



Consular Diplomacy

**Transformation of Diplomacy and the Role
of Honorary Consuls in the 21st Century**

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- **Consular Affairs** – traditional notions of Diplomacy and the views of practitioners – career diplomats (all throughout the most of 20th century), were to see Consular Affairs as a “**Cinderella Service**” with rather low image in the Foreign Policy machinery.
 - The longest history – “Greek City States”...”**proxenos**”, Indian states, China, Italian republics
 - **Honorary Consuls**, the forgotten “cousin” of diplomatic and consular representation and services.

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- The wanders of **GLOBALIZATION & 4th INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION** have forged new and more rapid networks of global communication and interaction.
 - Vast changes in **International Relations**, require further modernization, de-monopolization, democratization and decentralization of **Diplomacy**.

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- Bilateral diplomacy is increasingly engaged in the “**low-politics arena**”, or the issues of: economy, trade, investments, tourism, cultural and scientific cooperation... while “**high-politics**”, or burning high profile political issues are concentrating at the ministerial level, Prime Ministers and Presidents.

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- A coalition of social forces consisting of: parliaments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, media and public opinion – has managed **to catapult consular affairs** to the forefront of today's MFA's concerns, showing greater interest to meet the demands of **CITIZENS**.
 - **Citizens** are no longer merely a spectators and increasingly behave like customers and demand a quality product from their governments.

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- **Consular Diplomacy** is taking on increasing importance in the globalized world and economy.
 - **Consular Diplomacy**, can be defined as the diplomacy conducted via consulates and consular representatives, focused on classical activities, citizen and corporate services, representation, and issues of Trade, Tourism and Investment Promotion between countries, regions and localities.

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- In context of the contemporary reality, the accelerated globalization and regionalization in the world and the world's economy, along with the impressive growth of the Information & Communications technology, for some time already are imposing inevitable need of **transformation processes** in the sphere of the international relations or transformation of the traditional academic and practical understanding of **diplomacy and consular service**.

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- The institution **Honorary Consul** – evident “**RENAISSANCE**” and its intensified use in the era of globalization.
 - **Honorary Consuls**, as an unique “tool” for economic, trade, investment, cultural and academic promotion and efficient bilateral cooperation of states.
 - “**Vienna Convention for Consular Relations**” (1963) Chapter III – “**Regime Relating to Honorary Consular Officers and Consular Posts Headed by Such Officers**”.



- **Basic criteria for selection of HC:**

- Successful leaders from the academic spheres, business, science, culture, arts, sports...
- Persons of independent means, good standing and reputation in the local community
- Nonpartisan capacity to maintain good network of communications and relations with governmental authorities, local municipalities, business community, civil sector and media.



- **Phases in “deciding process”:**

- Evaluation of general conditions to justify that step
- Defining individual program of work, function and services offered by HC
- Selection of suitable candidates
- Recruitment
- Appointment of HC



- **Honorary Consuls Program- advantages over similar programs:**

- HC's already live and professionally work in the host country. They fluently speak the local language, which in most cases is their native language. They have excellent knowledge of the local habits, traditions and other specifics.
- HC's are well-known and prominent citizens of the host country, professionally established in the field of business, finances, tourism, culture, science, sports and so on.

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- HC's have already established network of contacts in the host country and have an affirmative impact on the public, political, economic and cultural life of the host country.
 - HC's are financially secured from own resources in covering the budget for Consulates. They use their professional/private facilities, and basic communication and other equipment for consular post.
 - HC's are practically with time-unlimited mandates, so that the positive effects of their engagement are of long term.



S.W.O.T. Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Legitimate institution with codified “frame” in the international law
- Highly “economical”
- Exceptionally efficient and cost-effective option for wide spread out diplomatic-consular representation
- Created extensive network of contacts
- Excellent knowledge of the business climate, the language, the customs and the culture of the “host” State
- Important “tool” for the public diplomacy

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- Instantly operational and functional
 - Long-term service and effects
 - No bureaucratic manners and practices
 - Possibility for appointing several consuls for the same territory
 - Creatively tailor-made work program appropriately designed to fit the Honorary Consul and in accordance with the current priorities and requirements
 - Fast and easy dismissal, i.e. termination of the mandate without any commitments



WEAKNESSES

- Unawareness of the internationally codified legislation (immunities and privileges of the Honorary Consuls and Consulates headed by them)
- It is not a principal activity, but a supplementary or secondary one
- Lack of education and training in diplomatic-consular affairs
- Lack of clearly defined standards
- Substantial discrepancy and inconsistency in the quality of services provided

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- Reliance on the personal willingness and motivation of the Honorary Consul
 - Aversion for acceptance of hierarchical subordination
 - Unclearly defined professional accountability
 - Inadequate perception of the role of the Honorary Consuls by the career diplomats and consuls (competition vs. compatibility)
 - Lack of a contemporary strategy for growth of the network with some Foreign Affairs Departments



OPPORTUNITIES

- Globalization, ICT revolution
- Transformation of diplomacy
- Economic crisis
- Trend for “outsourcing” and state-private partnership
- Realization of personal need for positive contribution with voluntary engagement



THREATS

- Possible profanation, degradation and discredit of the institution Honorary Consul
- Primary abuse of the status and the position for personal interests

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- Based on indisputably high potentials, capabilities and a unique cost-effectiveness, my study suggests that **Honorary Consuls Program** is like “**tailor-made**” concept for the “**Small States**” particularly.
 - In an age of increased virtual presence through the internet, the Honorary Consul remains a beacon for a “**face-to-face, getting the business done**” approach in a cost-effective manner.

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- It is quite evident that in the last two decades, the relevant **Governments and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the South-East European countries**, follow the global trend and more seriously, more organized and with higher expectations, approach towards practical use and incorporation of the instrument – **Honorary Consul**, as a **quality and complementary enhancement** of their existing network of professional diplomatic-consular posts.

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- **“Purpose of life is life with Purpose”.**
 - **“Leaders have Purpose & Vision, others have only wishes”.**
 - **“The best way to succeed in Future – is to Create it.”**

THINK ABOUT IT !