

# History, Theory and Practice of Hungarian Diplomacy: Hungary's New Diplomatic Lexicon Has Been Published

**[Istoria, teoria și practica diplomației maghiare:  
a fost publicat noul lexicon diplomatic al Ungariei]**

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After almost five years of preparatory work, the New Diplomatic Lexicon<sup>1</sup> has been published in Hungary, providing comprehensive information on the practice and theory of Hungarian diplomacy, as well as—through the biographies of the most important Hungarian diplomats—on the history of Hungarian diplomacy. The book has been produced with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but within the framework of scientific collaboration with universities. Written by roughly a hundred theoretical and practical experts, the more than 2,000 articles are worded in plain language, so that they can be enjoyed not only by professionals but also by interested laypersons and, since international (diplomatic) relations are taught at several Hungarian universities, by students. The New Diplomatic Lexicon is therefore primarily intended to be a professional guide for those interested in diplomacy, making the complexity of the field more transparent and the often mysterious foreign affairs news easier to understand.

Almost all of the fourteen chapters<sup>2</sup> of the two-volume book also contain articles related to legal history, but most of them are placed in the section on Hungarian national policy and in various country guides; the latter contain a brief presentation of each country that has diplomatic relations with Hungary (193 states at the time of

1 Iván Bába, János Sáringer (ed.) (2021): *Új Diplomáciai Lexikon I–II. A nemzetközi kapcsolatok kézikönyve*, Kairosz Kiadó, Budapest.

2 The chapters of the Lexicon are: Diplomatic Relations; International Law, International Organisations; Foreign Affairs' Administration; Consular Relations and Administration; Protocol; Minority Protection and National Policy; European Union; Security Policy; International Economic Relations; Cultural Diplomacy; International Sports Relations; Hungary's Diplomatic Relations (Country Profiles); Foreign Ministers of Hungary; Hungarian Diplomats' Biographies.

publication). The biographies of Hungarian diplomats contain many additions of legal historical relevance, even if there are still further opportunities in the development of this chapter. In recent decades, Hungarian historiography has elaborated the biographies of numerous medieval and modern Hungarian diplomats, starting with István Brodarics, Chancellor of Hungary (later the bishop of Pécs) who can be considered the first Hungarian “foreign minister”, who entered the service of King John I. (John Zápolya) after the Battle of Mohács in 1526.<sup>3</sup> Although the birth of the independent Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is traditionally counted from 1918, it is worth recalling that both Francis Rákóczi II.,<sup>4</sup> Prince of Transylvania and the Hungarian governments of 1848/49<sup>5</sup> were able to hire excellent diplomats whose biographies—either in the form of lexicon entries or as an independent biographical series—would be important to be made known to a wider readership.

Finally, it is necessary to speak about the importance of the New Diplomatic Lexicon in the history of Hungarian diplomacy. Although diplomatic articles were also included in Hungarian lexicons published in the 19th century, the first handbook dealing with Hungarian foreign affairs in its entirety was published only in 1947.<sup>6</sup> Since its compilers included several experienced diplomats, it became a volume with a practical aspect. However, after the communist takeover in 1948, work began on a new lexicon in line with the new political direction, which was prepared by a team of authors consisting mainly of theoretical experts. Its first edition in 1959 was later revised and remained in use until the 2000s. It is therefore undisputed that there was a need to prepare a lexicon containing fresh data and taking into account both theoretical and practical aspects, which has now finally been met. However, the work cannot stop here. The next task would be to translate the book into as many foreign languages as possible, as well as to present it in professional communities – by definition at universities and in diplomatic circles. On the one hand—and this could specifically strengthen relations with neighbouring countries—in order to ensure professional discussion and joint exchange of ideas, and on the other hand to develop new forms of practical cooperation. The New Diplomatic Lexicon may be excellently suited for both purposes in bilateral relations in the areas of law it covers: international law and legal history.

3 Péter Kasza (2019): *Egy korszakváltás szemtanúja. Brodarics István pályaképe*, Kronosz Kiadó, Pécs. For a review, see Endre Domaniczky: Szapolyai János király magyar diplomatája. Brodarics István új életrajzáról, *Jogtörténeti Szemle*, 2019/2, p. 79–81. It is also worth mentioning here the new biography of György Fráter, in which the author draws a portrait of the diplomat in addition to the politician: Teréz Oborni (2017): *Az ördögös Barát. Fráter György (1482-1551)*, Kronosz Kiadó, Pécs. For its review, see Endre Domaniczky: Fráter György új életrajza (Oborni Teréz könyvéről), *Jogtörténeti Szemle*, 2018/17, p. 105–106.

4 For examples, see Béla Köpeczi (1996): *Brenner Domokos, a Rákóczi-szabadságharc és a bujdosás diplomatája és publicistája*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.; Béla Köpeczi (2000): *Egy cselszövő diplomata, Klement János Mihály, 1689-1720*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.

5 As an example, see Miklós Losonci (2001): *Teleki Pál sorsa és küldetése*, TIT Teleki László Ismeretterjesztő Egyesület, Budapest.

6 See Anikó Bucsi: A Diplomáciai Lexikon 2018-as (első) kiadásáról, *Külügyi Műhely*, 2021/3(2), p. 249–254.