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CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Abstract: The fundamental role of culture in the development of international relations is undeniable, cultural diplomacy being an important component of public diplomacy. In this article we aim to analyse the influence of cultural diplomacy on the foreign policy of states in the general context of a constantly changing world. We will highlight the importance that the European Union attaches to the valorisation of the cultural diversity, the intercultural dialogue, the remarkable potential of culture for its foreign relations and we will explore the main trends in the development of cultural diplomacy. For the development of the paper, we used as research methods the analysis of the problems generated by the mentioned subject, with reference to the doctrinal points of view expressed in treatises and specialized works, documentary research, interpretation of legal norms in the field.

Keywords: diplomacy, European Union, strategy, international relations, foreign affairs

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1. Culture and Cultural Diplomacy – General Considerations

The cultural dimension of diplomatic activity is an important facet of interstate relations, and diplomatic missions and consulates should include in the contemporary context, in addition to the wide scope of the functions they traditionally fulfil, actions and activities pertaining to the cultural domain.

The 1961 Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations, as well as the 1963 Vienna Convention on consular relations, include among the diplomatic, and consular functions respectively, the attributions referring to the development of cultural relations between the sending and the receiving state:

- "1. *The functions of a diplomatic mission consist, inter alia, in:*

(e) *Promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations.*"¹

- "Consular functions consist in:

(c) *ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the*

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¹ Art. 3, alin. 1, letter e), *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*, 1961.

commercial, economic, cultural and scientific life of the receiving State, reporting thereon to the Government of the sending State and giving information to persons interested."²

In the same modern vein of asserting the consular institution, especially after World War II, the European Convention of Consular Functions (ECCF)³ mentions within the general consular functions that:

- "He shall likewise be entitled to further the interests of the sending State, including its interests in relation to commercial, economic, social, professional, touristic, artistic, scientific, educational and maritime matters and civil aviation, and to promote and develop co-operation between the sending and the receiving States in these and other fields."⁴

Numerous considerations motivate the diplomatic and consular tasks referring to the development of cultural relations between the sending and the receiving state; besides the fact that the development stage of the cultural relations between the two "international actors" reflect the general relations between them, cultural relations also favour, stimulate, create proper cooperation conditions in other domains of international relations, e.g. politics, economy, commerce, etc.⁵

Organizing and performing cultural exchanges within the normative framework created by states by means of bilateral conventions allow diplomatic and consular representatives to exert their cultural function by actions and activities like: organizing language courses for their co-nationals, organizing conferences on cultural topics or artistic manifestations, exhibitions, creating cultural institutions, cultural associations, etc., aiming at promoting and developing friendly relations

² Art. 5, letter c), *Vienna Convention on Consular Relations*, 1963.

³ ECCF and its protocols have been opened for signature to the member states of the Council of Europe and for accession by European States which are not member States on December 11, 1967.

The entry into force of this Convention is regulated in art. 50, paragraph 2 and it is subject to serving a period of three months from the date of deposit of the fifth instrument of ratification or acceptance: *The present Convention shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of the fifth instrument of ratification or acceptance.*" As a result, although signed in 1967, ECCF began to take effect only after 44 years, i.e. on 9 June 2011, three months after the date of deposit by Georgia of instruments of ratification (March 8, 2011), the fifth state to ratify it. – Jana Maftai, *The Contribution of the European Convention on Consular Functions to the Development of International Law*, EIRP Proceedings, Vol. 11/2016, p.103, <http://www.proceedings.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/eirp/article/view/1730>.

⁴ Art.2, point 2, *European Convention on Consular Functions*, 1967.

⁵ Ion M. Anghel, *Dreptul diplomatic și dreptul consular*, Universul Juridic, Bucharest, 2011, p.604; W. Bolewski, *Diplomatic Processes and Cultural Variations: The Relevance of Culture in Diplomacy*, in „The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations”, vol. 9/1/2008, <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/5460-bolewski---diplomatic-processes-and-cultural>.

among states and favouring relations in other activity domains.

To develop ideas on cultural diplomacy and its role in the sphere of international relations it is important to define the main concepts first.

Jan Melissen considers cultural diplomacy as an important component of the larger effort of public diplomacy, virtually comprising everything that a nation does to explain itself to the world, including the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of the culture between nations and their peoples in order to encourage mutual understanding. According to this author, who takes up an idea belonging to J. Nye⁶, the fact that by cultural diplomacy nations share forms of their creative expression is one of the most effective diplomatic tools, “*a prime example of ‘soft power’, or the ability to persuade through culture, values and ideas, as opposed to ‘hard power’, which conquers or coerces through military might.*”⁷

In a previous paper⁸ we highlighted that besides the term cultural diplomacy the analysts in the field also use other concepts to designate the approach of this area, such as cultural dimension of international relations, cultural history of the international relations, transcultural history etc.⁹.

Referring to culture, it was stated that it is “*perhaps the only vehicle that allows nations to work more closely together and successfully to share common interests*”¹⁰, and cultural diplomacy could be “*a unique source of closeness, producing benefits, mainly when other sectors cannot be taken into account*”.¹¹

⁶Joseph Nye introduced, in 1990, the concept of “*soft power*” in his work “*Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*” (the idea is based on what Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz called “the second face of power.” – Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, *Decisions and nondecisions: An analytical framework*, in „American Political Science Review”, No. 57, 1963, pp. 632-642) later developed in Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs, 2004.

⁷ Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. Basingstoke [UK]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp.147-148.

⁸ Anișoara Popa, *Romania and the International Intellectual Cooperation during the Interwar Period*, in *European Culture 2015: conference proceedings: 13th Edition, 29-31 October 2015, Cluj-Napoca*, ed. Păun N., Banus E., Presa Universitară Clujeană & EFES Publishing House, p. 307.

⁹ J. Dumont, *L'institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle et le Brésil (1924-1946): le pari de la diplomatie culturelle*, Éditions de l'IHEAL, Paris, 2014; idem, *Diplomatie culturelle et fabrique des identités. Argentine, Brésil, Chili (1919-1946)*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes/IDA, 2018; Al. Pita Gonzalez, *A case of Study: Mexico and the International Intellectual Cooperation in the Interwar Period*, in „Acta Universitatis Danubius. Relationes Internationales”, vol. 6, nr. 2/2014, p.122; Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History. Theories, Methods, Sources*, Springer Science & Business Media Publisher, 2012.

¹⁰ Irini Stamatoudi, *Mediation and Cultural Diplomacy*, Museum International, UNESCO Publishing and Blackwell Publishing, Vol.61, Issue1-2, 2009, p. 116.

¹¹ Ioana-Bianca Berna, *Cultural Diplomacy and the Re-shaping of the Romanian – France*

It may therefore be concluded that cultural diplomacy is a branch of foreign policy, a public policy aiming at the export of representative data for the national culture and the interactions with other countries in the cultural domain¹², for which multilateral or bilateral conventions are signed¹³, whereby the states' representatives take it upon themselves to implement common operations in the cultural sector. From this point of view, cultural diplomacy may be seen as a subcategory, in the sense that the notion of diplomacy takes precedence upon the notion of culture.

UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization¹⁴) views culture as "who we are and what shapes our identity", evinces its role as a facilitating factor and engine of economic, social, environmental dimensions of sustainable development, places it in the centre of the development policy considering that development is closely linked to culture. Hans G. Morgenthau considers that the purpose of UNESCO, as it was mentioned in art. 1 para. 1 of its Constitution (contribution to promoting world peace and security through education, science and culture¹⁵), reveals "*the fundamental error of*

Cultural Relations, Hyperborea Magazine, no. 3(6), 2013, Bucharest, pp. 54-64, p.58. The author includes in the article the opinion of William Glade, who finds that the function of generating cultural solidarities in the service of diplomacy, and shows how cultural diplomacy has become an instrument of foreign policy for the U.S. See William Glade, *Issues in the Genesis and Organization of Cultural Diplomacy: A Brief Critical History*, in „The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society”, Vol.39, Issue 4, 2009, pp. 240-259.

¹² Marie-Christine Kessler, *La diplomatie culturelle*, in *Manuel de diplomatie*, éd. Thierry Balzacq, Presses de Sciences Po, 2018, pp 263 and the next.

¹³ *Exempli gratia*, The European cultural Convention signed under the aegis of the Council of Europe in Paris on December 19,1954; The Convention of November 14, 1970 on the measures to be taken to prevent illegal operations of import, export property transfer of cultural goods, adopted by the General Convention of UNESCO in Paris, on November 14, 1970; the Convention on the Cultural and Technical Agency signed at Niamey on March 20, 1970; the Convention on protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions (Paris), the Convention on protecting the underwater cultural patrimony (Paris, November 2, 2001; the Convention on cooperation in the field of culture, education, science and information in the Black Sea area, signed at Istanbul on March 6, 1993; the Agreement between the Romanian Government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on cultural cooperation, Bucharest, May 16, 1995; the Agreement of cultural and scientific cooperation between Romanian and the Kingdom of Spain, 1995, etc.

¹⁴ UNESCO is one of the specialised agencies within the system of the United Nations Organization (UNO), founded on November 16, 1945.

¹⁵ "1. *The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.*" - UNESCO Constitution, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTIO

UNESCO's conception relative to international relations", considering that cultural unity and war have coexisted in all historical ages¹⁶. But the evidence of UNESCO's contribution to the consolidation of the catalysing role and vector of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and its acknowledgement among the 17 objectives set by the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, as well as evincing the important benefits provided by culture in regard to the social cohesion achieved by integrating the principle of cultural diversity and the values of cultural pluralism cannot be contested.¹⁷ By its actions UNESCO promotes peace and stability in the world, and attempts to build a more pacific world through the "soft power" dimension of culture, promoting cultural dialogue, the exchange of ideas, information, art and other cultural forms of expression among countries and people.

Cultural diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism are values supported and promoted by the European Union, since culture is the link of the European unity expressed in the concept "unity in diversity".

The European Union is part of the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which came into force on March 18, 2007, whose aim is to consolidate international cooperation and solidarity, favouring the cultural expression of all countries and people, encouraging cultural diversity on an international level.

2. European Union Concerns in the Cultural Domain

The dream of the European unity dates far back in history¹⁸, and the European Union (E.U.) was built and expanded through a long and arduous process; it started from the ideas of Jean Monnet about creating a closer union between the European peoples, and its "cornerstone" was the Schuman Declaration, accepted by 6 countries who signed on April 18, 1951, The Paris Treaty, thus creating the

N=201.html.

¹⁶ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politica între națiuni. Lupta pentru putere și lupta pentru pace*, Polirom, Iași, 2007, pp.534-537.

¹⁷ UNESCO, Culture for Sustainable Development, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/culture-sustainable-development>.

¹⁸ For details see, for example, C. Delisle Burns, *The First Europe*, Publisher George Allen and Unwin, London, 1947; Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity*, Sheed & Ward London, 1932, Anișoara Popa, *Preocupări privind organizarea Europei în gândirea românească: V. A. Urechia (1834-1901)*, în *European Integration. Realities and Perspectives Proceedings*, Vol. 1, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, pp. 685-692; Grete Tartler, *Identitate europeană*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006.

European Community of Coal and Steel¹⁹.

Today E.U. is one of the major global players, consisting of a “*mosaic of cultures, languages, religions, traditions, and history*”²⁰. Referring to the configuration of European culture, the Romanian proponent of comparative studies in culture, Adrian Marino, underlined that “Europe – as it is imposed on our present-day cultural conscience – represents the result of a tradition and a patrimony of shared millennial spiritual values. Some defined it through a threedimensional image: Europe is Greek in depth, Latin in extension, Christian in height”²¹. Unity and diversity are perceived as landmarks of the history of our continent corresponding to the inseparable values of solidarity and freedom. Setting clear precise objectives, E.U. strives to strengthen solidarity among the member states, at the same time respecting their own culture and history, to encourage cultural exchanges, involvement, cooperation, the development of various forms of expression, to draw attention on the operating manner of the cultural and creative process among all the European nations²².

The importance of the cultural dimension of the European building has been felt all through this process, and even very intensely in certain moments of sedimentation of acquisitions. Jean Monnet himself is said to have stated that: “*If I were to redo something – of course, in point of the European construct –, I would start with culture*”²³. But Vincent Dubois considers that the quotation is apocryphal, and asserts that the first genuine measures for an European cultural

¹⁹ Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *De la național spre federal*, second edition, Tritonic, Bucharest, 2006; Augustin Fuerea, *Manualul Uniunii Europene*, 4th edition, Universul juridic, Bucharest, 2016, Roxana Munteanu, *Drept european. Evoluție. Instituții. Ordine juridică*, Oscar Print, Bucharest, 1996, p.27; John McCormick, *Understanding the European Union. A Concise Introduction*, Palgrave, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, 2002, p.74; Vasile Ciocan, Emil Nuna, *Instituții europene. Noțiuni de drept comunitar*, GrafNet, Oradea, 2004, p.13; Ștefan Delureanu, *Geneza Europei Comunitare. Mesajul democrației de inspirație creștină*, Paideia, Bucharest, 1999, pp. 110 and the next; Jana Maftai, *Tratatul de la Lisabona, un tratat de reformă*, in The Materials of the Scientific-Practical International Conference „Reafirmarea drepturilor și libertăților fundamentale la 60 de ani ai Declarației Universale a Drepturilor Omului”, December 12, 2008, Helmax, Chișinău, 2009, pp.226-233.

²⁰ European Parliament resolution of 13 November 2018 on minimum standards for minorities in the EU (2018/2036(INI)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0447_EN.html.

²¹ Klaus Heitmann, *Adrian Marino și concepția sa despre Europa*, in „Steaua”, year LXI, no. 4-5 (738-739), April-May 2010, p.14, Steaua 4 2010 norm (revistea.ro).

²² Mircea Malița, *Zece mii de culturi, o singură civilizație – spre geomodernitatea secolului XXI*, Nemira, Bucharest, 1998, p.32.

²³ Vincent Dubois, *Există o politică culturală europeană*, in „Observator cultural”, No. 460, 2009, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/exista-o-politica-culturala-europeana/>.

policy were taken in 2007, through the Council resolution of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture²⁴, whereby the Union set the objectives of its future actions in the cultural and creative sectors, by annual work plans, to the purpose of promoting and stimulating cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, as culture is considered “a key factor for international partnerships”²⁵.

In fact, the Maastricht Treaty, which came into force in 1993, contained the first mentions of the E.U. preoccupations related to the “keystone” of the European construct, in the words of the historian Neagu Djuvara²⁶. The “title” of the treaty, “Culture”, stated that “*The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore*”²⁷. The action of the E.U. was to come down to “*encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas: - improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples; - conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance; - non-commercial cultural exchanges; - artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector*”²⁸ and also to “*foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of culture*”²⁹. As a decisional mechanism in the area, the treaty gave the Council the right to take decisions unanimously, entitled recommendations, starting from the propositions of the European Commission.

Subsequently, upon coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European External Action Service (EEAS)³⁰ was founded, which is the E.U.’s diplomatic service³¹, whose purpose is to increase the efficiency and coherence of the E.U.’s

²⁴ Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture, OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1–4, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32007G1129%2801%29>.

²⁵ Mădălina Mazăre, *Rolul diplomației culturale în relațiile internaționale. Studiu de caz Portugalia/The role of cultural diplomacy in international relations. Study case – Portugal*, in „Scientific Bulletin, Philology Fascicle”, Series A, Vol. XXVIII, 2019, p.390.

²⁶ Neagu Djuvara, *Civilizații și tipare istorice. Un studiu comparat al civilizațiilor*, Humanitas, Bucharest, Neagu Djuvara Author Series, 2008.

²⁷ Treaty on European Union, Title IX, Art. 128, al. 1, [treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf](#) (europa.eu).

²⁸ Treaty on European Union, Title IX, Art. 128, al. 2, [treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf](#) (europa.eu).

²⁹ Treaty on European Union, Title IX, Art. 128, al. 3, [treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf](#) (europa.eu).

³⁰ European External Action Service (EEAS) - https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/eeas_en.

³¹ This service cooperates with the diplomatic services of the member states and consists of

foreign policy, and to contribute to increasing the E.U.'s influence on a global level, including to improve the E.U.'s contribution to international cultural relations.

As a result of the request of the European Council addressed in 2015 to the European Commission and the High Representative to draw up a “*strategic approach to culture in the EU's external relations, outlining for this purpose a set of guiding principles*”³², the Commission advanced in 2016 “*The Joint Communication. Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*”, whereby it proposes a more strategic approach of the E.U. referring to cultural diplomacy, which is considered as one of the three pillars of a “*E.U. strategy for international cultural relations*”. It includes consolidated European cooperation (especially among the member states of the E.U. and the E.U. delegations), as well as the intercultural exchanges aimed at promoting the cultural diversity within the E.U.

Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy at the time, declared at the launching of the “*Strategy for international cultural relations*” that: “*Culture has to be part and parcel of our foreign policy. Culture is a powerful tool to build bridges between people, notably the young, and reinforce mutual understanding. It can also be an engine for economic and social development. As we face common challenges, culture can help all of us, in Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, stand together to fight radicalisation and build an alliance of civilisations against those trying to divide us. This is why cultural diplomacy must be at the core of our relationship with today's world.*”³³

According to Tibor Navracsics, the European commissioner for education, culture, youth and sport, culture is “*the hidden gem*” of the E.U.'s foreign policy, being the fundamental instrument in consolidating E.U.'s position on the international scene, by fulfilling its role in promoting mutual dialogue, understanding and respect, removing prejudice and stereotypes, contributing to

the public servants of the relevant services of the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission, as well as the detached personnel of the national diplomatic services. The organization and operation of the European service for External Action are decided by the decision of the Council. The European Council decides, at the proposal of the High Representative, upon consulting the European Parliament and with approval from the Commission. The role of the High Representative is to lead foreign policy and common security of the Union. The High Representative expresses the position of the Union within international organizations and conferences.

³² European Commission, *The Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN>.

³³ European Commission. *A new strategy to put culture at the heart of EU international relations*, Brussels, 8 June 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_16_2074.

preventing and solving international challenges and conflicts.

In 2018, a new agenda for culture³⁴ is adopted, continuing and improving the strategic framework of the E.U.'s actions in the cultural sector, planning the next cooperation stage at E.U. level, and evincing the role of culture in the European economy, as well as international relations.

The new cultural agenda, a strategic and dynamic instrument, is destined to implement the vision of a more attractive E.U. in the global cultural landscape, consolidate European identity by creating the feeling of appurtenance, valorise the entire European cultural potential, support innovation and creativity in the common interest of all the member states.

It will be achieved by putting in practice the Working Plan for Culture (2019-2022)³⁵, adopted by the European Council on November 27, 2018, according to which the member states have to draw up complementary action plans at national level, given that according to the principle of subsidiarity, the E.U.'s activity in the cultural domain completes the cultural policy of the member states, encourages and supports their cooperation in the cultural sector as well.

Referring to the strategic approach of the E.U.'s international cultural relations, the Plan provides as working methods meetings of the Culture Committee (CAC) and/or other relevant institutions, with the participation of SEAE and other public servants within the foreign affairs ministries and other relevant ministries, reunions of the experts and a conference of the presidential office, to the purpose of identifying common strategic principles, objectives and priorities of the E.U., clarifying the roles of the actors involved, and proposing domains where the common action at the level of the E.U. is the most relevant.³⁶

The actions of the European Union in the specific domain of the cultural policies have already registered notable results, programs like creative Europe, the European Culture Capitals, the European Year of the Cultural Patrimony 2018, Erasmus, the Intercultural Europe platform, etc. As an efficient contribution to what the leaders of the member states and the E.U. institutions wanted to create, viz. “a Union where the citizens can benefit from new opportunities of cultural, and social development, and economic growth. [...] a Union that preserves our cultural patrimony and promotes cultural diversity”³⁷.

³⁴ European Parliament resolution of 11 December 2018 on the New European Agenda for Culture (2018/2091(INI)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-820180499_EN.html.

³⁵ Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (2018/C 460/10) - [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1221\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1221(01))

³⁶ Point E in the Working Plan for Culture (2019-2022).

³⁷ The Rome Declaration. Declaration of the leaders of 27 member states and of the

Evincing the great importance of culture in the E.U.'s foreign policy, the Dutch europarliamentary member Marietje Schaake proposed in a 2010 report on cultural diplomacy and cultural dimension of the E.U.'s international relations that “*each EU representation overseas should be responsible for the coordination of cultural relations and interaction between the EU and third countries and for the promotion of European culture, in close cooperation with cultural actors and network-based organisations such as EUNIC*”³⁸, the use of digitalisation in order to make the cultural patrimony more attractive and provide a larger and more democratic access to culture, „*the inclusion of a DG Cultural and Digital Diplomacy in the organisation of the EEAS*”, etc.

The need for virtual connection and implementation of digital diplomacy, not only in the cultural domain, was found as imperative a decade later. The Covid-19 crisis has created new challenges in the diplomatic sector, that had to adjust quickly to an unprecedented situation limiting the diplomatic processes. The pandemic has remodelled traditional diplomacy, the activity has been transferred to the virtual environment, accelerating the already present trend to resort to new communication technologies³⁹. Diplomatic reunions are taking place online, consular services have been digitalised, diplomats make decisions through digital means and publicise their positions and messages through social networks like Facebook or Twitter, where they initiate discussions with citizens that in turn may send them messages or signals.

Moreover, in a world that is globally interconnected by developing communication networks and platforms, cultural exchange programs, academic mobilities, scholarships, grants, each of us becomes an “*ambassador*”.

Diplomacy, omnipresent in all that means international life, uses its means to achieve the objectives of foreign policy of the states. Is culture a useful diplomatic instrument able to improve the relations among states? There is no doubt about it. Even if it does not yield immediate results, the role that cultural diplomacy may have in a permanently changing world moving at an unprecedented pace, may

European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/pdf>.

³⁸ Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: Marietje Schaake, Report on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions (2010/2161(INI)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-7-2011-0112_EN.html#title3, European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions (2010/2161(INI)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-720110239_EN.html.

³⁹ On 7-9 September 2020, the Annual Reunion of Romanian Diplomacy was organized, in digital format, whose topic was “*Impact of the pandemic on international trends and the Romanian diplomacy's response*”. <https://www.mae.ro/node/53509>.

determine the development and improvement of interstate relations, generate new partnerships and cooperation, favour the states' development from a social, economic, political point of view.

3. Conclusions

After a century rich in events that “*passed into history, taking diplomacy with it*”⁴⁰, when the image of diplomacy contained not only virtues, but failures as well, the diplomacy of the 21st century has to add to the old foundations it was built on⁴¹ new modern elements, adapted to the complex present realities, the permanent international changes, contemporary national and global challenges. Managing these aspects requires adjusting the diplomats' working manner, the tools, actions and methods used. Referring to the “*new diplomacy*”, S. Riordan said that “*in a complex international order, it is necessary to have subtler, more nuanced instruments to survive*”⁴².

It goes without saying that the relations within the international society are being redefined, and now more than ever it is necessary to place the stress on culture and education, cultural diversity and dialogue, respecting the culture and traditions of all peoples. Cultural diplomacy, by encouraging a positive view on cultural diversity, constitutes a source of dialogue and peace, giving states the freedom of action and expression that no other diplomatic instruments can provide. It tends to become the ingredient providing balance and stability in international relations, and the image “*diplomats as Cultural Bridge-Builders*”, as Geert Hofstede puts it⁴³, stresses that “*cross-cultural preparation is crucial*”⁴⁴.

The political identity of the E.U., argument and prerequisite for the advancement of integration, is animated by the “*cultural insert*” of “*unity in diversity*”, and it is also built by interaction with third countries. European cultural diplomacy had to leave behind the previous eurocentrist tradition⁴⁵ and has proved,

⁴⁰ Constantin Vlad, *Istoria diplomației: secolul XX*, Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2014, p.730.

⁴¹ L. Frechette, *Diplomacy: Old Trade, new challenges (foreword)*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, eds. A.F. Cooper, J. Heine and R. Thakur, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, XXX.

⁴² Shaun Riordan, *Noua diplomație. Relații internaționale moderne*, Antet XX Press, Bucharest, 2004, p.15.

⁴³ Geert Hofstede, *Diplomats as Cultural Bridge-Builders*, Intercultural Communication and Diplomacy, ed. Hannah Slavik, Malta, Geneva, DiploFoundation, 2004.

⁴⁴ Wilfried Bolewski, *Diplomatic Processes and Cultural Variations: The Relevance of Culture in Diplomacy*, in „The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations”, vol. 9/1/2008, p. 156, <https://www.law.upenn.edu/live/files/5460-bolewski---diplomatic-processes-and-cultural>.

⁴⁵ Joseph Fontana, *Europa în fața oglinzii/Europe in Front of the Mirror*, Polirom, Iași, 2000.

besides reshaping the European cultural identity and asserting and maximising its own soft power potential, an increase of intercultural sensitivity and capacity of dialogue with other cultures, also supported by the member states in Eastern Europe.