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## Book Review: An Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy. A Hungarian Handbook of International Relations

- **ABSTRACT:** *The latest edition of the Lexicon of Diplomacy, An Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy. A Hungarian Handbook of International Relations has been published in English for the first time this year (2023) with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. It is a unique collection of a wide range of basic concepts on diplomatic relations compiled by renowned Hungarian diplomats. This review offers a glimpse into the creation of the book and the audiences it can benefit.*
- **KEYWORDS:** diplomacy, foreign affairs, Hungary, international law, international relations

It is always a great pleasure when a new handbook written by experienced legal practitioners with scientific devotion is released. The publication of Bába, I., Sáringer, J. (eds.) (2023) *An Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy. A Hungarian Handbook of International Relations* 1<sup>st</sup> Budapest: Kairosz Publishing, p. 996) is no different. This book was recently published for the first time in English. After two former editions in Hungarian,<sup>1</sup> the publication of this comprehensive handbook in English marks a major milestone.

The first Hungarian edition,<sup>2</sup> issued in 2018, was a more modest version of the handbook with one volume and fewer articles. Many substantial and

1 Lexicon of Diplomacy. A Handbook of International Relations. (Bába and Sáringer, 2018, p. 722.) New Lexicon of Diplomacy. A Handbook of International Relations (Bába and Sáringer, 2021, p. 978.)

2 Bába and Sáringer, 2018, p. 722. See also Bucsi, 2021, pp. 249–254.

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technical changes were made to the New Lexicon of Diplomacy in 2021, where some of the editors changed, the scope was expanded, and new chapters emerged; most importantly, the number of editors<sup>3</sup> (66 to 104) and articles (approximately 1,500 to over 2,000) increased considerably. As for the latest edition: ‘This Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy is a Hungarian handbook of international relations, so it is dealing with the most important areas of international relations in Hungarian and international contexts alike. The original – Hungarian – version of the book was written and edited for the Hungarian reader. This English language version has been modified for the non-Hungarian readers; however, the core of the Encyclopaedia has not changed and follows both of the main goals, to review the common legal basis and practice of international relations and to present the relevant Hungarian legislative and law enforcement solutions as well. We were using the standard English expressions of international relations and diplomacy in the translation. As for the Hungarian chapters, we were trying to use simple and easily understandable terms.’<sup>4</sup> Taking into account the non-Hungarian audiences for the English version of the book, another special feature of the Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy is its reflection on the history of Hungarian diplomatic relations: ‘With the publication of the Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy, we are also endeavouring to recount the rich history of Hungarian foreign affairs and diplomacy besides presenting the international relations. [...] We also pay tribute to the representatives and the foreign ministers of modern Hungarian diplomacy, as well as to the outstanding Hungarian diplomats.’

The authors of the handbook, numbering over 100, include the most highly qualified diplomats of Hungary. The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy is faithful to its subtitle, and is about the most significant aspects of international relations, including topics such as diplomatic relations (theme leader: János Sáringer), international law and organisations (theme leader: Barbara Baller), foreign affairs (theme leader: Ella Lemák) and consular administration (theme leader: Gábor F. Tóth), minority protection and kin-state politics (theme leader: Iván Gyurcsík), protocol (theme leader: Iván Bába), security policy (theme leader: István Balogh), the European Union (theme leader: Balázs Ferkelt), international economic relations (theme leader: Zsolt Becsey), cultural and science diplomacy (theme leader: Sándor Csernus), international sport relations (theme leader: János Janzsó), diplomatic relations of Hungary (theme leader: János Sáringer), ministers of foreign affairs of Hungary (theme leader: Viktor Attila Soós), and Hungarian diplomats

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3 The members of the editorial board of the first edition in 2018 were: János Martonyi (president), Endre Marinovich (vice-president), Csaba Balogh, István Bérczi, Sándor Csernus, Balázs Ferkelt, István Íjgyártó, Géza Jeszenszky, Levente Magyar, József Zsigmond Nagy. Members of the editorial board of the second edition of 2021: Zsolt Németh (president), Endre Marinovich (vice president), Csaba Balogh, Ferenc Gazdag, József Zsigmond Nagy, Péter Sztáray.

4 Bába and Sáringer, 2023, p. 9.

(theme leader: Viktor Attila Soós). The chapters are accompanied by brief biographies of former Hungarian ministers of foreign affairs and diplomats of great renown as well as descriptions of countries that Hungary has diplomatic relations with (193 states). These are new additions to the volume. The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy comprises 1 volume and 14 chapters.

Working in the foreign affairs administration is a striking example of the most complex activities one can pursue, and thanks to the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, now we can have a glimpse into the everyday workings and duties and tasks of diplomats.<sup>5</sup> The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy is designed for lawyers, international relations professionals, students, and non-professionals who aspire to understand how the ‘mysterious’ world of diplomacy works. As the editors-in-chief note:

This volume is for everyone who is interested in international relations and diplomacy. An average secondary school graduate will understand most of the articles. At the same time, the volume is bound to be useful for students in secondary schools or colleges who study subjects related to international relations, who prepare for a diplomatic career, or who wish to be occupied with the international relations of public administration.<sup>6</sup>

As it is stated in the forewords of the *New Lexicon of Diplomacy* and the *Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy*, in comparison with the first edition, the most substantial change was made to the approach. The first edition was meant to be a handbook for professionals engaged in foreign affairs. The second and third editions targeted laymen and students. Therefore, the language in the handbook does not deploy technical terms, which makes it easy to follow and consume for readers irrespective of their background.<sup>7</sup>

This handbook can also be used for educational purposes at law schools and international studies programmes. As a detailed collection enriched with clear-cut definitions of key concepts in international law, the *Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy* is ideal for students encountering public international law for the first time. Students may encounter difficulties understanding the unique nature of this field. As international lawmaking is far more vague and general when compared to lawmaking at the domestic level, there is no room for drafting accurate and detailed definitions under treaties. The dominance of custom in international law favours neither exact nor precise terms. However, many international legal definitions are rooted in customary law,<sup>8</sup> so jurisprudence and case law play leading roles in

<sup>5</sup> Domaniczky, 2022, pp. 284–289.

<sup>6</sup> Bába and Sáringer, 2023, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Bucsi, 2022, pp. 260–264.

<sup>8</sup> See Blutman, 2015; Blutman, 2018.

interpretation. The New Lexicon of Diplomacy can serve as a compass for students navigating the maze of international law. Thanks to its transparent structure, this handbook can help students and professors prepare for their international law and international relations classes: Several basic definitions are all available in one place and help illuminate and illustrate new educational materials.

Finally, this book can benefit legal professionals. The Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy can be used at ministries, courts, and law offices among other places, as it can help those involved seek 'quick aid' in matters relating to international law and international relations. The logical and detailed structure of the handbook and rich collection of resources in it offer guidance on basic concepts that may be inevitable to understand in everyday legal practice.

The extent and scale of experience and work invested in creating the Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy is significant. From a Hungarian and Central-European perspective, we must be proud to have such an excellent edition in hand, especially given that it fills major gaps in the literature. Sincere congratulations to the editors and authors of the Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy and I wish them many new editions and translations to come.

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