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## Adapt or Die: “Smart Power”, Adaptive Leadership, the Lithuanian Chairmanship, and the Evolution of the OSCE

When Charles Darwin wrote about evolution, he did not say that it is the strongest species that survive, rather it is those that can adapt to their environment. The same logic holds true for multilateral organizations. If they are to remain relevant they must adapt. Otherwise they will die out. What they may lack in size and strength, they can compensate for in brains – or, as Joseph Nye calls it, “smart power”.

This chapter looks at how the concept of “adaptive leadership” enabled Lithuania – a country of 3.2 million people and with limited resources – to chair the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2011, and how this experience enhanced Lithuania’s “smart power”. It also demonstrates how this experience contributed to the OSCE’s evolution, and argues that the OSCE needs to demonstrate “adaptive leadership” and enhance its own “smart power” in order to increase its relevance, profile, and leverage. It also looks at the role of public diplomacy in contributing to these processes.

### *“Adaptive Leadership”*

“Adaptive leadership” is a concept designed to mobilize people and organizations to adapt to change, and to thrive as a result. The concept was developed by three professors at Harvard University’s Kennedy School: Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow. It is inspired by evolutionary biology. According to this theory, successful adaptation has three characteristics: 1) to preserve the DNA essential for the species’ continued survival; 2) to discard (reregulate or rearrange) the DNA that no longer serves the species’ current needs; and 3) to create DNA arrangements that give the species the ability to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments.<sup>1</sup>

How can this theory be applied to the OSCE and to Lithuania’s Chairmanship of this organization in 2011?

The OSCE has been striving to adapt since its very genesis in the mid-1970s. The basic DNA code comes from the Ten Principles of the 1975 Hel-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ronald Heifetz/Alexander Grashow/Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Boston, MA, 2009, p. 14.

sinki Final Act. This has been the organism's nucleus ever since. But the body keeps evolving.

In 1991, some critics suggested that what was at that time the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) had served its purpose and should be abolished. After all, if the point of the CSCE had been to help reduce tensions between East and West and to build security through co-operation, then surely the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany demonstrated that this had been successfully achieved.

However, in the early 1990s Europe faced challenges that no organization was equipped to deal with, such as ethnic tensions, intra-state conflicts, and post-communist transition. As a consequence, the CSCE was transformed and strengthened. Institutions were created to deal with conflict prevention, minority issues, elections and democratization, and freedom of the media. Field missions and special representatives were deployed to reduce tensions, resolve conflicts, and assist states in coping with the challenges of change. Permanent bodies were established to promote dialogue, increase transparency, and review the implementation of commitments. This evolution resulted in the change from the conference culture of the CSCE into the operational and institutional organization that became the OSCE (in 1995). In short, the transformation from CSCE to OSCE in the early 1990s is a good example of a multilateral species evolving and, as a result, thriving in a highly challenging environment.

A decade later, the OSCE again faced a challenge that called for adaptive leadership. For many states going through the process of post-communist transition, the EU and NATO proved to be more attractive than the OSCE: They had "hard" and "soft" power that the OSCE could not provide. But, as a result of EU and NATO enlargement, Europe's dividing lines were pushed farther East rather than erased. Revolutions in a number of OSCE States (including Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine) led to accusations that the Organization was being instrumentalized by some countries in order to assist regime change. There was also a cooling of relations between Moscow and Washington due to NATO enlargement, plans to deploy a missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic, and the war in Georgia in August 2008. Furthermore, some states complained of double standards in relation to the human dimension: Most countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) objected to the imbalance among the OSCE's three dimensions and resented criticism of their human dimension record<sup>2</sup> while – they felt that – almost nothing was being said about human rights abuses in relation to campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan (for example the treatment of prisoners in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay). As the Panel of Eminent Persons wrote

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2 See *Appeal of the CIS Member States to the OSCE Partners*, Astana, 15 September 2004 (unofficial translation from the Russian) at: [http://www.ln.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/70f610ccd5b876ccc3256f100043db72?OpenDocument](http://www.ln.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/70f610ccd5b876ccc3256f100043db72?OpenDocument); see also *Statement by CIS Member Countries on the State of Affairs in the OSCE*, Moscow, 3 July 2004 (8 July 2004), at: [http://www.ln.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/3be4758c05585a09c3256ecc00255a52?OpenDocument](http://www.ln.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/3be4758c05585a09c3256ecc00255a52?OpenDocument).

in their report of June 2005: “Although the OSCE’s ability to adjust in a flexible manner to the changing security environment is generally appreciated, its relevance, effectiveness and strategic orientation have been questioned.”<sup>3</sup> Others were more blunt: The OSCE was in “unabated decline”.<sup>4</sup>

Efforts were made under Greece’s Chairmanship in 2009 – particularly through the so-called “Corfu Process” – to strengthen the effectiveness of the OSCE and to try to restore the idea of a security community which had been so badly shaken by the war in Georgia. In terms of adaptive leadership, this was an attempt to genetically engineer the Organization’s DNA in order to enable it to flourish. At the same time, many participating States were careful to preserve those strands of the DNA deemed essential for the species’ survival, namely its principles and commitments. As former Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut put it, the OSCE has a “never-ending task [in] the role of guardian of common values throughout the Euro-Atlantic area and the Euro-Asian area”.<sup>5</sup>

The process of trying to revitalize the OSCE entered a new phase with the Astana Summit in December 2010 – the first OSCE Summit for eleven years. The Astana Commemorative Declaration is a good example of how Heads of State or Government knew that they had to demonstrate adaptive leadership if the OSCE were to evolve and thrive. In it, they recommitted themselves to a vision of a “free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals”.<sup>6</sup> This preserved the DNA deemed essential for the Organization’s survival – namely its core values. For example, there was a categorical and irrevocable reaffirmation that “the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned”.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, there was a clear attempt to adapt the Organ-

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3 Common Purpose – Towards a More Effective OSCE, Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons On Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE, 27 June 2005, reprinted in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2005*, Baden-Baden 2006, pp. 359-379, here: p. 360.

4 Pál Dunay, *The OSCE in Unabated Decline*, Real Instituto Elcano, ARI 1/2007, 12 January 2007.

5 Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Thirty Years of Effective Helsinki Commitments, p. 3, in: Austrian Center for International Studies in co-operation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Frances Mautner Markhof (ed.), *Proceedings of the Conference to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act “Democracy and Security in the 21st Century and the Evolving Role of Regional Organizations”*, Vienna, 21-22 April 2005, available at: <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/17371?download=true>.

6 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Summit Meeting, Astana 2010, *Astana Commemorative Declaration – Towards a Security Community*, SUM.DOC/1/10/Corr.1, 3 December 2010, section 1, at: <http://www.osce.org/cio/74985>.

7 *Ibid.*, section 6.

ization to new circumstances, for example, by taking a more active role in facing transnational threats.

Yet while the Astana Declaration set out a clear and shared vision for the future, the lack of agreement on an action plan meant that there was no map of how to get there. As a result, Lithuania, the incoming Chairmanship country, was tasked with organizing a follow-up initiative to push the process forward.

### *Meaningful Steps*

The Lithuanian Chairmanship team knew that it would have to follow up whatever was agreed (or not agreed) at the Astana Summit. But the establishment of a European security community could not be achieved in a year. Therefore the challenge was to make demonstrable progress by the Vilnius Ministerial Council in December 2011 and to create momentum that could be built upon by future Chairmanships.

With this in mind, the incoming Chairmanship adopted the approach of taking realistic and meaningful steps in areas where Lithuania could make a difference. In a sense this was making a virtue out of necessity due to limited resources and objective realities. At the same time, it was inspired by the idea of “adaptive leadership”.

Lithuania decided to concentrate on five main priorities:

- registering tangible progress in addressing protracted conflicts;
- significantly improving implementation of media-freedom commitments;
- enhancing the OSCE profile with regard to transnational threats, including those emanating from the territory of Afghanistan;
- defining the OSCE’s role in the energy-security dialogue; and
- promoting tolerance education throughout the OSCE area in order to combat hate crimes and discrimination.

Implementation of these five goals has been assessed elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> But to illustrate one of the most meaningful steps, we shall consider what was achieved in relation to the settlement process in Moldova.

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8 Cf. OSCE Lithuania 2011, *Meaningful Steps. Report on progress made during Lithuania’s Chairmanship of the OSCE, 2011*, MC.GAL/13/11/Rev.1, 22 December 2011, at: <http://www.osce.org/mc/86008>.

*Moldova: The Golden Millimetre*

For almost six years, negotiations on the Transdniestrian settlement process had been stalled. One of the priorities of the Lithuanian Chairmanship was to resume them, not only informally, but in the formal 5+2 format that brings together Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE, plus the EU and the United States. This particular protracted conflict (rather than say Abkhazia or Nagorno-Karabakh) was chosen by the Lithuanian Chairmanship because it was one where Vilnius felt that it could use its geostrategic position as an EU state, a US ally, and a Russian neighbour to find convergence between the main power brokers in the settlement process. Furthermore, the Merkel-Medvedev Meseberg initiative of 5 June 2010 had signalled the possibility of Transnistria being a test case for EU-Russia partnership, and perhaps even the basis “to explore the establishment of an EU-Russia Political and Security Committee (ER PSC) on ministerial level”.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, in his opening speech to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis made it clear that Lithuania would push for a resumption of formal “5+2” negotiations on Moldova. Words were followed by deeds when he visited Moldova on 8-10 February 2011, where he met with officials and civil society activists from both banks of the Dniestr.

He did not simply visit the country once and move onto the next crisis. He persisted. Together with his Special Representative for Protracted Conflicts, Giedrius Čekuolis, and the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Philip Remler, he remained in regular contact with the other mediators, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. He brought up the issue during his visits to Washington, Moscow, Kyiv, and Brussels, and at crucial stages in the process spoke on the telephone to his colleagues, including the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Russia, and Ukraine. He raised the issue at every available opportunity: in the briefing he gave to the UN Security Council, at EU meetings, and in briefings to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. He also tried to ensure that all relevant actors were repeating the same messages in their discussions with the parties.

To use the jargon of the “adaptive leadership” theory, the combination of high-level diplomacy, bottom-up confidence-building measures (CBMs) and on-the-ground engagement (particularly through the OSCE Mission to Moldova) enabled the Lithuanian Chairmanship to be “in the balcony” and “on the dance floor” at the same time.

The idea was to remain seized of the issue, to get people to focus on what is a relatively tractable situation, and to set a process in motion that

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9 *Memorandum (Meeting of Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Dmitri Medvedev on 4-5 June 2010 in Meseberg)*, at: [http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/\\_Anlagen/2010/2010-06-05-meseberg-memorandum.pdf;jsessionid=6C2873A978FA319312B534B55D2BD443.s4t1?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=1](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/_Anlagen/2010/2010-06-05-meseberg-memorandum.pdf;jsessionid=6C2873A978FA319312B534B55D2BD443.s4t1?__blob=publicationFile&v=1).

would create a momentum for change. Progress would not necessarily depend on a dramatic breakthrough, but it would be manifested by a number of small, cumulative steps in the right direction. As Ambassador Čekuolis put it, “progress would be measured by millimeters and each millimeter is as precious as gold”.<sup>10</sup>

Informal meetings in the 5+2 format were held in Vienna on 14-15 February and 4-5 April, and in Moscow on 21 June. At the same time, the Chairmanship kept up the pressure by engaging the support of the European Union and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Furthermore, to keep constant attention on the process and, at the same time, to ripen it, ambassadors and representatives from 19 OSCE delegations visited Moldova in July 2011. The head of the delegation, Lithuanian Ambassador Renatas Norkus, reiterated the need for an early resumption of official negotiations in the 5+2 format without preconditions, and underlined the need for economic confidence-building measures, dismantling artificial barriers for trade, investment, and the movement of people, as well as restoring rail and telecommunications links between the two banks of the Dniestr river.

The Chairmanship stressed time and again that lack of progress in the settlement process could not be used as an excuse to halt CBMs. On the contrary: Confidence-building measures could create the good will and practical co-operation needed to generate the trust and momentum vital for the settlement process.

On 8-9 September, a seminar was held in Bad Reichenhall, Germany, on the issue of confidence-building measures. A set of regulations governing the operations of the Joint Expert Working Groups was adopted. Perhaps more importantly, a meeting took place between Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat and Transdniestrian leader Igor Smirnov, brokered by the OSCE and the German government. Foreign Minister Ažubalis and German State Secretary Emily Haber also took part.

This meeting helped pave the way for a meeting in Moscow on 22 September at which participants in the Permanent Conference on Political Issues in the Framework of the Negotiating Process for Transdniestrian Settlement agreed to resume their formal negotiations in the 5+2 framework (for the first time in more than five years). The first meeting took place in Vilnius on 30 November and 1 December. More than a “golden millimetre” of progress had been made. Since then, under Ireland’s Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2012 and with a new regime in Tiraspol, regular meetings have been held, and further progress has been made in implementing CBMs. The challenge now is to keep the process going, and to reach a final settlement to a conflict that has dragged on for more than twenty years. This will require adaptive leadership, not least by Ukraine’s Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2013.

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10 *Intervention of Ambassador Giedrius Čekuolis at the “V to V dialogue” seminar “CBMs As A Way Forward Towards Integration Between The Two Banks Of Nistru River”, Vienna, 3 April 2011.*

*Dealing with the Unexpected: The Arab Uprisings*

As much as a Chairmanship tries to plan in advance, it must also expect the unexpected. In order to enable a “certainty of response”, a Chairmanship – like any effective leadership during times of crisis – must be able to anticipate and recognize potential threats. While one cannot predict the future, one can at least be better prepared for it.

The Arab Uprisings are a good example of how leaders can be caught off guard and how they need adaptive leadership to handle a crisis. Almost no one anticipated that there would be dramatic uprisings in North Africa in early 2011. Indeed, when a few countries had suggested, just one month earlier at the Astana Summit, that the OSCE’s Mediterranean (and not just Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian) character should be highlighted, this was dismissed as irrelevant. Suddenly, in January 2011, just days after taking office, Lithuania had to come up with a policy for how OSCE States would react to this crisis in the southern Mediterranean.

The OSCE quickly prepared a set of institutional proposals to the governments of Egypt and Tunisia, which are OSCE Partners for Co-operation. To explore possible areas of co-operation, the Chairperson-in-Office visited Tunisia on 15-17 April, while Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Asta Skaisgirytė-Liauškienė and a team of ODIHR experts visited Egypt from 31 May to 3 June. Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly monitored the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Tunisia in October. Under the Chairmanship of Ireland, the OSCE-Mediterranean dialogue intensified, as manifested, for example, by the increased level of interest and range of topics at the OSCE Mediterranean Conference that took place in Budva, Montenegro, on 10 and 11 October 2011.

However, it was hard to make policy in a situation where there were so many variables out of the Chairmanship’s (even the OSCE’s) control. Firstly, it was sometimes difficult to figure out who spoke for the new regimes: the ambassador in Vienna or someone new in the capital? This made it difficult to identify the needs of the country concerned, and to assess whether they even wanted the OSCE’s support. Secondly, it was hard to engage the governments of Mediterranean Partners because they were in a state of flux and had other things to think about than talking to representatives of European security organizations. Thirdly, there was a plethora of well-meaning actors rushing to help, but no mechanism to co-ordinate their responses. In a good example of adaptive leadership, Foreign Minister Ažubalis tried to work with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to bring the relevant organizations together in order to promote complementarity. However, as so often happens, no organization wanted to be “co-ordinated” by another, and therefore no mechanism for inter-institutional co-operation was devised. This was a missed opportunity.

There will, inevitably, be unexpected events in the future that Chairmanships and the OSCE as a whole will have to respond to. It would therefore be prudent to strengthen the analytical capabilities of the Secretariat in order to help anticipate and prepare for potential crises. This need not be a large unit, but at least one or two people should be responsible for synthesizing information from the field, from open sources, liaising with think-tanks, and collecting data from inter- and non-governmental organizations. The Secretariat would be doing the Chairmanship a great service if it could augment the capacity of its staff with timely analysis, and strategic forecasting. This would also strengthen the Organization's early warning capacity.

#### *Constraints on Adaptive Leadership within the OSCE*

Countries that seek to pursue a policy of adaptive leadership within the OSCE face a number of constraints.

In the OSCE – as in other organizational cultures – efforts to discard those parts of the DNA that are no longer needed are fiercely resisted. One state's idea of a redundant activity is usually another state's pet project (and vice versa). In a consensus-based organization, it is hard to kill things – you have to just let them die.

Another constraint on exercising adaptive leadership within the OSCE is that the country holding the Chairmanship has limited room for manoeuvre. The Chair has few powers of initiative, nor can it act on its own. The real power brokers are the Permanent Council, and particularly the representatives of the European Union, the United States, and the Russian Federation. Furthermore, because decisions within the OSCE are taken on the basis of consensus, any country – if it is determined and vocal enough – can torpedo an initiative. As Nye writes, “one of the dilemmas of multilateral diplomacy is to how to get everyone into the act and still get action”.<sup>11</sup> The key is to define what everyone would consider as “thriving”, and then help to lead them to the realization of that objective.

It is not only participating States that the Chairmanship has to work with. The Secretary General and heads of OSCE institutions and field missions all have a high degree of autonomy. This decentralized form of governance can be considered a weakness insofar as it may not be clear to the target audience who is speaking for the OSCE. Sometimes there are too many cooks. Conversely, the relative independence of OSCE institutions and executive structures (as long as they are accountable) prevents political interference in operational activities.

It is important to keep things in perspective. There are constraints on leadership in any organization. At least the OSCE enables the Chairmanship

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11 Cf. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power*, New York 2011, p. 217.



country to help set the agenda, and to identify certain priorities. Since the OSCE's executive structures are relatively light (compared, for example, to the UN or EU), the Chairmanship can be innovative and push forward ideas, as long as it can bring all the participating States along. The fact that states continue to want to chair the OSCE is a good sign – it creates a certain expectation that new impulses will come every year, and that fresh approaches will be taken, since the Chairmanship has a self-interest in achieving a successful outcome. Indeed, demonstrating effective leadership of the OSCE can enhance a state's "soft power" and can help construct a state's "smart power".

### *"Soft" Power*

According to Joseph Nye, the "soft power" of a country rests heavily on three basic resources: its culture (which makes it attractive to others); its political values (if applied consistently); and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and possessing moral authority).<sup>12</sup> This can make a country attractive and respected, regardless of its military might. If it is seen as benign, competent, and charismatic, it can leverage its soft-power resources in ways that can affect behaviour and policy.

Of course, soft power is not only dependent on the agent who is projecting it: It is also in the eye of the beholder; the message one sends is not always the one that is received. Different cultural perspectives and historical experiences can filter information in ways that result in an idea being perceived in different ways.

Chairing the OSCE helps states (particularly smaller ones) to demonstrate soft power. As Chair, the country concerned is first among 57 equals for a year. This raises its profile, provides a rare opportunity for the foreign minister to have access at eye-level to more powerful peers, and brings with it considerable responsibility and influence (including in crisis management). Chairing the OSCE also enables the state concerned to enhance its networks, and it is a unique learning experience for a country's diplomats. This is particularly attractive for smaller EU countries that have become less visible due to the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, or countries that are seeking to increase their European and international profiles – such as Kazakhstan, which chaired the OSCE in 2010. Kazakhstan used its OSCE Chairmanship – to great effect – to enhance its image, to play a leadership role in Eurasia (not least by hosting the first OSCE Summit since 1999), and to draw attention to issues that it feels strongly about, including Afghanistan, nuclear non-proliferation, and dialogue among civilizations. Chairing the OSCE also stands countries in good stead for leadership positions in other multilateral

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12 Ibid., p. 92.

forums: for example, the OSCE Chairmanship prepared Slovenia and Lithuania for their Presidencies of the EU (in 2008 and 2013, respectively), and Kazakhstan used its OSCE Chairmanship as a springboard for a seat on the UN Security Council.

As Chair of the OSCE, Lithuania was well placed to exercise soft power. As an EU and NATO member, it was able to generate a positive attraction among its allies. At the same time, due to two decades of excellent relations with the United States and a large diaspora in America, Lithuania enjoyed close ties with Washington. While relations with Moscow were not as close, Lithuania had demonstrated in the past that it could be pragmatic (for example in relation to Kaliningrad), and was able to communicate effectively with its neighbour, not least since most of its diplomats speak Russian. In short, Lithuania was able to work well with all three power brokers within the OSCE (the EU, the US, and Russia), and tried to be even-handed in its relations with them all. It was a country that all participating States could do business with, which gave it considerable soft power. It leveraged this power to push forward the negotiation process in Moldova and reach consensus on a number of key decisions at the Vilnius Ministerial Council.

It is important to note that soft power also brings with it certain expectations. If soft power is generated in part by solid political values and benign foreign policies, a state needs to demonstrate those qualities as the Chair. While there are no formal criteria for becoming Chair, countries are held to account by their peers, particularly in relation to their human-rights record. Kazakhstan, for example, was subjected to tough scrutiny concerning the case of imprisoned human-rights defender Yevgeny Zhovtis. Austria's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2000 was overshadowed by the inclusion of Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in the government coalition. Lithuania was criticized over tolerance issues, while the trial and treatment of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko has put Ukraine's Chairmanship of the OSCE (in 2013) under pressure.

Since culture is a key ingredient of soft power, the Lithuanian Chairmanship took every available opportunity to project a positive image of its country. This included highlighting the country's culture, history, and sport, and making the link between Lithuanian values and OSCE principles and commitments. For example, there were classical music concerts (at the Hofburg and Mozart House), a joint Lithuanian-Russian film evening, photo exhibits, a jazz concert, and even a basketball tournament (that the Lithuanian team won).

But soft power has its limitations.

*Belarus: The Limits of Soft Power*

At the Astana Summit, President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus said: “I want to wish our close partner, our neighbour – Lithuania – every success and substantial achievements in the course of its Chairmanship in the OSCE in 2011. I want to assure you that we will do everything possible, not just as neighbours but as OSCE member state, so that your chairmanship would be successful.”<sup>13</sup> But on 19 December 2010, in the aftermath of the Presidential elections, the Belarusian authorities imprisoned President Lukashenko’s main political rivals, increased systemic persecution and harassment of the opposition and civil society, and curtailed freedom of media and assembly. These moves were heavily criticized by the OSCE. In reaction, Belarus did not agree to extend the mandate of the OSCE Office in Minsk beyond 31 December 2010.

Even before assuming the Chairmanship, Foreign Minister Ažubalis spoke out against the proposed closure and urged the Belarusian authorities to rethink their decision – but to no avail. On taking up the Chairmanship, he immediately called his Belarusian counterpart and invited his deputy to come to Vilnius to explore possible areas of co-operation. During the course of those and subsequent consultations at various levels in Vienna and Vilnius, it became apparent that there was little willingness to compromise.

The Chair sought to keep the channels of communication open with Minsk, while also trying to shield and support Belarusian civil-society groups. It successfully backed efforts by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to monitor the trials of those detained on 19 December. However, the impact of the trial monitoring was limited. ODIHR’s report was published in November 2011, but its findings were not accepted by the Belarusian authorities. Similarly, when 14 OSCE participating States triggered the Moscow Mechanism,<sup>14</sup> Minsk refused to grant the rapporteur, Professor Emmanuel Decaux, a visa. He therefore met representatives of Belarusian civil society in Paris, Geneva, Vienna, Vilnius, and Warsaw. The Belarusian authorities then argued that because Professor Decaux had never visited Belarus, his (scathing) report<sup>15</sup> was not credible.

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13 *Statement by the President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko at the Plenary Meeting of The OSCE Summit, Astana, 2 December 2010*, SUM.DEL/64/10, 2 December 2010.

14 The Mechanism, agreed by consensus at the CSCE’s Moscow Meeting in 1991 by all 38 OSCE States and amended by the CSCE’s Rome Meeting in 1993, allows for deployment of an independent, impartial fact-finding mission if one participating State, supported by at least nine others, “considers that a particularly serious threat to the fulfilment of the provisions of the [OSCE] human dimension has arisen in another participating State”. Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Moscow, 3 October 1991, in: Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 605-629, here, p. 611; also available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14310>.

15 See Prof. Emmanuel Decaux, *OSCE Rapporteur’s Report on Belarus*, 28 May 2011, ODIHR.GAL/39/11/Corr. 1, 16 June 2011.

The case of Belarus demonstrates the limits of soft power. The OSCE was powerless to change Belarus's tough stance. Invoking the Moscow Mechanism when the target country refused to co-operate only served to demonstrate how blunt an instrument the mechanism is. The counter-argument is that Belarus's refusal to co-operate with its peers showed how callous and untrustworthy the regime in Minsk is, and therefore deepened its isolation from most of the international community. It also provided further arguments for applying sanctions on the Belarusian leadership.

In Ukraine, the government is also paying a high price for the way former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko has been treated in detention. Ukraine – as co-host of the 2012 European football championships and Chair of the OSCE in 2013 – has considerably more soft power than Belarus. It is therefore more vulnerable to criticism. When the President of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė, visited Kyiv on 11 May 2012 – as the first foreign leader to see Tymoshenko in hospital – she warned that “Europe's trust in Ukraine is dwindling”. The lesson is: Lose the trust of other countries and you lose soft power.

In that respect, the OSCE – and small countries like Lithuania that are respected within the European and international community – *can* exert some influence by drawing on their own soft power, and by explaining to states that have soft power that the failure to change their policies can undermine their trustworthiness. It is usually most effective to communicate this message discreetly, and to appeal to a state's self-interest. If that fails, more robust public diplomacy may be necessary.

### *Constructing “Smart Power”*

If soft power is insufficient, what about “hard power”? The country chairing the OSCE cannot threaten coercive measures. Nor is the OSCE in a position to project hard power, for example by sending in peacekeepers. However, if a state can combine the “hard” power of coercion (the stick), with the persuasive attraction of “soft” power (the carrot), the result is what Nye describes as “smart power”.<sup>16</sup>

Small countries such as Lithuania can gain “smart power” by combining their soft power with the hard power that they acquire by being part of NATO and the EU. They can also demonstrate an ability to achieve results, to put forward innovative ideas, and to lead during times of crisis. One could argue that Lithuania demonstrated these traits during its Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011. It will continue to develop its smart power during its Presidency of the EU and in its bid to be a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

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16 Nye, cited above (Note 10), p. xiii.

But can this concept be applied to international organizations? NATO is trying to carve out a niche for itself in terms of “Smart Defence”.<sup>17</sup> The idea (triggered in part by the financial crisis) is that Alliance nations must give priority to those capabilities which NATO needs most, specialize in what they do best, and look for multinational solutions to shared problems. A concrete example of this pooling and prioritizing is the NATO Air Policing Mission in the Baltic states.

What about the OSCE? The OSCE has some aspects of hard power – including policing and field operations. Its conflict-prevention and early-warning tools, its mediation capacity, and its confidence-building measures are good examples of how the OSCE could profile itself as a “smart power” organization.

Furthermore, the OSCE has a niche as a “normative intermediary”.<sup>18</sup> Through its co-operative approach, it can appeal to the self-interest of states to implement their OSCE commitments. A good example is the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), who works discreetly with governments to defuse ethnic tensions at an early stage by explaining how international minority standards can promote peaceful integration. Other examples include the work of the OSCE in brokering the August 2001 Ohrid Agreement, which brought peace to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or the Border Monitoring Operation in Georgia between December 1999 and December 2004, which helped to create greater transparency along a tense portion of the Georgian border.

In a similar vein, the OSCE has an opportunity to exercise smart power in Central Asia. As the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) scales down in Afghanistan, the OSCE can help contain a possible spillover of the conflict to the north. For example, it could scale up its border monitoring support capacity in Tajikistan, help to defuse tensions between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, work to reduce vulnerability in the Fergana Valley, and help to promote regional co-operation, for example in relation to water management. This is a region where the OSCE can really make a difference.

Projecting smart power and soft power are dependent on effective marketing, and here public diplomacy is vital.

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17 See NATO, *Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020*, 20 May 2012, sections 7-9, at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_87594.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87594.htm), and NATO, *Chicago Summit Declaration*, 20 May 2012, section 56, at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_87593.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm).

18 An expression coined by Steven R. Ratner, Does International Law Matter in Preventing Ethnic Conflict? In: *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 3/2000, pp. 591-698, here: p. 668; cf. also Walter A. Kemp (ed.), *Quiet Diplomacy in Action: The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities*, The Hague 2001, p. 25.

*Public Diplomacy: How to Project Adaptive Leadership and Soft Power*

The country holding the Chairmanship of the OSCE has to carry out a careful balancing act in terms of public diplomacy. On the one hand, the Chairmanship – working with the Secretariat – has to try to raise the profile of the OSCE. Working with the participating States, it must also explain the OSCE's policies. On the other hand, the Chairperson has to satisfy a domestic audience, including parliamentarians and the press. What he or she may want to say as foreign minister may not jibe with what the Chairmanship should say on behalf of all participating States.

In the build-up to the Chairmanship, the Lithuanian Task Force had to identify issues that were both priorities for the OSCE and of particular relevance to Lithuania. At the same time it had to measure its policies towards neighbours such as Belarus, Poland, and Russia to ensure that bilateral issues would not jeopardize the need to build consensus as OSCE Chair. The Chairmanship team also had to explain to the Lithuanian parliament and public the added value of the OSCE. Lithuanian political actors were supportive of NATO and the EU, but were less familiar with, and not particularly supportive of, the OSCE. The domestic press was largely indifferent to the OSCE, even sceptical. Consequently, one of the Chairmanship's first adaptive leadership challenges was to generate domestic support for its leadership of the OSCE.

In the spirit of “adaptive leadership”, Foreign Minister Ažubalis was determined to “act politically”.<sup>19</sup> The opening of Lithuania's Chairmanship coincided with the twentieth anniversary of the so-called “January Events” of 1991, when Soviet military units attacked the television tower in Vilnius, months after Lithuania had declared its independence from the USSR. In his “We Believe in Freedom” speech, which he delivered to the OSCE Permanent Council on 13 January 2011, Ažubalis, who had witnessed the “January Events” first hand, used the example of the popular resistance that he saw that day as an inspiration for how people can defend their freedoms. He stressed the importance of adhering to democratic values, implementing the Helsinki principles, and protecting human-rights defenders and freedom of speech and assembly. He came back to this theme throughout the year, particularly when speaking up for civil society in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. Championing this cause and recalling Lithuania's history was a calculated risk because, while it could win support from civil society and the Lithuanian public, it could have made the Chairmanship less acceptable to the political establishments of some neighbouring countries. The fact that the Chairmanship consciously pursued this policy demonstrates its determination to act politically.

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19 Heifetz/Grashow/Linsky, cited above (Note 1), p. 133.

At the same time, the Chairmanship had to act politically on behalf of all OSCE participating States. It therefore tried to lead in pursuing the vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community that had been agreed to at the Astana Summit. Furthermore, at the Vilnius Ministerial Council in December 2011, it stuck its neck out to try to win support for Mongolia's bid to become an OSCE participating State, and for Switzerland and Serbia to take on the OSCE Chairmanship in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

To gain support for its objectives, to ensure visibility for the OSCE, and to promote adherence to the OSCE's values, the Chairperson and his team undertook 21 missions and took part in around 40 OSCE-related events, conference, and round tables. Further political weight was given to the Chairmanship by Lithuania's President Grybauskaitė. She took part in the Astana Summit, briefed the Permanent Council in Vienna, visited the South Caucasus and Moldova, and played a key role in the Ministerial Council in Vilnius.

During its Chairmanship of the OSCE, Lithuania tried to get its message across through the mass media. Over the course of the year, the Chairmanship team issued 243 press statements, of which 34 were devoted to human-rights issues and 38 to conflict resolution. During that period, dozens of articles in the various regional news portals of OSCE participating States, 25 op-eds, and a significant number of live interviews targeted the OSCE community's audience. At the Vilnius Ministerial Meeting on 6 and 7 December 2011, 175 representatives of the mass media were present, producing around 160 articles in the Lithuanian and international press. Over the course of the two-day meeting, the OSCE's website had 12,000 visitors, totalling 40,000 page views per day – 60 per cent more than the usual daily hit rate.

But quantity does not always add up to quality: There is not necessarily a positive correlation between how much information one generates and how it is received. Indeed, as Nye points out, "plentiful information leads to scarcity of attention".<sup>20</sup> To avoid this problem, there should be strategic communication to explain a set of themes, and regular communications to explain the context of policy decisions (ideally in relation to these themes).

There should also be long-term engagement with key policy and opinion makers to familiarize them with one's objectives and policies. That is why Lithuania engaged think-tanks (such as the International Peace Institute) as well as academics and NGOs, for example in the V to V Dialogues,<sup>21</sup> and welcomed the work of the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative (EASI). In 2012, this process intensified with the Initiative for the Development of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community (IDEAS) organized by think-tanks in France, Germany, Poland, and Russia as well as the first-ever Security Days (organized by the OSCE Secretariat). These activities opened up the inter-governmental process to external opinions and generated new ideas on

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20 Nye, cited above (Note 10), p. 103.

21 "V to V" stands for Vancouver to Vladivostok via Vienna and Vilnius.

how to revitalize the OSCE. This is a good example of how public diplomacy can contribute to adaptive leadership and soft power.

### *Crisis or Opportunity?*

There is a lot of talk about how the OSCE is in crisis. If this is true, then, as Hillary Clinton said, never waste a good crisis. With adaptive leadership, this crisis can be transformed into an opportunity. After all, one of the OSCE's strengths since 1975 has been its ability to adapt.

A number of factors are in the OSCE's favour. The financial crisis can force participating States to set some priorities: to do less, but do it better. This would enable the OSCE to identify its added value, its "smart power". The stronger the OSCE's profile, the more attractive it will be as a "soft" and "smart" power, and therefore the easier it will be – for policy makers, treasuries, the media, and the public – to understand the added value of the OSCE.

The fact that the next three Chairmanships have already been decided – namely Ukraine (2013), Switzerland (2014), and Serbia (2015) – means that there is a degree of predictability that can enable greater continuity and forward planning. The Helsinki +40 process should be used as an opportunity to outline a three-year process (from 2013 to 2015) to push forward the agenda from Astana to Belgrade (via Dublin, Kyiv, and Bern).

Another opportunity arises from the fact that so many ideas are being generated about the OSCE's role, for example, through EASI and the IDEAS process. This can help stimulate the process of adaptive leadership. At the same time, the OSCE should avoid becoming the Woody Allen of European security organizations – self-obsessed and introspective to the point of being neurotic. Instead, it should focus on what it does well, and just do it.

This will be easiest where there is a convergence of strategic interests. Central Asia is a good example. The recent Kazakh Chairmanship, Mongolia's heightened interest in the OSCE, the impending draw-down of ISAF forces in Afghanistan, and the growing strategic relevance of Central Asia all strengthen the OSCE's Eurasian credentials. Transnational threats are another subject where the interests of participating States converge. If the OSCE can demonstrate added value in this field, it can play a key role in reducing the risk posed by, for example, transnational organized crime. Furthermore, if the OSCE can show progress in resolving at least one of the protracted conflicts (most likely Moldova), it can restore confidence in its mediation skills. Participating States should also have a fresh look at peacekeeping, which is badly needed in Nagorno-Karabakh, and at arms control which has completely stalled. Progress in these fields would create DNA arrangements that would enable the OSCE to flourish in a challenging environment, and enable the Organization to find its appropriate place in a quickly evolving multilateral context.



### *Conclusion*

We hope that the observations made in this contribution can better explain some of the thought processes that went on within the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2011. This can be of particular relevance to future Chairmanships, and to those interested in policy- and decision-making processes within a multilateral framework. We also hope that the idea of adaptive leadership can be applied within the OSCE in order to enable it to evolve and thrive in a time of challenges and change. One of the aspirations of adaptive leadership should be to enhance the OSCE's "smart power" to give the Organization a stronger profile, a clear set of objectives, and the means to achieve them.

It is essential for the OSCE, as it is for all regional and international organizations, to evolve. If they do not, they lose their relevance. Indeed, the alternative to adaptive leadership is stasis. As Albert Einstein pointed out, doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is insanity – which is quite the opposite of "smart" power.