

Call for Papers: A Special Issue Small States in Turbulent Times



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The **Czech Journal of International Relations (CJIR)** is pleased to

announce a call for papers for a special issue, titled “**Small States in Turbulent Times,**” to be published as part of its second issue of 2023 (August). The issue is edited by Diana Panke (Freie Universität Berlin), Anders Wivel (University of Copenhagen), and Hyeran Jo (Texas A&M University).

It may seem that in these tumultuous times, small states are losing agency and only superpowers define the rules in international relations. Or, even more challenging, international norms and rules have lost their strength, and – to put it with Thucydides – “the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.” However, small states continue to seek to navigate international affairs, protecting interests and promoting values even in difficult times. This special issue invites authors to analyze both challenges and opportunities in an international environment characterised by increasing great power rivalry and geopolitical tensions.

We welcome contributions that answer the following questions: *What impact do recent geopolitical changes such as Russia’s war in Ukraine and the Trump administration’s ‘America First’ approach to international relations have on small states? How do small states cope with or navigate the uncertainty in the currently changing international security and economic environment?*

Compared to great power politics, small state politics in international affairs have received less scholarly attention. Yet, the research conducted on small states demonstrates that small states wielded agency and influence in international politics and sometimes even punched above their weight - especially after the end of the Cold War and throughout the first decade of the 21st century (Hey, 2003; Panke, 2012; Simon, 2019; Sutton, 1993). To this end, small states can coalesce in international negotiations (Arias, forthcoming); say no to superpower demands or stay noncommittal (Long, 2022); or hedge and pit superpowers against each other (Bailes, 2016; Deitelhoff, 2012; Ingebritsen, 2006; Panke, 2010; Thorhallsson, 2018; Thorhallsson, 2006; Wivel, 2014). They may continue to seek shelter with great powers while simultaneously aiming for higher status through norm entrepreneurship and small state unilateralism (Pedi & Wivel 2020; Wivel 2021).

Contemporary economic and security upheavals, such as the US’ tariff wars, the capture of the Venezuelan president, the strive to annex Greenland, or the Iran War, signify great power politics violating international law, trade-related customs, and norms of appropriateness. These events are likely to reorient the politics of small states. Thus, this Special Issue aims to

shed light on whether and how small states adjust their diplomatic strategies, as well as the mechanisms by which they exercise influence in international politics.

Aim and Scope

Reflecting on the uncertain geopolitical environment and recent turmoil in the global security and economic realm, we look forward to receiving various contributions on the topic of small states in international relations. Priorities will be given to those papers that explore how, why, and what tensions small states navigate. Methodologically open, the journal invites cross-country quantitative analysis, as well as a specific country case that analyzes changes and continuity within a small state. The goal is to advance the knowledge of what we know about small states in international relations and to reflect on recent changes we are experiencing in international relations.

Focus Areas

We welcome interdisciplinary contributions that engage with the following themes:

- **Changes in small-state statecraft** in the areas of security, economy, and military, focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on experiences in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Analyses of **small state relationships to great powers** in light of recent events, such as the Ukraine War, the Iran War, or the U.S. attempt to annex Greenland.
- Conceptualizations of **power and influence** in the context of small states navigating changes in international affairs.
- The **role of domestic politics**, such as political parties or public opinion, in shaping small-state statecraft at the global level.
- **Methodologies** for studying changes in small states' foreign policies.
- **Comparative analyses** of small states' international strategies in and beyond Central and Eastern Europe.
- Examination of the small states on the international stage, including their **interaction** with global norms and other small state partners.

Submission Guidelines:

Abstracts of 250–500 words should be submitted by **April 30, 2026**, outlining the scope of the proposed contribution and its relevance to the special issue's themes. Each submission must include the author's name, affiliation, and a brief bio (up to 200 words). Full manuscripts of up to 10 thousand words, excluding the list of references, will be due by the **end of October 2026**. All submissions will undergo a double-blind peer review process.

We encourage submissions from scholars at all career stages, particularly those from or working on Central and Eastern Europe.

Important Dates:

- Abstract submission deadline: **April 30, 2026**
- Notification of acceptance: **May 14, 2026**
- Full manuscript submission deadline: **Oct 30, 2026**

All submissions should be sent directly to the CJIR editor-in-chief, Michal Kolmaš, at michal.kolmas@mup.cz.

The Czech Journal of International Relations (CJIR) is a peer-reviewed academic journal that publishes scholarly work in International Relations (IR) and other related disciplines. The journal's scope is not theoretically or geographically limited, yet it aspires to promote research that is pertinent to Central Europe. In 2024, CJIR was attributed an Impact Factor of 0.6 by Clarivate's Web of Science and was placed within the 3rd Quartile for International Relations.

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