

Lithuania's Foreign Policy in the Public Policy Cycle: Efficient Evaluation is Still Missing

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Abstract. *The Activity Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania for 2017 declares that Lithuania's foreign policy is effective and claims that public opinion is the most important criteria for measuring its effectiveness. The article analyses Lithuania's foreign public policy cycle, with the focus on its formation and evaluation peculiarities. It argues that the cycle of Lithuanian foreign public policy is stagnating since its evaluation stage lacks efficiency and misses critical evaluations. The lack of strategic documents does not allow defining core foreign policy goals and in this matter to evaluate their achievement. The ambiguous goals in lower level documents prevent critical evaluation because of political interests. Lithuanian foreign policy is the outcome of close cooperation between President's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs which limits criticism between institutions. The Seimas provides greater criticism only when initiative is showed by the opposition. Foreign policy remains the sphere of responsibility of the political elite which has broad consensus and has differences in their views on a tactical level. Media and experts, for the most part, avoid critical evaluations of foreign policy as they want to remain in the dominating discourse and keep close contacts with state institutions. The current evaluation environment and tools are not sufficient to make changes at the agenda-setting stage of foreign policy.*

Keywords: *Lithuania, foreign policy, evaluation, formation, public policy.*

Raktažodžiai: *Lietuva, užsienio politika, vertinimas, formavimas, viešoji politika.*

Introduction

The Activity Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (further MFA) of the Republic of Lithuania for 2017 declares that Lithuania's foreign policy is effective and claims that public opinion is the most important criteria for measuring its effectiveness. Peculiarities and traditions of Lithuania's policy framework create

challenges for the analysis of Lithuanian foreign policy effectiveness as a part of public policy. The areas of responsibility of Lithuanian foreign policy are widely distributed between various institutions (compared with other public policy areas), this requires interactions which are not extensively defined.

The research object of this article is Lithuania's foreign policy cycle. *The article aims* to analyse Lithuania's foreign public policy cycle, with the focus on its formation and evaluation peculiarities. This *article sets the following tasks*: first, to define Lithuania's foreign policy formation process - foreign policy agenda-setting and decision-making processes; second, to reveal the problems in evaluation foreign policy implementation; third, to assess the challenges of Lithuania's foreign public policy cycle. The article argues that the cycle of Lithuanian foreign public policy is stagnating since its evaluation stage lacks efficiency and misses critical evaluations.

The analysis of Lithuania's foreign policy as a part of public policy is based on a classical approach to the public policy process, which states that the process of public policy is uninterrupted and dynamic, and consists of agenda-setting, making decisions, their implementation, assessment and, if necessary, decision correction (Parsons, 1995, p. 78-79). The article presents the results of the original research. Authors have analysed primary sources – legal documents defining the interaction of institutions responsible for Lithuanian foreign policy, documents defining formation and implementation of foreign policy, as well as strategic action plans of the MFA which identify priorities and provide assessments of the results foreign policy process. The sources also included Government's programs; speeches of Lithuanian officials and other types of documents published by the MFA.

The peculiarities of small states foreign policy

Foreign policy is the adoption and implementation of the decisions oriented towards external relations. It consists of actions expressed by government representatives in the form of defined objectives, commitments, instructions, acting on behalf of sovereign communities residing in a certain territory (Peters, Pierre, 2006, p. 344). Foreign policy has a special case in public policy, similar to defence policy, because it is not related to serving interests of separate interest groups of society (though in various cases it does) like coordinating interaction of interest groups or distributing and redistributing resources. Foreign policy is aimed at defence and representation of interests of the entire community of the citizens residing in a certain territory or beyond its borders, defending political system and values. According to Bernard C. Cohen, "foreign policy is "more important" than other policy areas because it concerns national interests, rather than special interests, and more fundamental values" (Cohen, 1968, p.341).

According to the system theory, public policy, including foreign policy, is a response to internal and external factors: it is a part of the policy framework, which adapts itself to the forming factors and is to be attributed to the outputs (Simon, 1997). The external environment exerts an impact on the formation of a foreign policy – which is a response to the challenges and possibilities created by the

international system. Lithuania is attributed to a group of small states (according to demographic, territorial and economic indicators). Such states have limited possibilities of exerting influence on international politics; traditionally, they mostly react to the processes initiated by more powerful states. A favourable international environment is necessary to implement the ambitious objectives of the foreign policy of small states. Small state's foreign policy is less dependent on the internal factors, like institutions and positions of leaders.

Groups of actors foreign policy formation

Three groups of actors can be distinguished in the Lithuanian foreign policy formation. The first group consists of public authorities whose functions in the sphere of foreign policy are defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (RL), laws and legislation: these are institutions of the President, the Government (including Minister of Foreign Affairs) and the Seimas (Parliament). These institutions form the nucleus of the formation and implementation of foreign policy; they interact directly with one another, adopt decisions, as well as interact with public authorities of other countries, international organisations and non-governmental institutions.

The second group consists of other public authorities under whose sphere of responsibility fall interaction with authorities of similar responsibilities of other countries. Ministries, departments, municipalities, state companies, and other public authorities interact with the counterpart authorities abroad and have some influence on core foreign policy institutions.

The third group are institutions and organisations acting as interest or pressure groups: interest groups (business, ethnic), the mass media, think tanks, the academic community, political parties. The Constitution or laws do not directly define the roles of institutions belonging to this group; institutions do not directly impact foreign policy and are not responsible for it. However, these institutions might have a direct impact on core institutions in some cases. In most cases, this depends on the desire of the core institutions to take into consideration the positions of the actors of this group.

Role of president, government and parliament

The interaction between the public authorities responsible for foreign policy and essential areas are defined in the Constitution. The role of the President is defined in Articles 77 and 84. Article 77 states that President's positions are official positions of the State internationally. Article 84 specifies that the President "shall settle basic foreign policy issues, and together with the Government, implement foreign policy; sign international treaties of the RL and submit them to the Seimas for ratification". The Article provides authority to appoint and recall diplomats; receives the highest diplomats of foreign states, confer highest diplomatic ranks and special titles. The Constitution stipulates that the President shall, first of all, be responsible for the formation and implementation of foreign policy, which will be coordinated with the

Government. It is a paradox that according to the Constitution, the programme of the Government is not coordinated with the President, however, the President, in appointing and dismissing Ministers (upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister) can have an effect upon the programme indirectly. A theoretical possibility exists that the President's and the Government's foreign policy actions may conflict with one another. However, due to rather intensive coordination of positions between the Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) as a core governmental institution responsible for foreign policy) and the President's Administration only certain tactical differences are observed. Moreover, the President can dismiss the Minister of Foreign Affairs coordinating position with the Prime Minister.

The Constitution defines dominance of the Presidential institution in foreign policy, but in practice, the formation and implementation of foreign policy directly depend on the person occupying the position. Presidents demonstrated obvious differences in activity and issues. Coordination of positions between the President and MFA has always been intensive, inter-institutional dynamics differed depending on a person who assumed Presidential office. Dalia Grybauskaitė played a more active role in the formation of foreign policy. In 2010 Grybauskaitė expressed non-confidence in the Minister of Foreign Affairs Vygaudas Ušackas and he resigned. President Grybauskaitė also openly criticised the Linas Linkevičius for the apology he made in Poland in 2013. During the presidency of Valdas Adamkus, however, there were no great scandals indicating disagreements. On the contrary, the supposition can be made that the President's Office followed the vision of foreign policy offered by MFA. When Adamkus was asked who would replace his foreign policy advisers Edminas Bagdonas and Rytis Muraška he indicated that he waited for appointments from MFA.

It is worth emphasising that the Presidential Office heavily depends on MFA. The administration cannot compete in resources or experts with MFA and President is dependent on the information from MFA. In most cases, the President's advisers on the foreign policy are diplomats from MFA. This ensures communication between the President and MFA, and the career diplomats can exert significant influence on the formation and implementation of foreign policy.

The Government's possibilities in foreign policy are defined in Paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Article 94 of the Constitution. The administration of the affairs of the country, protection of the territorial inviolability and national security encompass the foreign policy area. Coordination of the activities of the Ministries defines the activities of MFA, and interaction with other ministries and public institutions. The budget appropriations have an impact on the size of the diplomatic corps, capacities of representation, and scope of foreign policy projects. MFA contributes to preparation and improvement of laws. Establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations is the essential function of MFA as part of the Government.

The Seimas also takes part in the formation and implementation of foreign policy. The functions of the Seimas are defined in Paragraphs 2, 2, 7, 9, 14, 16 and 20 of Article 67 of the Constitution. A significant share of laws is related to foreign

policy indirectly as they affect trade, migration, enforcement of rights, participation in international organisations and etc. The Parliament has an impact on the objectives of foreign policy (adopting Government programme), approves the candidature of the Minister.

The Parliament's control function is often underrated in the formation of foreign policy. The Committee on Foreign Affairs (CFA) supervising the activities of the Minister or the Departments of MFA can influence policy. The composition of the CFA may create challenges to the Minister or the Departments concerning conflicting positions in the event of serious disagreements. The Minister or the representatives of the MFA follow the guidelines issued by the majority because the Minister's possibilities to maintain office depend on it. With the minority government in power, more balanced access is necessary.

Since a consensus on essential foreign policy issues in the Parliament prevails, no striking dissonance between the traditional parliamentary political parties, which devote most attention to foreign policy, has been observed. The approval of the budget in the Parliament determines the size of the diplomatic service, the network of diplomatic missions and the scope of the programmes. Parliament also ratifies and denounces treaties. Finally, the Constitution provides Seimas with action possibilities in foreign and security policies in the event of such critical situations, like the introduction of direct management, mobilisation or the use of the armed forces. The Seimas also decides military and non-combat missions.

The objectives and functions of MFA are defined in the Regulations approved by Resolution of the Government of 25 September 1998, which later were supplemented and amended. The Resolution specifies that the objectives of the activities of MFA are to form, organise, coordinate and control the State's policy in five areas:

- In foreign affairs and the security policy including international relations, economic security, foreign trade, protection of the RL, its legal entities and persons abroad;
- Coordination of the EU membership;
- Representing the State abroad, diplomatic and consular relations, diplomatic service, the State and diplomatic protocol, international contractual relations;
- The State's policy of development cooperation;
- Strengthening relations between Lithuania and Lithuanians living abroad.

The document identifies ten functions of the Ministry, which are respectively divided into policies. The Ministry carries out very different functions: from handling documents to representing the interests of the country, its security, economy, those of its citizens and legal entities; maintaining communication with governmental authorities and non-governmental organisations, as well as citizens and persons of Lithuanian descent and others.

Role of interests groups

When determining national interests different groups are active and the choices between priorities have to be made by the core group of decision-makers. The requirements of different groups are impossible to satisfy because the interests of groups often are in conflict. Business interest groups (associations and confederations, private and public companies), as well as national minorities (Polish, Russian or Jew), can be identified as the largest interest groups having an effect on the formation of foreign policy.

Businesses seek to affect foreign policy so that it would not contradict their essential interests – possibilities to expand into foreign markets, ensure incomes, and diversify the supplies. A perfect example is interests of Lithuanian Railways and the Port of Klaipėda –needs to ensure transportation and cargo handling capacities of Belarusian cargoes, which are at variance with the positions on human rights in Belarus and Ostrovec nuclear plant. Company *ORLEN Lietuva* has an effect on policy with respect to Poland. Lithuanian diplomats defended the interests of Lithuanian carriers and the interests of agricultural and dairy processing companies in Russia and the EU. The state-owned energy companies when implementing certain projects (e.g. the LNG terminal in Klaipėda) change the geopolitical environment, which changes the context of Lithuania's foreign policy and accordingly its objectives and tasks.

The only national minority, which exerts a greater impact on foreign policy, is the Polish national minority (accounting for 7 % of the population) mainly concentrated in the south-eastern part of Lithuania. Such distribution allows Polish minority to be an influential pressure group, especially in Parliament. The issues of writing surnames of the citizen of Polish origin and education make strategic partnership with Poland more complicated. In the period of escalation of bilateral relations the concept of “strategic partnership” was replaced with a milder wording in the strategic documents (e.g. in 2012). The second largest - Russian national minority does not have a significant effect on foreign policy. Other minorities, like Belarusians and Latvians, in essence, have no influence. Jewish minority has an impact which is related to the historical memory, holocaust and properties. The impact of national minorities on foreign policy is not direct, related to the factors of internal policy and the reactions of the foreign states on these factors.

In general, society supports foreign policy pursued by Lithuania – no sharp protests were lodged against it. The role of Lithuania's society in the formation of foreign policy is rather limited, hence, at the internal level, Lithuania's foreign policy is a result of the political elite of Lithuania. Discussions in two dimensions in the political elite prevail in foreign policy: this is the issue of Lithuania's activity in the international system and discussions of tactical approaches to non-strategic issues. Strategic decisions on cooperation with the US, NATO, EU and their member states do not have any significant opposition. It is only marginal groups or politicians who have no possibilities to change foreign policy and act effectively that express more unconventional views on foreign policy.

Vision and strategy of foreign policy

It should be emphasised that, first and foremost, Lithuania's foreign policy is considered to be part of security policy and only later as an instrument for deeper integration into the EU, NATO and the development of economic cooperation. These three aspects can be designated as strategic directions of foreign policy, and others regarded as supplementary. There is no doctrine, concept or strategy of foreign policy. The latest doctrine, which was treated with caution, was "Lithuania - the leader of the region" doctrine presented by the acting President Artūras Paulauskas in 2004 before the beginning of Lithuania's membership in the EU. The doctrine was implemented after Valdas Adamkus was elected President, which testifies the dominance of MFA in the formation of strategic directions.

Beginning with 2009 (i.e. Grybauskaitė's election as President) strategic directions of foreign policy can be identified only by the National Security Strategy, agreements of Parliamentary political parties on the directions of foreign policy, programmes of the Government and by MFA. It is a paradox, however, that a large part of State officials participating in the formation and implementation of foreign policy do not see any need for the concept. In the opinion of most respondents, objectives are naturally perceived, and the concept would limit freedom of action and would inform international players acting against Lithuania's interests about its intentions. This can be explained applying incrementalism theory on decision making, stating that public policy, including foreign policy, is a succession of political decisions adopted by the earlier state institutions: due to time, information and financial restrictions, the decision making institutions are apt to base themselves on the already established practices (Lindblom, 1959, p. 79-88). The foreign policy concept is the prerogative of the President, and its absence signals different tactical approach when views and goals are defined in direct institutional dialogue. It can also be assumed that strategic directions of foreign policy are defined intuitively and are of reactive nature. This nature is related to the State's power in the international system.

The self-evaluation of MFA activities

According to Alvydas Raipa (2002, p. 15), "public programmes, projects and public policy administration are effective if their results comply with the anticipated ones, i.e. if their need to society or problem-solving corresponds to investments, efforts and resources, and actually influences some interest group". Every year MFA submits activity reports, which list major achievements and changes, the implementation of the tasks of the programme. Unfortunately, the MFA lacks clear criteria for evaluating its activities, which would enable it to improve its performance. The creation of such criteria and their operationalisation would improve the accuracy of the evaluation and allow the institution to look self-critically at the activities carried out, but self-criticism is avoided for political reasons.

The Regulations of MFA stipulate that the Minister presents annual reports on the activities of the Ministry, however, their format is not provided for. As of 2004,

more comprehensive reports were started to be published. The annual report on MFA activities of the year 2004 is extremely short, making only a few lines in the Annual Report of the Government. The evolution of the reports allows to state that qualitative progress of public policy in the area of foreign policy is happening.

The MFA has problems of agenda setting in the Strategic Action Plans (SAP). As an example SAP of the MFA for 2017-2019 also includes objectives, tasks and measures for the year 2020. It seems a paradox that measures of that time period are indicated alongside the priorities of the year 2017. Comparing with the previous SAP of MFA it becomes obvious that a consistent continuity is formed in foreign policy despite the change of the Government. However, it has to be noted that since 2013, when SAPs were started to be published, Linas Linkevičius remained Minister of Foreign Affairs, despite changes of the Governments.

It is impossible to identify radical changes in SAPs. SAPs are limited to the redistribution of finances only taking into consideration somewhat changing priorities according to the lines of changing Government programs. Stability in foreign policy is considered to be of great importance - a certain result of the quality of foreign policy. The preparation and implementation of programmes and projects were especially consistent. Continuity and transferability of programmes are ensured by minimally adapting the MFA programmes to changing Government programmes and priorities. This indicates certain autonomy of MFA, which can be related the same Minister's in office, continuity of the policies pursued by the President Grybauskaitė, as well as the limited will of the parliamentary majority to have more significant changes in foreign policy and MFA.

Problems with the self-evaluation of MFA

The formation of objectives and the evaluation of their implementation must be improved. According to William N. Dunn, an effective policy implementation evaluation process must be based on such criteria as effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, the ability to respond timely (Dunn, 2006, p. 405). The tasks in the reports and the reports themselves are formed so that irrespective of what has (not) been done, the task is considered to be 100% accomplished. In the 2015 report, next to Task Four "To pursue the policy in line with Lithuania's interests with respect to the Eastern neighbours of the European Union" the following evaluation criterion is indicated "A dialogue with Russia based on the truth and justice is being held" the effectiveness of whose implementation is assessed at 100%, and the following is indicated next to the implementation actions "Cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation remains suspended, its future depends on the further actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. The EU succeeded in maintaining the unity of the Member States extending relevant the EU sanctioning regimes with respect to Russia and its individual officials" (*Activity Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania for 2016, 2017*). When viewed objectively, the dialogue between Lithuania and Russia is not taking place, and its absence can be justified by the necessity for the dialogue to be based on "the truth and justice" because it can be

deemed to be unjust due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and Moscow's propaganda. Though the dialogue did not take place, or if potentially it would have taken place, the implementation of the task would have been assessed all the same - implemented 100 %. This fact testifies to the problems of forming the tasks and the absence of an adequate evaluation. It can be stated that the tasks are formed so as to demonstrate their fulfilment, i.e. the efficiency of the implementation of foreign policy in the public, without revealing problems of inaction or implementation.

The evaluation of all the tasks accomplished, provided that the tasks are not related to quantitative factors (the number of meetings, financial measures or publications) are considered to be 100% achieved. Unaccomplished tasks are especially rare cases, or then their accomplishment is assessed at 0%. If the scale is binominal, measuring the level of accomplishment quantitatively is inadequate. In applying the scale, parameters should be established when the task is accomplished 100 %, 85 %, 40 % and etc., however, parameters of partial accomplishment are not established. For this reason, it can be stated that the evaluation of performance is not ensured therefore the implementation of the cycle of public policy is only partly successful.

The evaluation of another task, which is deemed to have been accomplished, in the same report of the Ministry is at variance with the very text of the report. The task "A dialogue in line with Lithuania's interests is being held with the Eastern neighbouring states" is specified as having been implemented 100%, despite the fact that the description of the task states that "the problem of the nuclear power plant in Belarus further remains a particularly topical subject of bilateral relations. Lithuania constantly and at different levels raises issues in relation to nuclear safety and environmental protection, insists that internationally accepted nuclear safety standards and provisions of international conventions (the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions) should be complied with" (*Activity Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania for 2016, 2017*). The report itself does not record any achievements or changes in the positions of other states and organisations on NPP in Belarus, so the dialogue should not be regarded as being in line with Lithuania's interests. Achievement of task for 100% is impossible.

Another problem related to the evaluation of the achievement of the results is an undefined comparison. Again, the achievement of the results provided for in the Report of 2015– "The internal communication of MFA has been optimised, analytical abilities of the officials of diplomatic service are strengthened" – is assessed to be implemented at 100%. The assessment criterion provided for was listed as follows: "better than in 2014". The result specified in the Report runs as follows: "The employees of MFA have been constantly and expeditiously provided with the topical issues about global policy, economy, and energy. Responding to the most significant events in the world and Lithuania in 2015, new categories on the internet website of MFA of RL have been created <...> drawing the attention of the employees of the Ministry to coverage of the events in the "unfriendly" mass media". To make conclusion that implementation is at 100% it is necessary to present the results of

2014, however, this task was not even included in the 2014 Report. In essence, progress was measured beginning with a non-existent (at least not provided) starting point. The 2015 Report does not provide information on how the analytical capacities of the employees increased.

The analysis of the reports exposes the needs for improving the public policy cycle in the assessment stage. The improved assessment might show some inefficiencies and failures, but this will create political problems for the Minister and heads of departments. At the same time, improved reports might make foreign policy more transparent and result orientated, without imitation of the achievements..

Criticism from institutions, media and experts

It should be underlined that when assessing foreign policy, direct criticism of the institutions responsible for the formation and implementation of foreign policy is avoided, with the exception of the time when the Government programme is being presented. Constant monitoring and assessment by experts are missing. It has to be underlined that foreign policy is assessed not as a result of the joint activities of the institutions, but as a result of separate institutions. Criticism is directed at MFA while criticism of the President is being avoided (Grybauskaitė in her first year in the office sometimes came under criticism though). This situation is a result of the provisions of the Constitution and great inter-institutional coordination.

Structural factors do not allow open criticism to be voiced either. The President coordinates actions with MFA, and the supervision of MFA belongs to the Parliament which is dominated by the majority. This annuls criticism with respect to each other. Furthermore, most often no striking examples of differences exist in the interests of the President's Office and MFA.

The assessment of foreign policy is also strongly related to personal views of analysts and experts. According to Stephen Walt (2018), experts avoid direct criticism of the established foreign policy discourse. The signs of this phenomenon could also be observed in Lithuania, like in most of the comments to the media by the political scientists and experts who want to remain in the prevailing discourse. It is also understood that criticism would also limit cooperation with state institutions.

In the media, the daily *Respublika* [Republic] is critical of the President's Office, while most other conventional media sources (TV channels, newspapers and Internet portals), which have the biggest audience, are not. According to the theory of the elite, the situation when society is rather apathetic, and it is the elite that forms the opinion on political issues and exerts the greatest impact on political decisions, and not the other way round, is natural and self-evident in public policy (Dye Th. and Zeigler H., 1993). Since foreign policy remains a matter for the political elite, society does not participate in it unless particular members belong to epistemic groups or political parties. According to Aušra Park, this situation has been observed since the recognition of independence (Park, 2005, p. 178-208). Foreign policy has not been an area, which would arouse the great interest of the general public and determine the results of the election. Issues of foreign policy were raised more sharply only in the

2014 presidential election. The parliamentary parties most often take a conventional approach; there are no great or strategic differences, thus criticism is limited.

The problems of evaluations of foreign policy achievements

The fact that foreign policy is closely related with other areas of public policy and also to the results of other Ministries complicates the evaluation of the achievements of foreign policy. Reports of the State Control show that MFA works more effectively than other Ministries in systematising information, presenting annual reports, participating in the work of international organisations. In addition, public bodies are not oriented towards accounting for participating in international organisations or providing exhaustive information to MFA (State Audit Report No. VA-P-40-7-9 of 18 July 2013).

It is challenging to evaluate the efficiency of foreign policy due to the enormous influence that the international system exerts on foreign policy results. The decision of Lithuanian institutions responsible for foreign and security policy to improve the State's defense capabilities can serve as an illustration thereof. To achieve this objective efforts of diplomats and the Heads of the State were concentrated (the issue of a threat posed by Russia was raised in NATO, the EU and other multilateral forums, meetings with the representatives of the USA and other states), however, tangible result was achieved only after changes in the international system – after Russia invaded Ukraine. It is obvious that it would not be fair to attribute the achievement solely on Heads of State and diplomats. At the same time changes in the international system might not necessarily have led to the changes of policies of Lithuanian partners had it not been for the firm actions of Heads of State and diplomats.

The achievement of some objectives in foreign policy undoubtedly hinders the achievement of other objectives. Greater focus on human rights will impede trade with the states, which do not respect human rights. Lithuania sought to strengthen relations between Belarus and the EU and often was sceptical about the sanctions imposed on Belarus (since 2009) due to the economic significance of Belarus. Lithuania also pays insufficient attention to human rights in Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan with which it maintains trade relations.

It is difficult to find indicators in foreign policy, which would objectively show the efficiency of policy. Since foreign policy is a sphere supporting other areas of policy, the achievements of other policies are not always regarded as the achievements of foreign policy because of the competition between Ministries. The growth of agricultural export can be considered a success in agricultural policy; however, without the work of diplomats, the growth of export would not potentially be so high. In Lithuania's case, the growth of transit by railways, cargo handling capacity of Klaipėda Sea Port can serve as a vivid example of successful cooperation of Ministry of Transportation and Communication and MFA.

Conclusions

1. The institutions of the President, the Government (MFA as part of Government) and the Seimas form the nucleus of decision-making in Lithuanian foreign policy. The Seimas contributes to the formation of foreign policy as it has the parliamentary control function, approves the Government programme and the budget. The state companies and Polish minority are among the most powerful interest groups. The state institutions in most cases are in accord on essential goals and objectives of foreign policy. Nevertheless, an integral strategic document of foreign policy has not been drawn up since 2004 because institutions do not see the necessity to create one.

2. The self-evaluation of the activities of MFA significantly improved when comparing to the first evaluation in annual report in 2004. However, significant problems with evaluation of foreign policy remain. The Strategic Action Plan of the MFA of 2017-2019 lack unambiguous definitions of tasks and achievements because it avoids critical self-evaluation, which is the result of political interests. Lithuanian foreign policy is the outcome of close cooperation between President's Office and MFA which limits criticism between institutions. The Seimas provides greater criticism only when initiative is showed by the opposition. Foreign policy remains the sphere of responsibility of the political elite which has broad consensus and has differences in their views on a tactical level. Media and experts, for the most part, avoid critical evaluations of foreign policy as they want to remain in the dominating discourse and keep close contacts with state institutions.

3. The lack of strategic documents does not allow defining core foreign policy goals and in this matter to evaluate their achievement. The ambiguous goals in lower level documents prevent critical evaluation. To sum up, there are significant problems at the stage of the evaluation of Lithuania's foreign policy creating preconditions for the stagnation. The current evaluation environment and tools are not sufficient to influence agenda-setting of foreign policy.

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Lietuvos užsienio politika viešosios politikos kontekste: efektyvios vertinimo sistemos paieška

Anotacija

Lietuvos Respublikos Užsienio reikalų ministerija 2017 m. veiklos ataskaitoje teigia, kad Lietuvos užsienio politika yra efektyvi ir tvirtina, jog geriausias efektyvumo vertinimo kriterijus yra visuomenės nuomonė apie užsienio politiką. Straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti Lietuvos viešosios užsienio politikos ciklą, pagrindinį dėmesį skiriant politikos formavimo ir vertinimo aspektams. Straipsnis teigia, kad Lietuvos viešosios užsienio politikos ciklas stagnuoja dėl nepakankamo užsienio politikos vertinimo efektyvumo ir kritinių vertinimų trūkumo. Strateginių dokumentų trūkumas nelaidžia suformuoti esminių užsienio politikos tikslų, o taip pat ir įvertinti jų pasiekimų. Neapibrėžti tikslai žemesnio lygmens dokumentuose leidžia išvengti kritinių vertinimų, o tai yra politinių interesų išdava. Lietuvos užsienio politika yra glaudaus bendradarbiavimo tarp Prezidento ir Užsienio reikalų ministerijos rezultatas kuris apiriboja tarpusavio kritiką. Seimo kritika yra didesnė tik tuomet, kai inicijuojama opozicijos. Užsienio politika išlieka politinio elito, turinčio platų tarpusavio konsensusą, atsakomybės sritimi, o požiūrių skirtumai reškiasi tik taktiniame lygmenyje. Žiniasklaidos ir ekspertų dauguma vengia kritinio užsienio politikos vertinimo siekdami išlikti dominuojančiame diskurse ir palaikyti glaudžius ryšius su valstybės institucijomis. Esama užsienio politikos vertinimo aplinka ir vertinimo instrumentai nėra pakankami paveikti darbotvarkės formavimą.

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