
Editorial: Economic diplomacy and human rights protection – a void that still needs to be filled

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This issue was intended to explore the questions related to human rights protection at the intersection between diplomacy and economic interests personalised by the economic diplomacy. The theoretical point of departure was the apparent shift from the monist to the pluralist exercise of external affairs. The traditional model of sovereign state diplomacy, marked by hierarchy, relative rigidity and costliness stemming, *inter alia*, from the customary and conventional constraints of law and politics of diplomacy, has been undergoing a major transformation. A monist approach to diplomacy, whereby all diplomatic functions derive from, are exercised and return back to the sovereign organs of a state, has been gradually supplemented, if not replaced, by a pluralist approach. The diplomatic functions of the state have now become disaggregated and are no longer exercised only by public but also by private bodies or at least in co-operation with them. The private economic actors, corporations and their representatives, NGOs and civil society have thus become involved not only in influencing, but also in framing and conducting the foreign policy of a state following the latter's explicit or implicit authorisation thereof. This has been paving the way to a more flexible, responsive, context sensitive, targeted model of diplomacy.

The call for papers, that this special issue is a result of, has proceeded with a thesis that this transformation in the nature and role of diplomacy must have, in a number of ways: theoretical and practical, impacted also on the human rights protection around the globe: on domestic, regional and transnational levels. However, while the call has attracted many excellent papers, only a few of them have properly tested the underlying thesis. This is surprising to a certain extent and, as an invitation for additional research, raises more and new questions than it provides answers. Judging from the responses to the call, which expose a truly global pattern, after all the articles contained in this issue come from North America, Western and Eastern Europe as well as Asia, human rights

protection is not a major concern to those researching and working in the field of economic diplomacy. Human rights protection is accounted for, taken as part of the public set of values that ought to be protected by every national constitutional system, as well as part of the global ethos that everybody at least discursively and symbolically subscribes to. Human rights protection is thus a constraint of some sort: legal, political or at least symbolical to the exercise of (economic) diplomacy. Sometimes it is considered to be in function of economic diplomacy, but the opposite is, perhaps contrary to my expectation, rarely the case: that economic diplomacy would be conceived of as a means of furtherance of human rights protection.

This can be also taken as a disappointment. A pluralist exercise of external affairs through a plurality of actors, both public and private, offers a great potential for the improvement of human rights protection, what ought to be a shared objective, by employing a number of new, flexible, more dynamic, better tailored to the actual needs, more inclusive and therefore even democratic means than traditionally offered by the states' foreign offices. Pluralist exercise of external affairs, of which economic diplomacy is a prime example, is thus an opportunity for strengthening human rights protection around the globe, which has not yet been seized enough or even at all. It is, therefore, an opportunity that ought not to be missed. However, at the same time a critical eye should be kept on the economic diplomacy. If the latter is exercised in a way that the economic interests are disproportionately privileged over competing interests, including those of human rights protection, the move from the monist to the pluralist diplomacy might even deteriorate rather than improve the human rights protection.

Under the traditional model the state's foreign office was clearly required to protect or at least not to violate human rights in the exercise of its competences. This requirement might become more fuzzy and diluted, but certainly more difficult to enforce, once the competences traditionally exercised by the state are dispersed among the plurality of actors, often of a hybrid public-private character, who are very often driven exclusively by self-interest without paying due cognizance to the common good and to human rights protection as its constitutive part. Economic diplomacy is thus both an opportunity and a threat for human rights protection. The role of scholarship at the intersection of economic diplomacy and human rights is to provide for the theoretical means and to pinpoint the best practices, which would foster the economic diplomacy's brighter side.

Against this backdrop, the issue in front of you contains seven articles. Some of them are directly connected to the contents of the call for papers, while others are, at best, related only indirectly and address one or several issues that pertain to the field of economic diplomacy in the broader meaning of the term.

The journal opens with an article by Turvey who, largely in conceptual terms, addresses the question of the dynamic relationship between the economic diplomacy and economic security. The article claims that concerns related to the economic security affect the role economic diplomacy can and shall play around the globe. The challenges are both practical as well as conceptual, relating to the very understanding of economic diplomacy and economic security which is still unsettled. In order to meet these challenges it is necessary, the article argues, to opt for a holistic, less state-centric approach, recognising fully the move from the monist to the pluralist diplomacy.

The second article by Silva and Galito approaches the queries contained in the call for papers through a pronouncedly regional lens. It concentrates on the rise of China from the perspective of economic diplomacy in conjunction with its relationship with human rights issues in the broad sense. It asks how, coercively or pragmatically, and to what an extent,

the specific Chinese internal political-economic order translates to the global affairs, including human rights protection, through the means of economic diplomacy. The following article authored by Giao stays within the same Asian focus, however centring on a purely domestic socio-political and economic context of Vietnam and its specific challenges of corruption.

The article by Bobek and Maček moves the focus to Russia and studies the effects of WTO membership on the automotive industry in this country. Having carefully analysed the often contested (dis)advantages of WTO membership, the authors stress that it is largely up to the Russian automotive industry itself to seize the opportunities offered by the WTO regime while avoiding its potential downsides. This pure economic focus is carried on to the next two articles which shift the attention to the European Union. The article by Novák examines disinflation and economic integration in emerging European economies. It stresses, *inter alia*, that these countries should strengthen their export competitiveness as a key to their improved economic performance by investing more in economic diplomacy. Krišto, Stojanović and Pavković in their article shed further light on the ongoing financial crisis in the EU and beyond by focusing on the role of institutional investors, especially with regard to their impact on the stability of financial market.

Finally, Kovač splits up with the exclusive economic discussion and with an ongoing focus on the European Union emphasises the importance of ethics, both inside the Union as well as in the latter's actions in global affairs. The article points out that in international relations power, including economic power, must be balanced against geo-political ethics. The EU has an important role to play in that regard as the cases of Libya and Cyprus presented in the article clearly demonstrate. Kovač's article pertinently reveals the inextricable link between politics as diplomacy, economy and human rights and in that way, staying faithful to the overall telos of this issue, rounds it up as an extremely rich, diverse and interdisciplinary collection of articles.