Chapter 2

New Challenges in Consular Work: The Case of Hungary, from the 1980s to 2023

Endre Domaniczky

Abstract

The study presents the impact of Hungary's relationship with the European Union on the structure and functioning of the Hungarian consular service. It shows that the modernisation of the Hungarian consular service – with the ratification of the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention in 1987 – had already started before the change of regime. As a result, after 1989, the consular service adapted more easily to the new challenges and tasks that followed Hungary's independence and EU integration. The harmonisation of EU law already led to significant changes in consular tasks during the Antall government. Moreover, EU accession itself led to a significant transformation of national foreign policy objectives. As a result, a small consular network was initially set up, but after 2010 it was rebuilt in line with the new policy objectives determined on national level and then significantly expanded after 2014. However, the study also explores not only the changes in the organisational structure, but also the changing and then expanding consular tasks and the potential for improvement in EU cooperation.

Keywords: Hungary, European Union, consular service, EU delegations, EEAS

Endre Domaniczky (2026) 'New Challenges in Consular Work: The Case of Hungary, from the 1980s to 2023'. In: Paweł Czubik (ed.) *Changes in the Structure and Scope of Foreign Service Activity*, pp. 67–105. Miskolc–Budapest, Central European Academic Publishing.

https://doi.org/10.54237/profnet.2026.pccssfsa_2

1. Introduction

Hungary regained its independence in 1989, and Soviet troops withdrew from the country in 1991. From a consular point of view, however, the fine-tuning of the Hungarian foreign affairs structure had already begun. With the incorporation of the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention[1] of 1987 into Hungarian law (hereinafter: VCC), bilateral agreements in the consular field were largely replaced by international standards. With the adoption of the 1963 VCC the sending and receiving of honorary consuls became possible again. By the time the Republic was proclaimed on 23 October 1989, the first Hungarian Honorary Consul – in Melbourne, Australia – had already been in service for four months.[2] The next milestone came in 1990, when, following the first free elections, a new structure for the Foreign Ministry was established, based on the priorities of the government's programme, including accession to the European Economic Community.

The date of Hungary's accession to the European Union (1 May 2004) – when 'ferry country (…) finally docks on the Western coast'[3] – is thus in fact only a milestone, even if the most significant one, on the path the Hungarian foreign administration and consular service embarked on in the mid-1980s, following the reforms of Gorbachev (Glasnost). This study presents the most important events and the epochal boundaries of this process, which lasted for some four decades (1985–2024). In doing so, it focuses on the concepts of the structure and responsibilities of consular service. Where did the Hungarian consular service start from and where has it reached by now, and what opportunities does it have for the future? In the following, we will focus on answering these questions.

---

2. Shadows of the Past (1945–1989)

Soviet troops arrived in Hungary in 1944, and the country was gradually occupied by the Soviets in stages. The majority of the Foreign Ministry's staff were replaced within a short time, and the organisational structure was also restructured. The Honorary Consular Network, which had previously formed the backbone of the consular service, was disbanded in 1950. The extent of the change is illustrated by a data set from 1938. In that year, 'there were seven Hungarian Consulates General (Vienna, Cologne, Milan, Montreal, Munich, New York and Istanbul), eight

1 Decree-Law No. 13 of 1987 promulgating the Convention on Consular Relations, adopted in Vienna on 24 April 1963.

2 Anonymous, 1989, p. 4.

3 President Ferenc Mádl's declaration on the occasion of the accession to the European Union [Mádl Ferenc köztársasági elnök nyilatkozata az Európai Unióhoz való csatlakozás alkalmából], in: Becker, 2004, p. 172.

Consulates (in Cleveland, Danzig, Cluj, Bratislava, Sao Paulo, Trieste, Winnipeg and Zagreb), five lower-ranking official consular missions and 87 honorary consular missions abroad'.[4] In other words, 20 professional consular posts and 87 honorary consular posts, i.e. the Hungarian consular service then had 107 units abroad. Even in the mid-1980s, when the number of consular cases increased significantly, the Hungarian consular network still had 'a total of 10 (professional) consular representations'[5] abroad. This is a step backwards even if we consider that embassies can also carry out consular activities under the 1961 Vienna Diplomatic Convention (hereinafter: VDC),[6] and Hungary, which actively developed its diplomatic network in developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s, has made use of this possibility. While it is common to argue that an independent Hungarian foreign affairs organisation began to take shape before the Battle of Mohács,[7] and that Hungarian interests were also represented in the joint Austrian-Hungarian Foreign Ministry,[8] it is important to note and even independent Hungary has maintained its own foreign affairs network since 1918.[9] However, the years following World War II resulted in significant disarray concerning consular institutions and staffing.[10]

What makes the balance positive is, on the one hand, the acceleration of decolonisation in the 1960s,[11] which led Hungary to establish diplomatic relations with a number of former colonies, followed in many cases by the opening of foreign missions.[12] On the other hand, the mass tourism that began in the 1960s was also to the benefit of the Hungarian diaspora living abroad. This resulted in an increase in visa issuances. As more Hungarian residents travelled abroad, the number of classic cases rose, leading to a greater demand for services within the consular network.

4 Gresznáryk, 1977, p. 33.
5 Éliás, 1986, p. 119.
6 Cf.: VDC Art. 3, para. 2. For explanation of the VDC, see: Denza, 2016.
7 We should mention István Brodarics (1470c–1539), who was later one of King John I's most accomplished diplomats, also responsible for foreign affairs as chancellor of King Louis II before the Battle of Mohács. See: Kasza, 2015 for his biography.
8 See also the Historian Éva Somogyi's related studies. The data she has collected clearly show that 'the proportion of Hungarian nationals in the joint foreign ministry and diplomatic corps increased from 15-20% in the 1890s to 26-30% on the eve of the World War'. Somogyi, 2004, p. 669. See also: Horváth, 2020, pp. 100–109.
9 For details, see the People's Act No. 5 of 1918 on the independent Hungarian foreign affairs administration. It is also worth emphasising here that, although the Hungarian foreign affairs administration has a long tradition, in 1918, in a country on the verge of bankruptcy, everything had to be built from scratch. As a newspaper article of the time proudly noted: 'The Hungarian state, as far as its financial strength could convince it, built up a worldwide consular network'. Anonymous, 1922, p. 4. For the history of the consular service between 1918 and 1945, see, among others, Pritz, 1989, pp. 149–178; Pritz, 1995, pp. 215–243.
10 So we can only speak of Hungarian continuity in foreign affairs from 1945 at the latest.
11 For more information see: Herczegh, 1962.
12 'At the end of 1970, we had diplomatic relations with 89 countries and consular relations with two. There were Hungarian foreign missions in about 60 countries (embassies, embassies, consulates general, UN missions, etc.)'. Anonymous, 1971, p. 1.

By the mid-1980s, it had become clear that the demand for consular services would remain and grow in the long term, and that it would not be possible to respond adequately to this increased demand simply by expanding the embassy system. The ratification of the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention consequently ensued primarily for professional, rather than ideological reasons, and was intended to strengthen the organisational system. Following the ratification of the VCC, the consular institutional system became a three-tier system, which made it possible to distribute cases proportionally and, because of the international acceptance of the VCC, to strengthen international consular cooperation, which had previously been difficult and less effective on the basis of consular agreements concluded mainly on a bilateral basis. However, the ratification of the VCC only began to have an impact in the 1990s (after the regime change). In the 1990s, a network of Hungarian honorary consulates began to be established, reviving the former Austro-Hungarian model in certain areas.[13] During this time, legislation was also created to govern the operations of this new type of consular service.

3. The Consular System of Independent Hungary (1989–2004)

3.1. About the Legal Sources

If we consider the ratification of the VCC in 1987 as a direct precursor to the change of regime, we can denote 23 October 1989 as the starting date of the consular system of independent Hungary. The *constitution*al amendment[14] that entered into force on that date included the right to consular protection[15] among the fundamental constitutional rights – and also contained several other provisions of consular significance. Most of these were related to citizenship,[16] but the constitutional amendment also brought changes in the area of passport legislation[17] and in the area of immigration law enforcement.[18] The declaration of state responsibility[19] for Hungarians

13 For example, in the Australian continent, see: Domaniczky, 2019, pp. 257–261; Domaniczky, 2018. pp. 341–362.

14 Cf. Act XXXIV of 1989, Art. 34. (Hereinafter 'Act' refers to Hungarian legislative acts, unless otherwise specified).

15 Art. 69 (3) of Act XX of 1949.

16 Art. 69 of Act XX of 1949 declared – in accordance with international conventions – the prohibition of deprivation of citizenship and the expulsion of Hungarian citizens from their homeland (Art. 69(1) of the Act).

17 Following the constitutional amendment, the right to return home from abroad (Art. 58(1)).

18 Cf. the section on the right of asylum (Act XX of 1949, para. 65(1)).

19 Art. 6(3) of Act XX of 1949.

living 'outside the borders' also brought changes of emphasis, and the effects were felt not only in the diplomatic world but also in consular offices.[20]

Although the declaration of consular protection in the constitution was one of the first steps of the new system, the detailed rules were only laid down in law relatively late, in 2001.[21] Until then, attempts were made to fill the legal gap by means of subordinate legislation or normative instructions (so-called consular instructions) which do not constitute legislation, but this practice is of concern both in terms of legality and the visibility of the norm. A similarly curious practice has resulted from the application of earlier legislation, dating from before World War II. This was also the case in other areas in Hungary before the regime change,[22] but an example can also be found in the case law of the consular service.[23]

However, the pace of *legislation* in other areas relevant to consular work has been faster. The new Passports Act was passed in 1989[24] and the Citizenship Act in 1993.[25] The law on civil status records was amended in 1991 – but again, comprehensive legislation was only adopted after 2000.[26] A new law on address administration was adopted in 1992, and on the entry of foreigners in 1993. As regards the organisation of the consular service, the legislator decided to place the provisions requiring statutory regulation within the Consular Act. In addition, ministerial decrees were issued on the honorary consular network, the certification duties of consuls, consular fees, consular protection activity[27] which provided for the application of certain laws as background legislation where necessary.[28]

20 After 1989, Art. 6(3) of the Constitution laid down two obligations for the government: to 'feel responsibility', i.e. to follow the events in the Hungarian diaspora and actively represent their interests; and to 'promote' the diaspora's relations with Hungary. Both of these obligations have consular implications, since the main person responsible for information and data collection on the local Hungarian community at the mission is the consul, whose activities in this area are also permitted under Art. 5 of the VCC.

21 Cf. Act XLVI of 2001 on Consular Protection.

22 Cf. the afterlife of the Trade Act of 1875 or Act V of 1930, on the basis of which a new, market-friendly company law, Act VI of 1988, could be created. For more on this, see: Verebics, 2020, pp. 2–9. Professor Sárközy mentioned a similar technique from the 1970s, for more details see: Révai, 2009, pp. 151–153.

23 Cf. Act X of 1940 was used from the mid-1980s until the creation of the Notaries Act in 1991, but it was occasionally referred to even later, until the entry into force of the Consular Protection Act in 2001, which repealed it, cf. Act XLVI of 2001 on Consular Protection, Art. 23.

24 Act XXVIII of 1989. However, the passport valid for all countries of the world ('world passport') was introduced before the change of regime by Decree 25 of 1987.

25 Act LV of 1993.

26 Until 2010, the basic legislation was Act No. 17 of 1982.

27 Until the 2001 Consular Act was enacted, the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention was referred to as the enabling legislation in several cases (see: Decree 2/1995 (III. 24.) of the Ministry of Justice, Decree 2/1998 (XII. 9.) of the Ministry of Justice, Decree 4/2000 (IX. 27.) of the Ministry of Justice).

28 Thus, for example, in the case of the duties of consuls in connection with the preparation of certificates, the 1940 Act on the authentication of documents and later the 1991 Notaries Act had to be applied as background legislation.

Table 1: Adoption of new sectoral laws relevant to consular work (overview table)[29]

Regulatory area	Year of the new law	Year of issue of previous legislation
consular protection	2001	–
passport issuance	1989, 1998	1987
citizenship matters	1993	1957
birth registration	2010	1982
migration of foreign nationals	1993, 2001, 2007	1982
consular legalisation matters	2001	1940

Table 2: Levels of regulation affecting the main areas of consular work (overview table)[30]

Regulatory area	Act	Government decree	Ministerial decree	Ministerial instruction	Other
consular exams	●		●	●	
consular data management	●				
consular ranks	●				
consular official work	●				
consular protection	●		●	●	
honorary consuls	●				
consular tariffs	●		●		
consular translations			●		
consular legalisation matters	●				
birth registration	●	●	●		
passport management	●	●	●		

29 The table was compiled by the author.
30 The table was compiled by the author.

Regulatory area	Act	Government decree	Ministerial decree	Ministerial instruction	Other
address administration	●	●	●		
citizenship matters	●	●			
visa matters	●	●			● (EU regulation)
residence permits	●	●			

Throughout the 1990s, regulations were also continuously being drawn up setting out the details of the new system. These took two main forms: implementing regulations for sectoral laws, and government or ministerial decrees which expanded on the subject matter necessary for the operation of the consular service or regulated a specific legal detail.[31]

The gaps in the evolving legal framework were filled by *consular instructions*. The consular instructions are usually based on customary law, dating back to the early period of the establishment of the Hungarian rule of law, the age of Dualism (1867–1918) that followed the Compromise of 1867. At that time, the executive was considered to have general powers of instruction. In exercising this power, it was bound by law. But where 'relations are not governed by law (…), obedience to the supreme authority (…) is obligatory and unconditional'.[32] By this time, jurisprudence had already perceived that the right to give instructions was more prevalent in the case of foreign employment than in other areas of public administration. 'Such are in particular offices which are based on trust without any objective rule. The diplomatic and foreign affairs officials of the state (...) occupy positions which are not subject to the ordinary official relationship, but depend purely on the trust of the appointing executive power (...)' – summarised the insights of the great Hungarian public lawyer of the dualist era, Győző Concha.[33] Currently, there are two forms of consular instructions: a) explanatory or norm-substituting, which expounds the meaning of a given piece of legislation or task; b) normative, which contains a requirement (usually involving a positive action) for a given person or group of persons (to do something, issue a document, obtain a birth certificate, etc.).

Finally, for the sake of completeness, it should also be mentioned that previously, in the pre-computer era, consular instructions communicated verbally were common (in the case of foreign missions, usually by telephone). In the post-computer

31 In Hungary, according to the issuer, there are several types of regulations. The relevant regulations for consular administration under the legislative law in force during the period under review were the Government Decree and the Ministerial Decree. Cf. Act XI of 1987 on Legislation (Arts. 1–10, 16, 46–49, 53–56.).

32 Concha, 1893, p. 68.

33 Concha, 1893, pp. 68–69.

era, instructions without a registration number are considered equivalent, even if they cannot be retrieved in the mail system.[34] It is important to note that the responsibility for carrying out such instructions rests with the consul, so it is always advisable to ask for instructions in writing in order to justify your own procedures. The need to request instructions in writing is not only for human reasons, but above all, because these cases are almost invariably international in nature and the consul, being at the bottom of the chain of command, in most cases does not see the full picture immediately or at all, and is therefore unable to assess the impact and consequences of his or her action.

On the basis of the above, the most important features of the legislation necessary for the functioning of the consular service of Hungary, which has regained its independence, can be identified as follows: a) the creation of laws to provide a legal framework started before the regime change; b) the new laws were not drafted all at once, but over a period of about 15 years (1987–2002); c) the absence of new laws has been filled by case-law primarily in two ways: consular instructions that do not constitute legislation and ministerial decrees that do; d) if the nature of the task required a legal background, and there was no socialist law on the subject, they had no problem referring to the legislation adopted under the pre-socialist system.

3.2. About the Consular Service

The consular service is nothing more than the totality of officials performing consular duties at headquarters and in foreign missions, including the minister and the honorary consul.[35] The modernisation of the consular service essentially began in the mid-1980s, the first step being the ratification of the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention, referred to above. The expansion of the operational levels of the consular service was thus a foregone conclusion at the time of independence. Subsequently, the main issue became the size of the network: a) how large should it be: how many elements should it consist of; b) what structure should it operate in: should there be special consulates, if so, according to what criteria should they be classified as being special, how many levels of consular networks should operate in which countries (where should there be consulates-general, professional consuls, or consulates led by honorary consuls); c) how many consulates should be independent units and how many should continue to operate as part of an embassy; d) the extent to which the different interests and needs of the Hungarian diaspora affect the development of the consular network; e) the extent to which the Hungarian consular network can make use of the possibilities offered by the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention, i.e. whether and to what extent consulates can handle ‘commercial, economic, cultural

34 In my own consular practice, even in the 2010s, I encountered both types of consular instructions given over the phone and instructions without a file number.

35 For a precise Hungarian definition of consular service, see Act XLVI of 2001 (Art. 2(1)).

and scientific'[36] matters in addition to purely consular matters. If so, where and what kind of specialised diplomats should be posted, and who should have the authority to employ them (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or another body)?

From the point of view of independent Hungary, the most important question was therefore the size of the consular network. This, as we have seen above, was also linked to a number of other structural issues. In addition to these, there was of course the issue of consular staff continuity from the outset. Should there be a need to replace staff in the network, and if so, to what extent and over what period? To what extent are replacements necessary for a new approach? If they are absolutely necessary, how will their implementation affect the smooth running of business, which has always been a primary concern for consular affairs?

As regards the size of the consular network, it is clear that it continued to grow in the 1990s compared to the previous period. This was partly for professional and partly for personnel reasons. At the beginning, it was not possible to see how quickly the disintegration of the former political blocs would progress and where it would stop. On the other hand, in the region immediately neighbouring Hungary, there have been major changes in state borders,[37] the first phase of which lasted until the turn of the millennium,[38] but which are still ongoing.[39] Thirdly, the country's new system of alliances took longer to develop and, fourthly, the national policy aspects, which are key to the consular network, have not been negligible, but have been on the agenda of successive governments in Budapest with varying degrees of importance.

In addition, the number of visas to be issued and the number of Hungarian citizens requiring consular assistance had to be taken into account. Regarding the first issue, there have been significant changes since the country gained independence. The visa requirement has been largely eliminated and the new legal regime has been modelled based on Western European models from the outset. This means that some of the former visa issuing centres (such as the Consulate General in Sydney, Australia) have been left without their visa function, while other places (such as St Petersburg, Russia) have been left with a large visa workload. The number of nationals in need of consular protection increased significantly following the lifting of travel restrictions. In addition, Hungarian nationals have ventured further and

36 Cf. Art. 5(c) VCC.

37 The break-up of Czechoslovakia, which was peaceful, and the break-up of Yugoslavia, which led to a decade-long armed conflict (the Yugoslav Wars).

38 The Yugoslav Wars between 1991 and 2001 were followed by further territorial changes. Montenegro seceded from Serbia in 2006 and Kosovo in 2008.

39 See the war in Ukraine and its background. It is worth noting here that the issue of borders was already fraught with tensions at the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Cf. an excerpt from one of Gorbachev's speeches on Ukraine's independence: 'Gorbachev announced at a meeting of the Soviet Supreme of the Soviet Union that the Russian leaders' position was that if Ukraine remained within the Union there would be no conflict on the Russian-Ukrainian border, but if it continued to insist on leaving the Union, this could lead to unforeseeable consequences because of territorial problems'. Anonymous, 1991, p. 46.

further afield over time, first to Western European countries and then to various exotic destinations.

Each of the above processes unfolded gradually over a period of several years, which, with the intervening changes of government and the resulting shifts in strategic emphasis, made it difficult to respond immediately. For this reason, Hungarian foreign policy tactics in the first decade and a half (1987–2002) were in favour of a wait-and-see approach and slow change. Some embassies were closed, others opened, honorary consuls were appointed in an increasing number of places, and economic offices were preserved. Since the organisational system remained essentially intact, staffing was also only touched upon in a fragmentary fashion. The two key words were 'to ensure staff rejuvenation' and 'to preserve institutional memory'. Both concepts offered a wide range of possibilities for successive governments to recruit new people and retain the old guard. In terms of staffing, it is therefore also worth emphasising continuity, at least until 2002, after which the outlines of a more robust political governance in the foreign affairs field began to emerge.

There is one other direction for development worth mentioning, as its beginnings also date back to the post-1989 period. It is the electronification of paper records, currently called digitisation. In order to carry out its advocacy work quickly and professionally, the consular service needs access to data from several administrative registers. The three most important of these are: a) the personal data and address register; b) civil registers; c) travel documents register. To this end, the use of computers started in the 1980s, first on an ad hoc basis and then for certain workflows (e.g. printing of birth certificates). For a long time, the possibility for consular staff to access these records remotely and directly was still a dream. At that time, only postal correspondence and telephone messaging were possible. Another important development was the establishment of a consular registration system, which would be able to register both cases and the procedural actions associated with them, by case number. Although progress was made in both areas during the period under review, it was not until the second half of the 2000s and, globally for the whole network, until the 2010s, that significant results could be seen.[40]

In the light of the above, the most important changes affecting the consular service of Hungary, which has regained its independence, can be identified as follows: a) structural changes in the consular service started already during the socialist period; b) the changes were triggered not only by changes in the political environment but also by changes in social habits; c) on the most important issue for the development of the consular service, i.e. the size of the network, no clear decision was taken at the time, and the decision-maker chose to wait and see in the light of political events; d) a similar decision was taken regarding the staffing of the consular service: in addition to rejuvenation, it was also considered important to maintain the previous staff.

40 See more below (under the title of 'The Place of Consular Services in a New Foreign Affairs Concept (2014–2024)').

3.3. About the Consul's Duties

The consul's duties should also be briefly mentioned, for several reasons.

a) On the one hand, consular functions have undergone several – significant – changes during the 20th century. Thus, the consul who, after the regime change in 1989, will be the recipient of numerous powers and the central figure of the Hungarian consular service, will only vaguely resemble his or her colleague of the early 20th century in terms of their tasks!
b) On the other hand, the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention, which was taken into Hungarian law in 1987, contains a specific and detailed catalogue of consular tasks. Thus, the formerly customary law and bilateral consular conventions have been replaced by a specific, normative catalogue, which gave the contracting states – including Hungary – a wide latitude in defining consular tasks.
c) Thirdly, the regime change also triggered various processes in the diaspora, which was one of the main areas of activity for Hungarian consuls in the second half of the 20th century.[41]

Ad a) From the point of view of our topic, it is important to emphasise that the main task of the consul at the beginning of the 20th century – when Hungarian consular functions were still performed within the Austro-Hungarian consular service – was to represent commercial interests and to adjudicate.[42] Already after the Compromise of 1867, Hungarian legislation provided for consuls to perform official duties, for example in the field of citizenship (1879),[43] birth registration (1894)[44] or passport administration (1903).[45] In the absence of an independent Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, legislative tasks of this kind were the responsibility of the individual departments, most often the Ministry of Justice.

The peace treaties that ended World War I, however, not only brought the end of the common state, the common foreign ministry and the Austro-Hungarian consular

41 See more Domaniczky, 2025a, pp. 87–113.

42 Consular adjudication was not part of the common affairs, so it could – in theory – have been developed independently. Cf. Szabó, 2022, p. 42. In contrast, the representation of commercial interests was considered a common matter (Art. 8 of Act 12 of 1867), but at the same time, plans were made on the Hungarian side – primarily in scientific guise, for example within the framework of the Hungarian Geographical Society – to explore Hungarian interests of its own. However, when the opportunity arose to implement these plans (after World War I), Hungary was no longer able to represent them. For the existing plans in relation to Australia and the South Pacific, see Domaniczky, 2024b, pp. 12–13.

43 Cf. para. 31 of Act No. 50 of 1879 on the acquisition and loss of Hungarian citizenship.

44 Cf. Art. 79 of Act No. 33 of 1894 on State Birth Registers, as well as Decree No. 2800/1906 of the Hungarian State Registry Office on the establishment of the necessary deviations from the procedure to be followed by diplomatic representatives, consuls and their deputies as Hungarian State Registrars, and Decree No. 2600/1906 of the Hungarian State Registry Office on the registration and certification of births and deaths occurring aboard ships.

45 Cf. para. 8. of Act No. 6 of 1903 on the Passport Act.

service, but also brought about significant changes in consular tasks. In the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, Hungary renounced all capitulation rights to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy[46] and thus the legal basis for consular jurisdiction was abolished.[47] The other important task of the Austro-Hungarian consular service, the protection and representation of commercial interests, could only be fulfilled in a haphazard way by Hungary, which had been operating under difficult financial conditions for many years – although the legislator, when the Hungarian Foreign Ministry was established, made this the most important task of the consulates.[48] At the same time, great numbers of people were emigrating, partly from the parts annexed to other countries and partly from the remaining state-territory, some of them settling in other countries, but also haunted in their new lives by the legal situations that had arisen in their former lives. The Hungarians who emigrated inherited and made wills, sold and acquired property even as citizens of their new homeland. Thus, one of the first tasks of the independent Hungarian consular service became the handling of official matters, which had previously been a marginal task – but it was only after World War II that these tasks became a dominant part of consular competences.[49] Secondly, since the consul could easily build up contacts within the diaspora through official affairs, the consuls were also responsible for the preparation of (comprehensive) reports on Hungarian communities abroad.[50] These diaspora-related tasks were completed in the second half of the 20th century, when – after 1945 and 1956 – tens of thousands of people set out again and settled abroad. Consuls were then mainly responsible for political reporting,[51] but continued to carry out the official duties they had already been assigned.[52]

A significant change in these (official) tasks occurred in the second half of the 1960s, when Hungarians who had previously fled abroad began to travel as citizens

46 Cf. Part IV of Act No. 33 of 1921, specifically paras. 81, 86 and 94.

47 It is worth noting that the Monarchy was still working on the structure of the consular court system in 1917, cf. Act 19 of 1917 on the extension of the validity of Act No. 31 of 1891 on the regulation of consular jurisdiction and the amendment of certain provisions of the same Act. For an assessment see Lers, 1904; Antal, 2004, pp. 5–52.

48 The People's Act No. 5 of 1918 formulated this so that 'Hungarian consular offices in foreign districts shall serve mainly the interests of the domestic economy (…)' (para. 6 of the People's Act No. 5 of 1918).

49 For more information, see: Ustor, 1978, p. 378.

50 See also Domaniczky, 2025a, pp. 87–113.

51 From the second half of the 1940s, the Hungarian state authorities began to take an increasingly keen interest in the political sympathies and political movements of Hungarians living abroad. Wherever the rules of the host state allowed it, 'mood reports' on organisations of the diaspora were regularly prepared, which most often had to be written by the consul, who was the person who knew the local Hungarians and their organisations best. The practice of 'political mood reports' only ceased definitively with the regime change of 1989.

52 Cf. for example the provisions of the Citizenship Act that came into force during the Rákosi dictatorship: paras. 9 and 10 of Act LX of 1948 on Hungarian Citizenship, and paras. 20, 27 and 28 of BM Decree 600/1949 (I. 23.) on the enactment and implementation of Act LX of 1948 on Hungarian Citizenship.

of another country. The issuing of visas, and later the replacement and exchange of passports for visiting family members abroad, also fell to the consuls. Although the number of cases rose steadily until 1989, these tasks remained manageable until the change of regime, as until 1989 the possibility for Hungarian citizens to leave Hungary was limited.

Table 3: Hungarian citizens' foreign trips[53]

Year	**Number of foreign trips abroad** (in thousand)
1937	220
1964	1500
1988	10800
1989	14500
2023	c. 18000

One of the most important tasks of the consular service was to ensure access to the same quality of services in all regions. This was mainly possible through diplomatic negotiations due to t he small size of the country. Hungary, like most socialist countries, sought to conclude bilateral consular agreements with as many countries as possible, which regulated the privileges and immunities of consuls on the one hand, and their duties and the scope of their activities on the other. The possibilities for consular service thus depended on the success of the negotiations with the country concerned. A significant change in this respect was the accession to the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention, which contained normative rules on both consular privileges and immunities and consular functions. As far as consular functions are concerned, the 1963 VCC defined consular functions in broad terms and thus gave states considerable leeway. The ratification of the VCC does not preclude the conclusion of bilateral consular conventions, and in fact explicitly encourages the conclusion of such conventions.[54] The VCC states that '[n]othing in the present Convention shall preclude states from concluding international agreements confirming or supplementing or extending or amplifying the provisions thereof'.[55]

In practice, this section has helped to make the VCC the basic convention, since bilateral consular conventions have gone beyond the VCC and have defined their own content in relation to it.

Ad b) Returning to consular functions, let us examine the relevant section of the Convention![56]

53 The table was compiled by the author.

54 Accordingly, Hungary has concluded consular conventions even after the ratification of the VCC. See, for example, the consular conventions concluded with Kazakhstan (Act VI of 2006), Cyprus (Act V of 2000), Portugal (Act LXXVI of 2006) or Russia (Act X of 2003).

55 Art. 73(2) of the VCC. (Parts in italics are my own highlights (E.D.)).

56 Art. 5 of the VCC.

Consular functions consist of:

a) protecting, in the receiving state, the interests of the sending state and of its nationals, both individuals and corporate bodies, within the limits permitted by international law;
b) furthering the development of commercial, economic, cultural and scientific relations between the sending state and the receiving state and otherwise promoting friendly relations between them in accordance with the provisions of the present Convention;
c) ascertaining by all lawful means the conditions and developments in the 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;
d) issuing passports and travel documents to nationals of the sending state, and visas or appropriate documents to persons intending to travel to the sending state;
e) helping and assisting nationals, both individuals and corporate bodies of the sending state;
f) acting as notary and civil registrar and in capacities of a similar kind, and performing certain functions of an administrative nature, provided that there is nothing contrary thereto in the laws and regulations of the receiving state;
g) safeguarding the interests of nationals, both individuals and corporate bodies of the sending states in cases of succession mortis causa in the territory of the receiving state, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the receiving state;
h) safeguarding, within the limits imposed by the laws and regulations of the receiving state, the interests of minors and other persons lacking full capacity who are nationals of the sending state, particularly where any guardianship or trusteeship is required with respect to such persons;
i) subject to the practices and procedures obtaining in the receiving state, representing or arranging appropriate representation for nationals of the sending state before the tribunals and other authorities of the receiving state, for the purpose of obtaining, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the receiving state, provisional measures for the preservation of the rights and interests of these nationals, where, because of absence or any other reason, such nationals are unable at the proper time to assume the defence of their rights and interests;
j) transmitting judicial and extrajudicial documents or executing letters rogatory or commissions to take evidence for the courts of the sending state in accordance with international agreements in force or, in the absence of such international agreements, in any other manner compatible with the laws and regulations of the receiving state;
k) exercising rights of supervision and inspection provided for in the laws and regulations of the sending state in respect of vessels having the nationality

of the sending state, and of aircraft registered in that state, and in respect of their crews;

l) extending assistance to vessels and aircraft mentioned in subpara. (k) of this article, and to their crews, taking statements regarding the voyage of a vessel, examining and stamping the ship's papers, and, without prejudice to the powers of the authorities of the receiving state, conducting investigations into any incidents which occurred during the voyage, and settling disputes of any kind between the master, the officers and the seamen insofar as this may be authorised by the laws and regulations of the sending state;

m) performing any other functions entrusted to a consular post by the sending state which are not prohibited by the laws and regulations of the receiving state or to which no objection is taken by the receiving state or which are referred to in the international agreements in force between the sending state and the receiving state.

It is evident from the first reading that the section consists of one long list of thirteen items. On closer examination, however, the text can be broken down into three larger sections:

ba) general terms of reference;

bb) specific terms of reference;

bc) general authorisation to update consular tasks.

The *general terms of reference* aim to define the scope of consular competence. To this end, Art. 5, points a) to c):

a) state that the consul's basic duty is to protect the interests of natural and legal persons belonging to the sending state (consular protection);

b) stipulate that the consul may be active in other areas of cooperation in addition to his or her advocacy duties, in particular 'furthering the development of commercial, economic, cultural and scientific relations';

c) has a fundamental right to freedom of information and information on all these activities (right to report).

Under the *specific terms of reference*, the legislator lists the areas of consular protection and the most important tasks related to them (Art. 5, points d) – e) of the VCC). Since the VCC was drafted in the early 1960s, it covers both the old and the new 'world', i.e. the former and the modern tasks of the consul.

Two of the former functions of the consul are mentioned in the section: the power of supervision and inspection of vessels (Point k)) is one of the oldest functions of the consul. Point l)), a remnant of the former consular jurisdiction, allows the consul to settle 'all disputes of any kind' of the ship's crew ('between the master, the officers and the seamen'). The importance of the protection of consular interests is not only emphasised in the general terms of reference (Point a)) but is also specifically set out in the specific terms of reference as a general duty to provide assistance

(Point e)). Closely linked to this point is the protection of the interests of minors and incapacitated persons. As it is a specific task, it is also specifically mentioned in the text (Point h)).[57]

The tasks expected of the consultant in the modern world (which were new in 1963 but customary in 2024) are:

1) issuing travel documents and visas (Point d));
2) civil status matters (Point f));
3) notarial matters (Point f));
4) probate cases (Point g));
5) judicial and administrative assistance (Point j));
6) consular representation in judicial and administrative proceedings (Point i)).

The last two points need some elaboration. The VCC provides that legal aid may be provided on the basis of contracts, but in the absence of contracts, it may be provided by any other means (i.e. based on customs or reciprocity!). Although there have been a number of legal assistance conventions in the six decades since the VCC was drafted, Hungarian consular practice has remained essentially unchanged: the consul will always forward requests for legal assistance to the appropriate authorities whenever possible. However, it is important to emphasise that in these cases the consul has no substantive decision-making power (as in the majority of the tasks listed in Art. 5) but must only forward the requests as a kind of postman.

The VCC mentions consular representation in judicial and administrative matters among the consular tasks. However, it is important to emphasise – and Hungarian practice has taken the same position – that such representation is limited in time and subject matter: it can only be temporary and involve taking measures that are indispensable until the action of the right holder. In other words, this provision also falls more within the scope of the consul's general duty to provide assistance.

Finally, the last point (Point m)) of Art. 5 sets out a *general authorisation* for consular functions. The consul may perform any other functions conferred on him by the sending state, provided that they are not prohibited by the law of the receiving state, or are not opposed by the receiving state, or are provided for by international agreements between the sending and receiving states. The rule is clear, but why is it necessary? Firstly, to adapt the consul's tasks to changes over time. This section will, for example, be the legal basis for consular functions in relation to diasporas if there is a significant Hungarian diaspora in the host country.[58] Furthermore, this section will also allow the consul's tasks to be adapted to regional specificities.

In the light of the past and present tasks of the consul, the following observations can be made about the changes in the tasks of Hungarian consuls: a) the tasks of the Hungarian consul have changed significantly several times during the 20th century;

57 So, in Art. 5, the consul's general duty of assistance is set out in two points, (e) and (h).

58 For example, (*inter alia*) there is a significant Hungarian diaspora in the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and Australia.

b) the changes in the remit were partly due to historical events and processes and partly to changes in legislation; c) most of the tasks known today as consular tasks, although they existed before, became a dominant part of the consular portfolio in the second half of the 20th century; d) the creation and then widespread adoption of the 1963 Vienna Consular Convention, while encouraging the conclusion of bilateral consular conventions, paved the way for the standardisation of consular functions.

4. The Impact of EU Accession on the Hungarian Consular System (2004–2014)

4.1. The Road to EU Accession

The Hungarian government had been trying to move closer to Western European integration – officially known as the European Union only since 1993 – even before the regime change. The most important result of this was the conclusion of a trade and economic agreement with the EEC in 1988, the first of the COMECON countries to do so, followed by the establishment of diplomatic relations in the same year. However, although the 1989 regime change opened up several other options for the country,[59] the Hungarian people finally chose the Euro-Atlantic integration, which they confirmed by two referendums.[60] Before joining the EU, the three main goals of the foreign policy strategy of independent Hungary were: a) Euro-Atlantic integration, which implied joining the various institutions and the EU; b) the development of a new system of good neighbourly and regional relations; c) the development of a new national policy towards Hungarians living beyond the borders, especially Hungarian communities in neighbouring states. EU accession in 2004 made it necessary to rethink all elements of this strategy. The primary objective, Euro-Atlantic integration, has been achieved, while the second objective, neighbourhood and regional relations, has largely become intra-EU relations, especially after Romania's accession in 2007.[61] To a significant extent, this has also affected Hungarian policy towards

59 For example, the declaration of neutrality, which was advocated by Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy in 1956. For the foreign policy options open to Hungary, see: Gazdag, 2021, pp. 87–88.

60 In the 1997 referendum on Hungary's accession to NATO, more than 85% of those present voted in favour. In the 2003 referendum on Hungary's accession to the European Union, more than 83% of those present voted in favour.

61 After 2007, of Hungary's seven neighbours, only Ukraine and Serbia remained outside the European Union, but both are currently candidates (Serbia: since 2012, and Ukraine: since 2022).

Hungarian minorities beyond the borders – mainly because it initially appeared[62] that minority issues and disputes within the European Union would become more manageable.[63]

By joining the EU, Hungary became a member of a political-economic community that sought to create closer integration between the countries of the continent.[64] The reform processes[65] that have been dragging on for many years have stalled at several points, but there is no doubt that they have facilitated communication between Member States and made it easier to establish various forms of cooperation. EU standards have been introduced into national legislation and the EU's organisational structure has begun to organise an autonomous EU external action service.[66] In the following, we will examine the impact of these developments on the functioning of the Hungarian consular service, the areas in which it has become easier and more difficult to operate, and the directions for further development that have emerged over the past two decades.

4.2. The Emergence of EU Law in Consular Work

Aspects of EU law were already present in Hungarian consular work long before EU accession. The 2001 Consular Act stated in its final provisions that the legislator would ensure the conformity of Hungarian legislation with EU law by issuing ministerial decrees.[67] The approximation of legislation accelerated after 2004, and EU legislation gradually appeared in all areas of consular work. Perhaps most recently

62 The Copenhagen criteria adopted by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993 included 'respect for and protection of minority rights' as a condition for EU membership. The Hungarian jurist Ferenc Mádl, who has been researching the legal framework of European integration for decades, considered the Copenhagen criteria to be a half-solution from the very beginning. In contrast, he believed – and has stated this in all his political positions – that, in view of the large number of minorities (now known as autochthonous, national minorities and ethnic groups) in almost all EU Member States, it was not sufficient to examine the respect and protection of minority rights only when new members joined the EU, but that uniform minority assessments should be carried out at certain intervals, under the same conditions for all EU members, and that the implementation of the findings should be monitored at a later date. The treatment of the Minority SafePack Initiative, one of the few successful European citizens' initiatives, by EU institutions has shown that the EU is currently committing to real minority protection only in words. See also: next footnote.

63 The EU's handling of the Benes decrees case demonstrates its disinterest and insensitivity to real minority issues. For the application of the Benes decrees in Slovakia in 2020 see for example: Ablonczy, 2022; Fiala-Butora, 2022, pp. 171–193.

64 Point 1 of the EU Treaty, originally introduced by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

65 The reform packages are marked by the major treaties: Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997), Nice (2001), Lisbon (2007).

66 Cf. 2010/427/EU: Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service.

67 Act XLVI of 2001, para. 24

in the area of consular protection and visa policy, where they have become very important in a short period of time. The former include the possibility of issuing a European temporary passport (ETD)[68,69] and assistance to EU citizens in distress (including assistance in evacuation).[70] In the case of the visa processing, the legislation on the Visa Information System (VIS) and the EU's Visa Code started to be applied in Hungary in the form of an EU regulation.[71] A number of directives relating to the movement, crossing and residence of persons were transposed by the Hungarian Parliament in two Acts in 2007.[72] However, the EU legislation has brought significant changes not only to the substantive and procedural rules for issuing visas, but also to the infrastructure of consular offices. After Hungary's accession to Schengen, it became inevitable to ensure a high level of security at visa issuing offices (e.g. security locked doors, bulletproof windows, alarmed visa issuing rooms), which led to a significant restructuring of the consular infrastructure in several places.

The most significant change in passport administration came after Hungary's entry into the EU: the introduction of biometric passports.[73] The introduction of changes to both the appearance and the content of Hungarian passports started in 2006, took several years and was fully implemented in 2011, following the introduction of biometric passport applications in the Pacific.[74] Later, also thanks to EU legislation, the appearance and content of Hungarian ID cards changed significantly.[75] The ID card used for identification purposes in Hungary should be mentioned here for two reasons: firstly, because after Hungary became a member of the EU, many of its non-EU neighbouring countries also accepted it as a travel document (e.g. Croatia before 2013 or Serbia (still)), and the changes to the ID card are

68 From the beginning, the Government Decree (Government Decree No. 197/2006 (27.IX.)) uses the term 'European travel document (ETD)', but since the ETD is in practice a temporary passport, I prefer to use this term in the text.

69 For more on the ETD, see: Csatlós, 2017, pp. 7–14; Csatlós, 2019, pp. 10–20.

70 Cf. the following decisions: the Decision of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 19 December 1995 on the protection of citizens of the European Union by diplomatic missions and consular posts and the Decision of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 25 June 1996 on the creation of a temporary travel document.

71 See Regulation (EC) No. 767/2008 concerning the visa information system and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas (VIS regulation), and Regulation (EC) No. 810/2009 establishing the EU's Visa Code.

72 See Act I. of 2007 on the entry and residence of persons with the right of free movement and residence and Act II of 2007 on the entry and residence of third-country nationals (the latter was replaced in 2023 by a new Act (Act XC of 2023 on the general rules for the entry and residence of third-country nationals)).

73 See Council Regulation (EC) No. 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States.

74 The first Hungarian biometric passports in the South Pacific region were issued by the author of this article in the second half of 2011, as the Hungarian Consul in Canberra.

75 See Council Regulation (EC) No. 428/2009 of 5 May 2009 setting up a Community regime for the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items; Kiss and Szegő, 2017, pp. 54–65.

therefore also considered as a change to the travel document. On the other hand, for certain citizenship procedures, it was also possible to apply for an ID card at consular offices abroad after 2011, so the changes to the law on ID cards to comply with EU legislation have clearly affected the consular service. The first part of the changes, the possibility to apply abroad and the introduction of biometrics, came in the first half of the 2010s, while further developments will make the possibility to apply for an ID card in consular offices almost complete by the early 2020s.

Euro-Atlantic integration and Hungary's membership in the EU have also had an impact on the functioning of the Hungarian consular service, not only through EU rule-making, but also through opportunities such as the availability of EU funding. The best example is the creation of the consular service's own electronic database, the Consular Information System (CIS), the development of which started well before EU accession in 1999 under the PHARE programme. Thanks to the CIS, a growing part of the document flow, which had previously been carried out in a number of isolated systems in different filing books, has become electronic, which has significantly accelerated consular procedures. Although it was a national system, the most significant improvements have been and are still being made in the light of EU and Schengen regulations. In the long term, the system has evolved from a filing system into a closed system for multi-directional communication and data transmission, and has become compatible with several national and EU systems.[76]

The Hungarian civil registry system has also been affected from two sides by EU accession. On the one hand, the modernisation of the system has been achieved with EU support,[77] and on the other hand, thanks to EU regulations, the usability of Hungarian birth certificates abroad has been increased.[78] The implementation of the latter has imposed some additional burdens[79] on the Hungarian consular service, but the benefits – mainly in terms of facilitating the administration of Hungarian clients abroad – are much more significant. The situation is therefore similar to the CIS: the development, which was implemented with the help of EU funding, had to be made suitable for handling EU-compliant forms. The development itself, the electronic birth register, has brought significant changes not only in Hungarian civil registry offices but also in Hungarian consulates abroad – but only in the period after 2014,

76 For CIS, see F. Tóth, 2021a, p. I/305.

77 Ministry of Interior of Hungary, no date.

78 For the legal background to the apostille exemption and the annex on multilingualism, see: Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 on promoting the free movement of citizens by simplifying the requirements for presenting certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2012.

79 More specifically, the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 has been both a relief and a challenge for the Hungarian consular service. Not having to use the apostille for documents used in EU Member States has had the effect of reducing and speeding up the paperwork (and has also made the administration cheaper), while the addition of the multilingual form to the birth certificate has made the procedure somewhat more complicated (but its usefulness is beyond question!).

as the Electronic Registration Book (ERB)[80] was only launched in 2015 and it took years to load the system with data and to implement the necessary improvements for full operation. The main impacts of the ERB on consular work are as follows:

a) the involvement of consuls in birth registration. Whereas previously, with a few exceptions, consuls were only involved in the civil status procedures as collaborators, filling in forms, validating signatures, verifying data, transmitting forms and copies and sometimes also providing the necessary translations, from the second half of 2010 onwards, in some consulates they have also been responsible for entering and recording data in the system. The breakthrough is still only partial, but the direction of progress is clear: sooner or later all consuls will have to be involved in the full range of civil status procedures;
b) the electronic issuance of civil status documents. Previously, the relevant Hungarian registrar issued the birth, marriage and death certificates from the paper registration books and sent them by courier to the consulate indicated by the client in his or her application. Following the launching of ERB, the consul abroad can now print out the certificates directly for the clients. This means that applying for Hungarian (birth/marriage/death) certificates abroad has become much faster, easier and cheaper in a short time. Thanks to electronic development on the one hand, and on the other hand because the consul has become the master of the matter, instead of his former intermediary role.[81]

Thus, we have witnessed a two-way process: besides the application of EU rules directly affecting the consular field, the database developments that fundamentally affect the work of the Hungarian consular service were implemented with EU support, and during the implementation, particular attention had to be paid to compliance with EU rules and compatibility with other Member States and EU systems.[82] We have also seen that the developments themselves started before Hungary's accession to the EU, but were largely carried out in the period 2004–2014. However, their impact – to which we will return in the next chapter – was almost entirely felt in the period 2014–2024.

80 For ERB, see: F. Tóth, 2021b, p. I/276.

81 Unless it is pre-2015, data that still needs to be transferred from the paper register to the electronic civil status system. In such a case, the registrar holding the register is responsible. The consul will therefore have to wait and continue to be referred to another person, but in practice such cases – foreign related – are usually taken in advance.

82 See for example, in the case of CIS, access to the Schengen Information System and the Visa Information System. At the Member State level, the compatibility of CIS with the passport register, the Hungarian address register and the civil status register is worth mentioning.

4.3. Broadening the Scope for Cooperation

After 1989, Hungary not only built new relations with Western Europe, but – as we have seen from the foreign policy strategy of the time – it also made a strong effort to establish closer cooperation with regional partners. The best known of these was the Visegrád Group, established in 1991, which initially consisted of three, and subsequently four members. This – political – agreement was later complemented by a trade (CEFTA) and then an education and research (V4 Fund) co-operations. Without the accession of the states of the region to the European Union, a regional association with several legs could probably have been created, which – as a 'small EU'[83] – could have opened the way to foreign policy cooperation. The EU's 'eastern enlargement' in 2004 and subsequent accessions have made it clear that regional relations should be cultivated and developed within the EU and Euro-Atlantic cooperation. The V4 has also continued to exist within the EU because of the protection of the interests of its members, and the common interests of the V4 states have in some cases been able to be reflected, at least at the planning level, in the area of consular relations (Visegrad House project).[84] Finally, the V4 has remained a loose political cooperation, clearly as a result of the accession of the states of the region to the EU,[85] which, despite the fact that the possibilities for cooperation between the Member States within the European Union are much wider than before, can be deepened in certain areas on a case-by-case and more permanent basis.

4.3.1. Areas of Consular Protection and Visa Issuance

From the point of view of consular work, the most topical areas of cooperation are consular protection and visa issuance. While in the former areas, the sub-areas and depth of cooperation are primarily determined by the common interest of Member States, in the case of visas the same is imposed – normatively – by EU legislation.[86]

First, let us review the main areas of consular cooperation, as they were summarised in the mid-1990s in the form of Council decisions,[87] not binding but

83 A 'certain degree of unification of the Central European countries' was already mentioned in an early essay of the great Hungarian jurist Ferenc Mádl, written in the early 1950s, see: Domaniczky, 2024a, p. 437.

84 The Visegrad Houses pilot project was implemented in Johannesburg (South Africa) (2011), but the V4 countries are also planning to set up jointly run Visegrad Houses in other locations (Mongolia, Vietnam) to provide the infrastructure for their consular work. See also: https://www.visegradgroup.eu/home/documents/presidency-programs/innovative-visegrad (Accessed: 17 February 2026); Anonymous, 2010, p. 30.

85 Only one institutionalised form has emerged, the V4 Fund, established in 2000 and based in Bratislava, Slovakia.

86 There is an overlap between the two areas, for example where the spouse of an EU citizen needs an EU visa to enter the EU in case of evacuation.

87 See Art. 5 of Decision 95/553/EC and Decision 96/409/CFSP. See also: Becánics, 2018, pp. 149–168; Becánics, 2015, pp. 9–23. See also: Moraru, 2019, pp. 417–462.

facilitating coordination: a) assistance in the event of death; b) assistance in the event of a serious accident or serious illness; c) assistance in the event of arrest or detention; d) assistance to victims of violent crime; e) assisting EU citizens in distress and repatriating them (evacuation); f) European travel document (ETD).

Although the UK's exit from the EU (Brexit) and the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, which has led to numerous travel restrictions, have had a significant impact on passenger numbers, EU citizens still make nearly 100 million trips a year (2024) to countries outside the EU[88] and nearly 20 million EU citizens – more than 4% of the EU population – currently live outside the EU.[89] In significant areas such as Africa, Inner Asia or the South Pacific, the consular network of EU Member States is still incomplete. All of this clearly shows that in the field of consular protection, the EU has already tried to find solutions to real problems after the inclusion of European citizenship in the Maastricht Treaty (1992). Previously, these problems could only be dealt with on the basis of the 1963 Vienna Convention, through bilateral consular agreements or by applying the principle of reciprocity.

Of the above list, the last two, the issuance of temporary travel documents and evacuation, are obviously the most important and largest volume activities. In the case of the ETD, it is sufficient to refer to EU citizens visiting African landlocked countries (e.g. South Sudan, Central African Republic) or the South Pacific islands (e.g. Samoa, Tuvalu), whose return home, if they run into difficulties, is made possible by this temporary travel document.[90] The success of the cooperation is also confirmed by the fact that the ETD will be available in a new format from 2025.[91] As for evacuations, there are many success stories from the last three decades of cooperation between Member States to bring people out of crisis situations, whether following the Arab Spring (in Africa or Asia) or more recently in the Middle East. In these tasks, Hungary has played a prominent role to the best of its ability.[92]

88 This is expected to grow dynamically in the coming years (there are currently 1 billion trips per year within the EU!).

89 For earlier data, see Schiffner, 2012, pp. 506–532. See also: Eileen Denza's book chapter as part of the Commentary on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

90 The legal background and jurisprudence on the scope of eligibility is not yet clear. To give an example, let us consider a Hungarian citizen living in Hungary who, during his previous stay in Australia, married a lady of Philippine nationality. After that he and his wife get into trouble on the Indonesian island of Bali. Who is entitled to consular protection and evacuation by the EU: himself only, or together with his wife? Raising the question a little more practically: can the wife of a Hungarian citizen in the Philippines board a plane sent by the Hungarian state? And can she board an aircraft sent by another EU Member State? For the EU Member States' practice, see: Csatlós, 2019, pp. 112–114.

91 See also Council Directive (EU) 2019/997 of 18 June 2019 establishing an EU temporary travel document and repealing Decision 96/409/CFSP.

92 For example, in 2011, during the Hungarian EU Presidency, Hungary evacuated 29 Romanian, 27 Hungarian, 20 Bulgarian, 8 German and 6 Czech citizens from Libya (for a description of the case, see: F. Tóth 2021b, p. I/339; Wagner, 2011, pp. 6–8).

In practice, the details of the evacuation (e.g. the designation of the lead state)[93] are agreed upon through *local EU consular cooperation*, coordinated by the local EU delegation, if there exists one in the country. Meetings are chaired by the consul of the country holding the rotating EU Presidency. However, local EU consular cooperation also serves as a permanent forum for consultation, where in fact any consular issue involving several EU Member States can be raised and discussed. The most frequent topic are, of course, Schengen matters and data. This means not only specific issues but also, for example, regular feedback on the functioning of local visa representation agreements.[94] In some places, a V4 group may also function as a forum for reconciliation of interests within local EU consular cooperation, but its effectiveness depends largely on the current state of cooperation between the V4 countries.[95]

4.3.2. The Legal Aid Conventions

Mutual legal assistance treaties are a traditional area of consular work, the earliest such treaties being concluded by Hungary in the mid-19th century. 'Mutual assistance treaties are international conventions which provide for the reciprocal execution of requests for the performance of certain official acts between the courts and other authorities of the contracting states'.[96] In addition to criminal and civil conventions on judicial proceedings, there are increasingly more conventions on mutual assistance in a number of areas (e.g. taxation, service of documents, civil registry) which cover the activities of individual public authorities. These conventions are generally intergovernmental, but EU legislation has already reached the borders of this area. Whether we think of the so-called Brussels IIa Regulation[97] or the 2016 EU Regulation on the simplified use of public documents,[98] there is a certain degree of standardisation from a consular point of view, with the aim of speeding up administrative procedures and making it easier for EU citizens to

93 See European Union guidelines on the implementation of the consular Lead State concept (2008/C 317/06) and Council Directive (EU) 2015/637 of 20 April 2015 on the coordination and cooperation measures to facilitate consular protection for unrepresented citizens of the Union in third countries and repealing Decision 95/553/EC.

94 For example, Hungary is represented in Australia and New Zealand by Switzerland for Schengen visa matters. For the visa representation agreements in force for Hungary, see the website of the Hungarian Consular Service: https://konzinfo.mfa.gov.hu/vizumkiadas-magyarorszag-neveben (Accessed: 18 October 2024).

95 In Australia, for example, a V4 cooperation on diplomatic matters worked very well between 2011 and 2015, allowing V4 consuls to work more closely together on consular matters.

96 Szondy, 1947, pp. 484–485.

97 Council Regulation (EC) No. 2201/2003 of 27 November 2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1347/2000, is mentioned here because it was the legislation in force during the period under review (2004–2014).

98 See Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 on promoting the free movement of citizens by simplifying the requirements for presenting certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2012.

deal with their affairs. Whether by reference to these or not, there is still room for improvement in this area for Member States. Firstly, in relation to third countries, where the EU's more favourable negotiating position than that of the Member States promises greater success in concluding legal assistance treaties (in which the EU can then act as an independent player in its own right, alongside the Member States), secondly, in simplifying certain procedures and forms within the EU, which the EU can easily achieve through its own legal instruments, and thirdly, within the EU, Member States or a group of Member States can more easily reach agreements with each other on a particular issue (e.g. birth registration matters).

4.3.3. Other Delegation and Representation Agreements

Hungary itself recognised the potential for cooperation within the EU relatively early on. The 2012 Amendment to the 2001 Consular Act reads that 'the legal conditions for closer cooperation with the consular services of EU partners will be created by allowing Hungarian consular officers to provide diplomatic supervision of documents issued by the authorities of the host state not only in Hungary but also, by agreement, for use in the Member States of the European Union'.[99] For example, on the basis of this section, the Hungarian Trade Office in Taiwan provides diplomatic endorsement of public documents issued by the Taiwanese authorities for use in Bulgaria.[100] For the time being, the Consular Act does not allow for such agreements in other cases, but the model exists and is a clear help for small Central European countries, so that in the medium term legislation in this area – for example for certain certificates, for which the practice is already permissive[101] – is expected to move in a positive direction.

4.4. The Possible Role of the EU External Action Service (EEAS) in Consular Work

The creation of the European Union's external action service was already foreseen in the European Constitution.[102] However, it was only set up in 2010, following the strengthening of the powers of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs (Lisbon Treaty, 2009).[103] From a consular perspective, EU delegations initially served as insti-

99 Explanatory notes to the proposal of the Act CLXIX of 2012, para. 5.

100 Although currently not permissible by consular law, the related field of super-legalisation, the legalisation, would also lend itself to the development of similar cooperation.

101 This is the case of *certificates of existence* (Art. 14 (1) (c) of Act XLVI of 2001), where in some cases the Hungarian consul also certifies the authenticity of the signature on forms issued by pension authorities of other countries.

102 See European Constitution, Art. III-296.

103 Although there is no space here to elaborate further, it is worth emphasising the positive impact of the Lisbon Treaty on practical consular work and EU consular cooperation. For a general overview, see: Wouters and Duquet, 2011, pp. 3–20.

tutions providing the administrative background for local EU consular cooperation. However, the crises of the 2010s and the early 2020s have shown that the consular background of the EU external action service, which is essentially a diplomatic service, needs to be strengthened as soon as possible. The EEAS crisis centre in 2022 was born out of this realisation.

In the consular field, the EEAS, for the time being, focuses on strengthening the cooperation necessary for consular protection, and filling in the gaps in the competences of the Member States. Some developments, such as the deployment of an EU consul in the larger EU delegations or the creation of a separate EU consular information portal, would seem to be a logical step in the current situation, but are hampered mainly by the desire to preserve the competences of the Member States.

---

5. The Place of Consular Services in a New Foreign Affairs Concept (2014–2024)

5.1. On the External Relations Strategy

Joining the EU has achieved one of Hungary's most important foreign policy objectives. Accession not only meant the realisation of a foreign policy goal, but also required significant changes in the other two elements of foreign policy strategy – relations with the United States and regional relations. However, the new foreign policy priorities were slow and gradual to emerge; the uncertainty was mainly driven by intense domestic political infighting. In the six years between accession in May 2004 and the formation of Viktor Orbán's second government, four governments succeeded each other in quick succession,[104] focusing primarily on economic policy, and foreign affairs, including consular functions, that were reshaped accordingly.

In the field of foreign affairs, continuity was made even more prominent by the new involvement of law professor and former Foreign Minister, János Martonyi. However, the importance of political aspects in the measures of the 3rd Orbán government (2014–2018), which took office in 2014, increased compared to previous government cycles, and this change was also emphasised by the change of ministers in the field of foreign affairs.

The talented young communications specialist who took office at that time, Péter Szijjártó, is now the EU's longest-serving Foreign Minister – with nearly three full

104 At the time of accession to the EU (1 May 2004), Péter Medgyessy (elected in 2002) was still Prime Minister, but in the autumn of 2004 Ferenc Gyurcsány formed a government (1st Gyurcsány government, 2004–2006). After the elections in 2006, Gyurcsány remained Prime Minister (2nd Gyurcsány government, 2006–2009). After the resignation of Ferenc Gyurcsány, Gordon Bajnai functioned as Prime Minister until the next general elections (Bajnai government, 2009–2010).

government cycles behind him.[105] Thanks to the personal (and structural) stability, it was also possible to implement profound changes that affected the infrastructure, personnel and tasks of the consular service.

5.2. Key Issues for Infrastructure Change

The pre-2010 government's spending cut plans included a foreign affairs austerity package. A prominent element of this were the foreign mission closures announced by the Bajnai government. 'Initially, 42 embassies and consulates were to be closed down, but this number was eventually reduced to 12 (4 embassies, 8 consulates-general)'.[106] However, Viktor Orbán – as leader of the opposition at the time – had already predicted that 'if they win the elections, they will certainly restore (…)'[107] some of the foreign representations. 'After all, wherever there is a significant number of Hungarians, we have a duty to maintain state representation, which is a link that we simply cannot give up', said President László Sólyom during his visit to Sydney, Australia.[108] This initially meant cutting back and preserving a network of over 100 missions, which in 2008 the previous government had tried to fix at between 80 and 100. Around 2010, it was not a question of ideological debate, but of deciding, on the basis of professional arguments, a professional question that had already arisen around 1985, namely how large a network of foreign missions a country of this size and endowment could maintain.

Table 4: Hungarian missions abroad after the regime change of 1989[109]

Year	Number
1990	88
2006	90
2010	88
2024	147

However, after 2014, as the concept of political governance became more pronounced, the network of external representations also took on a representational function. The subsequent increase in size reflected the ambition of a confident

105 See MTI, 2023.
106 Csapó, 2009, p. 4.
107 Anonymous, 2009, p. 11.
108 Anonymous, 2009, p. 11.
109 The table was compiled by the author.

country that wanted to assert itself in world politics in its own right.[110] The enlarged Hungarian network has also been given a number of new tasks – for example, in the conducting of elections[111] – but its greatest benefit is undoubtedly in terms of consular administration and consular protection. Wherever Hungary opens a new mission, ensuring consular functions has so far been a priority. By *de facto* dividing the foreign affairs staff into domestic and foreign staff, the increased demand for professional personnel has also been dealt with – based on previous experience.

Within the continuously growing consular network – thanks to the accelerated development of the legal framework for digitalisation since 2010 – the interconnection of various registers of particular importance from a consular perspective has been practically completed. It is primarily due to this that in the majority of consular procedures, the processing times have been significantly shortened in the 15 years since 2010,[112] and the range of available services has been continuously expanding.[113]

5.3. Transforming the Role of the Consul

All this leads to another area, the issue of staffing. On the one hand, the increase in the number of consular posts requires an increase in the number of consular staff. On the other hand, the increase in the number of cases that can be handled

110 According to international data, Hungary had 104 foreign representations in 2016 and 140 in 2023 (146 in 2024), moving up from the 30th to the 20th place in terms of the size of the international network of foreign representations. In other words, after 2010, the size of the Hungarian network was comparable to that of smaller Central European countries, and now it has more constituents than the foreign representation network of Poland, traditionally the strongest player in the region (and growing). For international figures, see: https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org (Accessed: 29 October 2024), for slightly different Hungarian data see: https://konzinfo.mfa.gov.hu/kulkepviseletek/osszes (Accessed: 29 October 2024), and Annex 1 of the Decree 3/2017 (28.II.) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the classification of missions and the detailed rules for the calculation of the basic foreign currency salary and reimbursement of expenses for persons on long-term foreign service (which lists 166 Hungarian missions as of 13 November 2024).

111 For more information, see: Domaniczky, 2025b.

112 I would just like to give you a striking example from my own practice. In 2011, in Canberra, Australia, it took approximately 21–30 days to obtain a Hungarian certificate of good conduct, which is a significant time compared to its 90-day-validity. From 2015, we were able to issue this certificate electronically, with official translation, on the spot, which in most cases was done within 2 working days. Similar results could be mentioned for example in the area of birth certificates. Another example, from New Zealand: in 2011 we issued passports with a one-year-validity, which took about 7–12 weeks to renew (as we did not have a local embassy in Wellington). After we started issuing biometric passports in 2011, and I organised the first consular reception day in New Zealand, we were able to issue 10-year passports from 2012 and the processing time was reduced to 5–6 weeks. And now, 10-year biometric passports – obtained at the Hungarian Embassy in Wellington, which opened in 2015 – can arrive with a turnaround time of 2–4 weeks.

113 Just to give you a few examples from my own practice: in 2011, we were able to deal with a few basic issues – in several steps – for the most important types of cases (passport, visa, authentication, birth, marriage and death registration). In 2018, we were able to handle dozens of case types – mostly in a one-step-process – at the then-opened Sydney Consular Office.

at consulates shifts consular tasks away from diplomacy and towards administrative work. In other words, the consul is becoming more and more of an administrator, and the consular office is moving from being a diplomatic office to a place of administration. After 1989, the number of cases increased severalfold as global tourism as a phenomenon affected the Hungarian citizens, and has continued to rise. As the number of consular cases increases, cases and clients increasingly lose their individuality and become numbers and data. This is a worldwide trend that is also having an impact in Hungary. After 2010, the government responded by simplifying consular work. The tasks of a consul are, according to the VCC, multifaceted, but according to the Convention (Art. 5), there is no obstacle to some consuls specialising in certain tasks. Thus, after 2010 – but especially from 2014 – the mostly uniform consular functions and competences before 2010 started to diverge and the use of specialised consuls and specialised diplomats became common. At the same time, the 'ordinary' consul retained his or her official functions and became an administrative employee working abroad, whose main task was to ensure a swift and professional conduct of business. At the same time, and especially following the acceleration of technological developments after 2014, consular offices have become a counterpart to domestic (governmental) administrative centres[114] abroad.

5.4. Re-evaluating the Role of Consular Work in Foreign Affairs

In addition to changes in infrastructure and staffing, the role of consular work itself has also been reassessed, and these changes have been particularly noticeable after 2014. Previously, consular work covered a type of administrative activities that was rarely given news value, and even then, it was communicated at lower, professional levels. After 2014, however, a minister skilled in communications began to take charge of some consular affairs. This involved not only cases of consular protection that sometimes entailed greater publicity, but also the expansion of the consular network and possibly the communication of consular cooperation. This level of publicity, the elevation of consular affairs to the political sphere, initially seemed unusual, but in several cases – for example, during evacuations or during the period of COVID pandemic – it proved to be particularly effective. In addition to emphasising Hungarian achievements and national efforts, however, the government also – much more quietly – supported EU cooperation in consular matters. Hungary actually participates and plays a role in all consular cooperation that is useful for

114 These governmental offices are called 'kormányablak' (government window) in Hungarian. 'The metropolitan- and county government offices (…) are the territorial state administration bodies of the Government with general competences. They are implementing government functions at the territorial level, and carrying out general state administration powers towards the customers. Government offices – led by government commissioners appointed by the Prime Minister – are operating in each county and the capital city of Budapest'. See more https://kormanyhivatalok.hu/en (Accessed: 9 January 2025).

Hungarian citizens (such as issuing documents or visas), even if this does not appear as a separate, independent topic in the rhetoric.

5.5. Characteristics of the Last Decade

Against this background, the main features of the post-2014 decade in terms of consular work can be summarised as follows: a) the large and steady expansion of the Hungarian diplomatic network has opened up great opportunities for the consular service, which could be an advantageous position in future EU-cooperation regarding consular matters; b) after 2014, compared to the previous period, the (inter-) connection and digitisation of the consular databases accelerated, which created a quick, professional and one-step ('one-stop shop') handling of a significant caseload; c) the transformation of consular offices from diplomatic premises to administrative offices has accelerated, and with it the separation and standardisation of consular tasks also accelerated.

It is important to underline that, although all these changes have been implemented at national level, the country has also used significant EU funds to implement some elements (such as the digitisation of consular databases) and the expansion of the consular network has also had to take into account EU standards (for example, in the establishment of new consular posts). In other words, despite the increasing national character, the impact of EU funds and standards on the Hungarian consular network was also detectable in the period under review.

---

6. What Does the Future Hold?

At the end of our lengthy discussion, we have seen that the European Union has in fact had an impact on the functioning and development of the Hungarian consular service since 1989. This impact is constantly growing and is spreading to more and more areas, even if it is not clearly reflected in government rhetoric or national news. The EU impact is mainly – directly or indirectly – reflected in legislative provisions, but Member States, including Hungary, can also regularly use EU financial resources for various developments. However, the greatest advantage and scope for action, in both the short and long term, lies in the field of cooperation in different consular matters.

The basic question is in what areas and what powers could be exercised at EU level in the consular field. Some of these areas are considered below, *de lege ferenda*.

6.1. Different Forms of Consular Information

The quality of consular information is crucial for the realisation of consular protection. Currently, this task is in the hands of the Member States, which means that, although crisis situations (i.e. natural disasters or armed conflicts or terrorist attacks) most often affect EU citizens from several Member States at the same time, each EU Member State is responsible for providing information to its own nationals. This means that for every trip to a third country, a citizen of a given Member State can rely on their own national consular service and its information. An even more absurd case of this is when EU citizens are endangered in a busy intra-EU destination. This could be, for example, an act of terrorism, where some EU citizens (who are nationals of the Member State concerned) are required to follow the instructions of their national government departments, while other EU citizens are required to follow the instructions of their national consular service.

As keeping national competences – especially those that are visible in the communication channels – in the Member States is quite popular, there is no prospect of progress in the short term. Even though it would be relatively easy to come up with a compromise that would ensure a win-win situation for all actors. For example, if all national consular services had a separate window on their websites where news from the EEAS Crisis Centre could be published – in an unchanged form in all Member States. An EU directive could be used to ensure that copies of national consular protection data sheets are also sent to the EU's external services – as they would have to be requested from Member States in the event of an immediate intervention anyway. And if there is already a single EU consular information point, a telephone version of this could be launched on a trial basis – in different languages. In this way, the framework for an EU consular information mechanism could be gradually defined, without prejudice to the competences of the Member States, and could be built upon further in a second phase.

6.2. Areas of Consular Protectio

Obviously, consular information is already part (or a precondition) of consular protection, but the most frequent area (with around 500–1000 cases per year)[115] is the issuing of the Emergency Travel Document (ETD), which is primarily administered by national consular authorities. Here, due to differences in national practices, it would be particularly useful if the EU External Action Service could take on a coordinating role, which could reduce the number of documents issued incorrectly or without legal basis. For example, the EU crisis centre could also provide a telephone service by consular experts, even by setting up teams of 2-3 people from each Member State, who would have access to the necessary databases and could assist with the issuance of the document.

115 The 2017 data is cited in Csatlós, 2017, p. 9.

In most cases, the evacuation also requires action under the auspices of the EU, because EU citizens can be brought to safety more quickly and efficiently than if the Member States were to act individually. However, an immediate hotline is usually only needed during the emergency period – and this can generally be ensured within the framework of local EU consular cooperation. During the evacuation, the closure or relocation of Member States' foreign missions is often also a question, which frequently requires political consultations, which take place in Brussels. Here, we could expect the process to be accelerated by the involvement of EU delegations (see below).

6.3. The Scope for Developing EU Delegations

The most important point of my proposals is aimed at creating a consular 'leg' of the EU external action service. Here, we may primarily encounter Member States defending their national competences, and secondly, it would be necessary to justify whether there is any justification at all for establishing an independent consular office in EU delegations.

Reversely: since the local EU and local Schengen consular cooperation meetings are regularly held in the buildings of the EU delegations, it would be fortunate, given the nature of the tasks, if each EU mission concerned had a person who is experienced in consular work from his or her own practice, who has already encountered visa issuance issues or evacuation at the national level and is aware of consular interest protection tasks from the practical side. So the consular department itself (even if this meant just one person or a diplomat who had previously done consular work) would have a reason to exist.

However, if such a department were to be established, it would be interesting to see what tasks it could still perform or take over in the longer term. The first place would certainly be given to the issuance of EU ETDs, since the network of EU delegations covers all regions of the world. Their involvement in the issuance of *Schengen visas* could also be considered, since these representations must comply with higher security standards, anyway. The staff of the EU consular department could also be involved in signature authentication, which has already caused difficulties for more than one Member States in providing them in remote regions. However, while the requirement for understanding the signed text might also arise in the case of signature authentication, this criterion does not apply in the case of copy authentication. They could probably also participate in the issuance of birth, marriage and death certificates of EU Member States, provided that the civil registry system of the given Member State is capable of handling electronic birth certificates (for example, Hungary has been able to do this since 2015).

EU consuls could also be involved in performing certain consular protection tasks (for example: visiting a detained EU citizen, preparing a report on their condition), as well as in preparing for evacuation.

The performance of these tasks would only seemingly infringe on the competence of the Member States' consular services, since in reality the EU consular office could only act in an auxiliary capacity, in order to facilitate the life of EU-citizens and their cases' administration, alongside the Member States' consular services, if the latter's services are more easily and cheaply available (for example in certain areas of Central Asia or Central Africa or in Oceania). However, each Member State has its own sensitive data and types of cases. For example, citizenship data or decision-making materials related to the issuance of national visas and residence permits are particularly sensitive – each Member State could continue to retain these within their exclusive competence.

7. Summary

As can be seen from the above, EU membership offers national consular services a number of opportunities for modernisation and fast and cost-effective cooperation, not only in the short and medium term, but also in the long term. However, cooperation can be established not only horizontally, but also vertically, between the EU and Member State levels, since the main goal is to fill the concept of EU citizenship, which has existed for decades, with content, in which the EU could cooperate not only as a regulatory authority, but also – if consular departments of EU delegations were to be established – as a partner.

This would not necessarily mean that the EU's influence would become unilateral. On the contrary: the EU could continue to act – within the framework of COCON[116] – as a regulatory authority, or – by providing for various infrastructural supports – as a donor. The establishment and operation of EU consular departments could make this role more diverse – provided that the Member States also find this form of cooperation positive and forward-looking.

116 It is a working party on consular affairs coordinates consular cooperation within the EU. For its tasks, see www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/working-party-consular-affairs (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

References

Bibliography

Ablonczy, B. (2022) 'A Beneš-dekrétumokra hivatkozva vesznek el magyar tulajdont Szlovákiában. Most, 2022-ben' [Hungarian property in Slovakia is being confiscated under the Beneš Decrees. Now, in 2022], *Valasz online*, 16 February 2022. [Online]. Available at: www.valaszonline.hu/2022/02/16/fiala-butora-janos-benes-dekretumok-szlovakia-interju (Accessed: 13 October 2024).

Anonymous (1922) 'Passzív mérlegek' [Passive balances], *Az Újság*, 20(247), p. 4.

Anonymous (1971) '89 országgal…' [With 89 countries…], *Igaz Szó*, 16(11), pp. 1–3.

Anonymous (1989) 'Mit csinál a tiszteletbeli konzul?' [What does an Honorary Consul do?], *Népszava*, 117(153), p. 4.

Anonymous (1991) 'Ukrajna nem mehet!' [Ukraine must not go!], *Beszélő,* 2(34-35), p. 46.

Anonymous (2009) 'Orbánék a sydney-i konzulátust is újra megnyitnák. Sólyom elítélte a bezárásokat' [Viktor Orban would also reopen the Sydney consulate. President Sólyom condemned the closures], *Magyar Hírlap*, 42(227), p. 11.

Anonymous (2010) 'Erősödő együttműködés' [Strenghtening cooperation], *Dunaújvárosi Hírlap*, 21(52), p. 30.

Antal, T. (2004) 'A konzuli bíráskodás a dualizmus korában. Az 1891. évi XXXI. tc. létrejötte' [Consular jurisdiction in the age of dualism. The establishment of Act XXXI of 1891], *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis. Acta Juridica et Politica. Publicationes Doctorandorum Juridicorum*, pp. 5–52.

Bába, I., Sáringer, J. (eds.) (2021a) *Új Diplomáciai Lexikon I.* [New Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy]. Budapest: Kairosz.

Bába, I., Sáringer, J. (eds.) (2021b) *Új Diplomáciai Lexikon II.* [New Encyclopaedia of Diplomacy]. Budapest: Kairosz.

Becánics, A. (2015) 'Jogalkotási törekvések az európai polgárok összehangolt konzuli védelmének megteremtésére' [Legislative efforts to establish coordinated consular protection for European citizens], *Pro Futuro*, 5(2), pp. 9–23.

Becánics, A. (2018) 'A konzuli védelem 'európaizálódása' – válsághelyzetekben biztosított segítségnyújtás az uniós polgárok számára' [The 'Europeanization' of consular protection – assistance provided to EU citizens in crisis situations], *Jog-Állam-Politika*, 16(2), pp. 149–168.

Becker, P. (ed.) (2004) *A Köztársasági Elnöki Hivatal Évkönyve* [Yearbook of the Office of the President of the Republic]. Budapest: Köztársasági Elnöki Hivatal.

Ministry of the Interior of Hungary (no date) 'Elektronikus anyakönyvi nyilvántartás megvalósítása' [Implementation of electronic civil registry records] *Belügyminisztérium Nyilvántartások Vezetéséért Felelős Helyettes Államtitkárság*, no date [Online]. Available at: www.nyilvantarto.hu/hu/kiemelt_projektek_eanyakonyv (Accessed: 16 October 2024).

Concha, Gy. (1893) *Politikai jegyzetek II.* [Political Notes, vol. 2]. Budapest: Politzer.

Csapó, E. (2009) 'Bajnai-féle vasfüggöny' [PM Bajnai's Iron Curtain], *Kapu*, 21(8-9), (1), p. 4.

Csatlós, E. (2017) 'Az EU ideiglenes úti okmányának helye az EU konzuli védelmi politikájában' [The place of the EU's temporary travel document in the EU's consular protection policy], *Közjogi Szemle*, 10(2), pp. 7–14.

Csatlós, E. (2019) 'Az EU ideiglenes úti okmánya: A reformfolyamat alapjogi megközelítéséből' [The EU's temporary travel document: a fundamental rights approach to the reform process], *Közjogi Szemle*, 12(3), pp. 10–20.

Csatlós, E. (2019) *A konzuli védelem európai közigazgatása* [Consular protection – European administration]. Szeged: Iurisperitus.

Denza, E. (2022) 'Article 46 – Diplomatic and Consular Protection' in Peers, S., Hervey, T., Kenner, J., Ward, A. (eds.) *The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – A Commentary*. Baden: Nomos, pp. 1227–1244; https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748913245.

Denza, E. (ed.) (2016) *Diplomatic Law: Commentary on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Domaniczky, E. (2018) *Australia through Hungarian Eyes*. Budapest: Fakultás.

Domaniczky, E. (2019) 'Centralizációs és decentralizációs tendenciák a délkelet-csendes-óceáni magyar külügyi hálózatban' [Centralisation and decentralisation tendencies in the Hungarian foreign affairs network in the South-East Pacific], *Jura*, 25(1), pp. 257–261.

Domaniczky, E. (2021) 'Elektronikus anyakönyv' [Electronic registration book] in Bába, I., Sáringer, J. (eds.) *Új Diplomáciai Lexikon*. [New Diplomatic Lexicon]. Budapest: Kairosz, p. I/276.

Domaniczky, E. (2024b) *Határterületeken II.* [On Borderlands, vol. II: Australia and Oceania]. Budapest: Mádl Ferenc Intézet.

Domaniczky, E. (2025a) 'The Consul and the Hungarian diaspora. Legal background and practical considerations', *Review of European and Comparative Law*, 61(2), pp. 87–113; https://doi.org/10.31743/recl.18488.

Domaniczky, E. (2025b) 'Voting at the missions abroad. The current Hungarian regulations, with special regard to the duties of the consuls' (article, under press at Acta Universitatis Sapientiae).

Domaniczky, E. (ed.) (2024a) *Az ismeretlen Mádl Ferenc. Írások tőle és róla* [Ferenc Mádl, the unknown president. Papers by and about him]. Budapest: Mádl Ferenc Intézet.

Éliás, P. (1986) 'Egy klasszikus jogintézmény: a tiszteletbeli konzul' [A classic legal institution: the honorary consul], *Külpolitika*, 13(3), pp. 107–121.

F. Tóth, G. (2021a) 'Konzuli Információs Rendszer' [Consular Information System] in Bába, I., Sáringer, J. (eds.) *Új Diplomáciai Lexikon I.* Budapest: Kairosz, p. 305.

F. Tóth, G. (2021b) 'Uniós polgárok közös konzuli védelme' [Consular protection on European level] in Bába, I. Sáringer, J. (eds.) *Új Diplomáciai Lexikon I.* Budapest: Kairosz, p. 339.

Fiala-Butora, J. (2022) 'A kollektív bűnösség árnyékában' in Gyurcsík, I. (ed.) *Gyönyör József emlékkötet – 'Lesz-e végre igazi hazánk?'*. Budapest: Méry Ratio, pp. 171–193.

Gazdag, F. (2021) *Három évtized magyar külpolitikája (1989–2018)* [Three Decades of Hungarian Foreign Policy (1989–2018)]. Budapest: Ludovika.

Gresznáryk, P. (1977) 'A Magyar Népköztársaság konzuli kapcsolatai' [Consular Relations of the Hungarian People's Republic], *Külpolitika*, 4(4), pp. 32–41.

Herczegh, G. (1962) *A gyarmati kérdés és a nemzetközi jog* [The Colonial Question and International Law]. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.

Horváth, J. (2020) *Magyar diplomácia. A magyar állam külpolitikai összeköttetései… (1815–1918)* [The foreign policy connections of the Hungarian state... (1815–1918)]. Várpalota: Trianon Múzeum.

Jónás, E., Szondy, V. (1947) *Diplomáciai lexicon* [Lexicon of Diplomacy]. Budapest: Kulcsár Andor Nyomdája.

Kasza, P. (2015) *Egy korszakváltás szemtanúja. Brodarics István pályaképe* [A witness to an epochal change. The career of István Brodarics]. Budapest: Kronosz.

Kiss, T., Szegő, T. (2017) 'A személyazonosítás múltja, jelene és jövője – e-Személyazonosító igazolványra épített szolgáltatási lehetőségek' [The Past, Present, and Future of Personal Identification – Service Opportunities Based on the e-Personal Identification Card], *Új Magyar Közigazgatás*, 10(2), pp. 54–65.

Lers, V. (1904) *A konzuli bíráskodás intézménye* [The institution of consular jurisdiction]. Budapest: Lampel.

Moraru, M. (2019) 'An analysis of the better consular protection directive: are EU-citizens now better protected in the world?', *Common Market Law Review*, 2019/56, pp. 417–462.

MTI (2023) 'Szijjártó Péter az EU leghosszabb ideje hivatalban lévő külügyminisztere' [Péter Szijjártó is the longest-serving foreign minister in the EU], *Magyarország Kormánya*, 17 November 2023. [Online]. Available at: https://kormany.hu/hirek/szijjarto-peter-az-eu-leghosszabb-ideje-hivatalban-levo-kulugyminisztere (Accessed: 31 December 2024).

Pritz, P. (1989) 'A magyar külügyi szolgálat története a harmincas évek első felében' [History of the Hungarian Foreign Service in the first half of the 1930s], *Történelmi Szemle*, 31(2), pp. 149–178.

Pritz, P. (1995) 'A magyar külügyi szolgálat története (1936–1941)' [History of the Hungarian Foreign Service (1936–1941)], *Történelmi Szemle*, 37(3-4), pp. 215–243.

Révai, G. (2009) *Beszélgetések nem csak jogról…* [Conversations not just about law…] Budapest: Corvina.

Schiffner, I. (2012) 'Az uniós polgárok védelme harmadik államokban – a statisztikák fényében' [The Protection of EU Citizens in Third Countries – In Light of the Statistics] in Katona, T. (ed.) *Ünnepi e-könyv Herczeg János professzor 70. születésnapjára*. Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Állam- és Jogtudományi Kar, pp. 506–532.

Somogyi, É (2004) 'Magyar diplomaták a közös Külügyminisztériumban' [Hungarian diplomats in the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs], *Századok*, 138(3), pp. 601–672.

Szabó, M. (2022) 'A konzuli bíráskodás reformjával kapcsolatos tárgyalások módozatai és közjogi kérdései (1891–1898)' [Modalities and public law issues of negotiations related to the reform of consular jurisdiction], *Jogtörténeti Szemle*, 20(1), pp. 39–44.

Szondy, V (1947) 'Jogsegély-egyezmények' [Legal aid conventions] in Jónás, E., Szondy, V. (eds.) *Diplomáciai lexicon* [Lexicon of Diplomacy]. Budapest: Kulcsár Andor Nyomdája; pp. 484–485.

Ustor, E. (1978) 'Magyarország konzuli szerződései és az egyenlő elbánás' [Hungarys consular treaties and equal treatment], *Külügyi Szemle*, 5(3), pp. 72–84.

Verebics, J. (2020) 'És még mi adtunk magának Kossuth-díjat' – Sárközy Tamás és az 1988-as társasági törvény születése' ['And we gave you a Kossuth Prize' – Tamás Sárközy and the birth of the 1988 Companies Act], *Gazdaság és Jog*, 28(11-12), pp. 2–9.

Wagner, P. (2011) 'Magyar evakuáció Líbiában az EU polgári védelmi mechanizmusának részeként' [Hungarian evacuation in Libya as part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism] *Hungarian Insitute of International Affairs*, 11 April. [Online]. Available at: www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/YHWVET/2011_121_wagner_peter_magyar_evakuacio_libiaban.pdf (Accessed: 17 October 2024).

Wouters, J., Duquet, S. (2011) 'The EU, EEAS and Union delegations and international diplomatic law: New Horizons', *Lueven Centre for Global Governance Studies*, working paper No. 62; https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1898664.

Legal sources

Act CLXIX of 2012 (Hungary).
Act I of 2007 on the Entry and Residence of Persons with the Right of Free Movement and Residence (Hungary).
Act II of 2007 on the Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals (Hungary).
Act L of 1879 on the Acquisition and Loss of Hungarian Citizenship (Hungary).
Act LV of 1993 on Hungarian Citizenship (Hungary).
Act LX of 1948 on Hungarian Citizenship (Hungary).
Act No. 17 of 1982 (Hungary).
Act V of 1930 (Hungary).
Act VI of 1903, the Passport Act (Hungary).
Act VI of 1988 (Hungary).
Act X of 1940 on the Authentication of Documents (Hungary).
Act XC of 2023 on the General Rules for the Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals (Hungary).
Act XI of 1987 on Legislation (Hungary).
Act XII of 1867 (Hungary).
Act XIX of 1917 on the Extension of the Validity of Act XXXI of 1891 on the Regulation of Consular Jurisdiction (Hungary).
Act XLVI of 2001 on Consular Protection (Hungary).
Act XX of 1949, the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic, as amended.
Act XXVIII of 1989, the Passports Act (Hungary).
Act XXXI of 1891 on the Regulation of Consular Jurisdiction (Hungary).
Act XXXIII of 1894 on State Birth Registers (Hungary).
Act XXXIII of 1921 (Hungary).
Act XXXIV of 1989 (Hungary).
Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Hungarian People's Republic on Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation, signed at Brussels, 26 September 1988, concluded by Council Decision 88/595/EEC of 21 November 1988, OJ L 327, 28.11.1988, p. 1.
BM Decree 600/1949 (I. 23.) on the Enactment and Implementation of Act LX of 1948 on Hungarian Citizenship (Hungary).
Consular Convention between Hungary and Cyprus (Act V of 2000) (Hungary).
Consular Convention between Hungary and Kazakhstan (Act VI of 2006) (Hungary).
Consular Convention between Hungary and Portugal (Act LXXVI of 2006) (Hungary).
Consular Convention between Hungary and Russia (Act X of 2003) (Hungary).
Copenhagen criteria, European Council, Copenhagen, 21–22 June 1993.
Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, OJ L 201, 3.8.2010, p. 30.
Council Directive (EU) 2015/637 of 20 April 2015 on the coordination and cooperation measures to facilitate consular protection for unrepresented citizens of the Union in third countries and repealing Decision 95/553/EC, OJ L 106, 24.4.2015, pp. 1–13.
Council Directive (EU) 2019/997 of 18 June 2019 establishing an EU Emergency Travel Document and repealing Decision 96/409/CFSP, OJ L 163, 20.6.2019, pp. 1–12.
Council Regulation (EC) No. 1347/2000 of 29 May 2000 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and in matters of parental responsibility for children of both spouses, OJ L 160, 30.6.2000, p. 19.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 2201/2003 of 27 November 2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1347/2000, OJ L 338, 23.12.2003, p. 1.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States, OJ L 385, 29.12.2004, pp. 1–6, entered into force 18 January 2005.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 428/2009 of 5 May 2009 setting up a Community regime for the control of exports, transfer, brokering and transit of dual-use items, OJ L 134, 29.5.2009, p. 1, entered into force 27 August 2009.

Decision of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 19 December 1995 regarding protection for citizens of the European Union by diplomatic and consular representations (95/553/EC), OJ L 314, 28.12.1995, pp. 73–76.

Decision of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 25 June 1996 on the creation of a temporary travel document (96/409/CFSP), OJ L 168, 6.7.1996, p. 4.

Decree 2/1995 (III. 24.) of the Ministry of Justice (Hungary).

Decree 2/1998 (XII. 9.) of the Ministry of Justice (Hungary).

Decree 3/2017 (28.II.) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Hungary).

Decree 4/2000 (IX. 27.) of the Ministry of Justice (Hungary).

Decree No. 25 of 1987 (Hungary).

Decree No. 2600/1906 of the Hungarian State Registry Office (Hungary).

Decree No. 2800/1906 of the Hungarian State Registry Office (Hungary).

European Union guidelines on the implementation of the consular Lead State concept (2008/C 317/06), OJ C 317, 12.12.2008.

Government Decree No. 197/2006 (27.IX.) (Hungary).

Notaries Act, 1991 (Hungary).

People's Act No. 5 of 1918 on the Independent Hungarian Foreign Affairs Administration (Hungary).

Regulation (EC) No. 767/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 concerning the Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas, OJ L 218, 13.8.2008, p. 60.

Regulation (EC) No. 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas, OJ L 243, 15.9.2009, p. 1.

Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 on promoting the free movement of citizens by simplifying the requirements for presenting certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2012, OJ L 200, 26.7.2016, pp. 1–136.

Trade Act, 1875 (Hungary).

Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, Rome, 29 October 2004, OJ C 310, 16.12.2004 (never entered into force).

Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, Amsterdam, 2 October 1997, OJ C 340, 10.11.1997, entered into force 1 May 1999.

Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, Lisbon, 13 December 2007, OJ C 306, 17.12.2007, entered into force 1 December 2009.

Treaty of Nice amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, Nice, 26 February 2001, OJ C 80, 10.3.2001, entered into force 1 February 2003.

Treaty of Trianon, signed at the Grand Trianon, Versailles, 4 June 1920, entered into force 26 July 1921.

Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), Maastricht, 7 February 1992, OJ C 191, 29.7.1992, entered into force 1 November 1993.

Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, Vienna, 24 April 1963, entered into force 19 March 1967, UNTS vol. 596, No. 8638, p. 261; Hungary: Decree-Law No. 13 of 1987.

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Vienna, 18 April 1961, entered into force 24 April 1964, UNTS vol. 500, No. 7310, pp. 95–222; Hungary: Law-Decree No. 22 of 1965.