

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

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## NEW DIPLOMACY IN A CHANGING WORLD

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## Key Takeaways

At the Vienna Security Salon of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Vienna, senior diplomats and experts gathered for an informal exchange on the challenges the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) faces in the context of an emerging new kind of diplomacy.

A central theme of the discussion was whether traditional diplomacy - long anchored in multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the OSCE - can still effectively address today's geopolitical realities. And if so, with which approaches. Increasingly, key negotiations take place outside established diplomatic platforms and sometimes involve unconventional intermediaries such as Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. This reflects a broader transformation in which governmental and private actors interact more fluidly, blurring the line between diplomacy and deal-making.

Another major point of debate was the shift from value-based diplomacy to interest-based negotiation. This raises uncomfortable but necessary questions for diplomats, such as:

Should we continue to fight primarily for our values? When negotiations revolve around concrete interests or power calculations - such as discussions about the purchase of Greenland - how can diplomats respond effectively? Some ambassadors emphasized that retaliation through illegal acts cannot be an option. But if values alone are insufficient leverage, the question becomes: what concrete demands should be placed on the table?

The conversation also explored whether business leaders and diplomats speak the same negotiation language. In an environment increasingly shaped by strategic bargaining, leverage, and timing, do traditional diplomatic argumentations have limited impact?

Our approach focuses specifically on tough negotiations and deadlock situations. We start from the reality that negotiations often begin with high and competing demands. Instead of avoiding confrontation, negotiators should engage with these dynamics and gradually move the process -

toward cooperation. One core principle is to present clear demands rather than arguments. Moral or legal reasoning alone rarely changes the position of a competing counterpart. Negotiators must therefore define their own objectives clearly and "play their own game". In this context, the negotiation style associated with Donald Trump was discussed as an example of a "play-to-win" mindset, prioritizing clear victory and win-lose outcomes. This contrasts with the traditional European diplomatic culture, which often values compromise and balanced results, compared to being satisfied with a 2-2 football result rather than insisting on a decisive win.

Another key insight was that negotiators should embrace conflict rather than fear it. By framing negotiations as a challenge, rather than as a crisis to avoid, diplomats may be better equipped to navigate an increasingly competitive and fragmented geopolitical landscape.

Overall, the discussion highlighted that diplomacy is undergoing a profound transformation. Negotiations are becoming faster, less formal, and increasingly shaped by a wider range of actors and interests. For institutions like the OSCE, this moment represents a turning point: remaining effective will require adapting diplomatic practices, experimenting with new negotiation formats, and rebuilding trust and credibility in a rapidly evolving international environment.