending the sanctions could be promoted taking into account the security interests of the countries concerned and without undermining the security of any state or national interest. According to Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis, the new measures could prove to be an effective tool to discourage Belarus from becoming directly involved in the military action in Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> It is also significant that the EU summit had no difficulty endorsing the idea, seeing it as a response to Belarus' participation in the Russian military invasion of Ukraine. They also argued that the concept was not too broad, noting that it was ambitious, purposeful and therefore did not need to be shortened and more moderated, without omitting any reference to institutionalisation. Lithuania also believed that the concept promoted from the beginning of the invasion should focus on the internal security of the EU as a whole. The adoption of extended sanctions for Belarus was a diplomatic achievement of great powers and small states (Malužinas, 2022: 76).

### NATO SUMMIT IN MADRID

At the NATO summit in Madrid in July 2022, NATO member state leaders endorsed a new strategy to adapt the Alliance to the threats from Russia and to strengthen defence and deterrence capabilities, much of which responds to calls from the Eastern flank countries, including Lithuania. The adoption of NATO's new defence strategy was a diplomatic achievement for great powers and a small state. It was welcomed not only by Lithuania but also by the international community, which saw it as an important step towards strengthening collective defence and deterrence in the region (*NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*, 2022). What may be seen as a tangible result of these activities is the decision concerning the establishment of four international battlegroups to be deployed in Poland and the Baltic States.

The elaboration of concrete decisions aimed at the implementation of the Alliance's deterrence and defence policy was implied by Lithuania's specific actions and continuous diplomatic efforts in the past. Starting from the period of Grybauskaitė's presidency, Lithuania has sought in its programme to make the NATO member states pay more attention to the region and to its importance. Lithuania's priority was to create a model for the presence of allied troops and to change the nature of their stationing from a rotational option to a permanent one.

Having formed a consistent geopolitical alliance with some Northern countries for a decade, Lithuania took on the function of geopolitically linking Northern Europe, Central Europe and Eastern Europe, so that NATO troops could be rapidly re-deployed in the future, if necessary. This included a permanent and rotating military presence in the Eastern flank countries, forming permanent brigade units there. This was taken into account at the NATO summit in Madrid, when a compromise formula

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<sup>3</sup> In addition, many Lithuanian companies that are abandoning cooperation with Russia are extending this to Belarus. Lithuania had already begun to limit its economic cooperation with Belarus. The reason was the migration crisis at the border, which started in spring 2021, which is why, among other things, in February 2022, LTG Cargo stopped the transit of Belarusian potassium fertilisers.

was adopted for the allocation of forces with increased readiness to the individual Baltic countries.

Lithuania's priority with the NATO leadership was to obtain security guarantees in this way in connection NATO's permanent and rotating military presence in the region. For Lithuania, the adoption of the NATO's new strategic concept, which reflected the altered security situation in Europe, is not an end in itself, but a means to strengthen its own security and contribute to the common cause of making the world safer from Russian geopolitical threats. As noted by Mindaugas Norkevičius, it was Lithuania that spoke most about these threats; if we look even 10 years back, Lithuania perceived the threat from Russia when NATO then considered Russia a strategic partner (LRT, 2022c). According to Albinas Januška, Lithuanian diplomacy not only won in Madrid in terms of increasing military capabilities but also contributed to the establishment of a permanent command in Poland, which means that the Baltic Sea region will be protected better (LRT, 2022c).

Enjoying broad international support and having received political security guarantees from NATO countries, two of which are its closest neighbours, Lithuania is now turning its attention to the appropriate institutionalisation of its status and the importance of strengthened collective territorial defence.

## CONCLUSIONS

This article seeks to demonstrate that states without any great economic or military potential, including small states, may contribute to strengthening regional confidence; with goodwill and perseverance, even great powers and small states may come to an agreement on issues concerning their individual and common interests. Lithuania's experience in building regional security can prove useful for small states, including some small states or entities that cannot be considered as traditional (regional) powers due to their geographical or geopolitical location or material resources, but do not want to remain a blind spot in an emerging country free from the influence of foreign powers.

More broadly, based on their specific needs, small states may also initiate a process that can benefit the entire region and thus contribute in their own way to the cause of international peace and security-building. International practice demonstrates that negotiation is more than mere bargaining.

As far as Lithuania's policy based on building regional security is concerned, it has so far been unable to obtain legitimate security guarantees from NATO countries or institutionalise its status at the international level.

When analysing Lithuania's international activity in 2022, one may conclude that it was fairly productive. With its example, Lithuania proved that each side must take real efforts to understand the legitimate interests of the other side and to find solutions without compromising those interests. Moreover, Lithuania sets an example for small states: by pursuing an active and effective foreign policy that is based not only on their national interests but also on regional and broader common interests, making attempts not to jeopardise the legitimate interests of large or regional powers may contribute to tangible results (cf. Table 1).



Table 1

**Summary of achievements in Lithuania’s multi-vector foreign policy in 2022**

<b>Country/ organisation</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Effects</b>
US	Strengthening military alliance with USA  Seeking military assistance package for Ukraine	June: Maintenance of guarantees security June: expansion of US military forces in Lithuania and region From March/April: negotiating maintenance of tough stance towards Russia June: negotiating declarations guaranteeing increased security for Baltic States December: Joe Biden’s announcement of \$26.5 billion 30th military aid package for Ukraine
NATO	Strengthening Transatlantic ties for building security of Lithuania and region by strengthening Eastern Flank Criticism towards Germany for insufficient military support to Ukraine	From April/March: negotiating maintenance of tough stance towards Russia  June: adoption of new security strategy concept From March/April: intensification of political and practical support for Ukraine From July: increase of currently active frontline battalions of allied battle groups to brigades in Baltic region May: Organisation of NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023
EU	Reducing Russia’s economic and military potential and strengthening Europe’s energy sovereignty Seeking EU support package for Ukraine	From March: introduction of stronger EU sanctions against Russia (7–9) and Belarus (incl. Packages 3–5) From April/May: active EU engagement in support of Ukraine December/November: pressure on Hungary to unblock EU decision on €18 billion support for Ukraine April: EU countries abandoning gas imports from Russia and acceleration of implementation of renewable energy resources and infrastructure construction projects
Ukraine	Bringing Ukraine closer to NATO and EU and calling for “Marshall Plan” for Ukraine	June: EU Council granting EU candidate status to Ukraine March: introduction by NATO of no-fly zone over Ukraine March-November: Lithuania becoming leader among countries donating the largest share of their (GDP) aid to Ukraine between 24 January and 20 November 2022*

\* Cf. Statista Research Department (2022), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1303450/bilateral-aid-to-ukraine-in-a-percent-of-donor-gdp/>.

Source: Author’s own study.

When analysing the results presented above, it can be concluded that Lithuania has gradually led to greater trust and dialogue, which has accelerated the productive joint search for more cooperative and mutually beneficial relations in the region. These efforts can be considered as Lithuania’s contribution to peace and security in the region. This, in turn, may provide appropriate conditions for the country gaining a regional leadership status as an organic part of the regional security architecture, which will continuously advance the cause of strengthening international confidence and security

by serving as an example of a contribution by small state to international security. Taking into account a post-structural perspective, one may conclude that the key element that determined Lithuania's successes in the international arena was its active international involvement, including its effectiveness reinforced by a prominent permanent presence in international forums.

As mentioned earlier, poststructuralism gives small states subjectivity and looks at their identity, shaped in the changing circumstances of international relations. This means that the content contained in the concept of a small state may change over time, being associated not only with weaknesses and limitations, but, for example, with flexibility and circumstances, thus strengthening its position, as well as subjectivity and sovereignty in all the most important international forums, the best example of which is Lithuania.

In the course of the analytical proceedings, several hypotheses were accepted, which proved to be valid assumptions. Both the hypothesis that small states are able to initiate a process that may benefit the entire region and thus contribute in its own way to building international peace and security, and the hypothesis that an active Lithuanian foreign policy based on national interests yet also on regional and broader common interests contributes to building international security – were confirmed in the research. The hypothesis was also verified positively that in the process of acting as the main advocate of Ukraine in the international arena, Lithuania proves that a small state is able to exert pressure on other states and powers to force them to take necessary actions towards shaping the region's security strategy in crisis situations. On the other hand, the hypothesis of Lithuania's efforts to draw the attention of the international community and to put pressure on it to take more decisive action on the issue of Ukraine yielding tangible results needs to be explored further.

When adopting a more realistic assessment of Lithuania's influence on the international order, attention should be paid to an important element, which is the active tightening of cooperation with countries from this region due to the convergence of interests. Recognizing the complexities and limits of Lithuania's influence, given regional dynamics and the role of neighboring countries such as Poland, Lithuania would not be able to contribute to global affairs on its own. However, the ambitious concept of being the leader in aid for Ukraine clashes with reality and the state's limited capabilities, and the neighboring countries have never seen Vilnius as a natural political center (EESC, 2020; Statkus, Paulauskas, 2006: 43–44).

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the present article is to analyse the efforts taken aimed to build the security of the region as part of Lithuanian foreign policy in the international arena in the era of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This article seeks to verify the hypothesis that small states are able to set in motion a process that can benefit the entire region, and thus they may contribute to building international peace and security. The theoretical basis of the research is post-structural theory, from its perspective Lithuania accepts and actively shapes its identity as a small state, which is defined primarily in relation to its large and dangerous neighbor. This helps explain the small country's consistent pursuit of integration and being an active player in the international arena, which was supposed to help it break away from the Soviet past and "return to the West." Thus, this study contributes to knowledge on the practice of international relations by reflecting on the growing role of the Baltic States.

**Keywords:** small state, security, diplomacy, NATO-EU, Ukraine, Baltic region, Lithuania

### ROLA MAŁYCH PAŃSTW W PROMOWANIU BEZPIECZEŃSTWA MIĘDZYNARODOWEGO: STRATEGIA LITWY

#### STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest analiza podejmowanych działań na rzecz budowania bezpieczeństwa regionu przez litewską politykę zagraniczną na arenie międzynarodowej w dobie rosyjskiej inwazji na Ukrainę. W niniejszym artykule starano się zweryfikować hipotezę, która zakłada, że małe państwa są w stanie uruchomić proces, który może przynieść korzyści całemu regionowi, a tym samym przyczynić się do budowania międzynarodowego pokoju i bezpieczeństwa. Podstawą teoretyczną badań jest teoria poststrukturalna, z jej perspektywy Litwa akceptuje i aktywnie kształtuje swoją tożsamość małego państwa, która jest określana przede wszystkim w relacji do wielkiego i groźnego sąsiada. Pozwala to wytłumaczyć konsekwentne dążenie małego państwa do integracji i bycie aktywnym graczem na arenie międzynarodowej, która miała pomóc odciąć się od sowieckiej przeszłości i „powrócić do Zachodu”. Tym samym niniejsze opracowanie wnosi wkład w wiedzę na temat praktyki stosunków międzynarodowych poprzez refleksję nad rosnącą rolą krajów bałtyckich.

**Słowa kluczowe:** małe państwo, bezpieczeństwo, dyplomacja, NATO-UE, Ukraina, region bałtycki, Litwa