
Editorial: change, corporate diplomacy, medical diplomacy, soft power and China are the keywords for the year 2021

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Biographical notes: Gorazd Justinek is the Dean of Faculty for Governmental and European Studies, New University and a former diplomat. His research interests include international business, particularly the internationalisation of small businesses, economic and commercial diplomacy and the competitiveness of economies and attracting foreign direct investment. He is the Founder and Editor of the *International Journal of Diplomacy and Economy*.

Change, medical diplomacy, corporate diplomacy, soft power and china are the key words of the *IJDIPE* spring issue for the year 2021. During the process of preparing this issue (the year 2020) the world has witnessed immense change. And not only in the field of economic diplomacy or corporate diplomacy level, but rather on the whole global sphere. The Covid pandemic has reshaped the world economy and boosted some of the processes which would have otherwise taken years to implement (digitalisation), and on the other side stopped some of the processes, probably forever (like classical door to door selling).

Additionally, we have witnessed the return of Keynesianism practically everywhere around the world, even in countries where liberal economic concepts have been in place for decades. What kind of consequences will that have for public policies (diplomacy) and public finances in the future, we shall see in the years to come?

Yet, at the beginning of 2021, there is a new type of “cold” war going on – the fight for vaccines. The countries that will have their population vaccinated faster, the sooner they will be able to return to normal, despite the fact that the normal is what actually brought us here in the first place. On the other hand, a country might be more successful in their vaccination process, yet if the countries around – or your largest trading partners will not be so successful, that still will not do much good for international business, nor the economic diplomacy supporting it.

Economic diplomacy is often defined as soft power by some authors. A new type of diplomacy - medical diplomacy could be on this list from 2020 onwards.

And of course there is the last keyword, but certainly not the least important, China. The country with huge population and immense capacities and the country where the Coronavirus was first detected in the year 2019. If we add to this specific global “cocktail” the new administration in Washington, we might understand why change is in fact the first of the selected key words for this issue.

I hope you will enjoy reading the five papers plus a book review, which we have prepared for you in this spring issue.

The first paper is authored by ambassador Bolewski and talks about change in Corporate Diplomacy. The author states that the 21st Century is characterised by grand challenges, external shocks and global fragilities, such as economic volatility and societal upheaval in our interconnected communities. International business managers must adapt to consider geopolitics as relevant to their activities, to integrate political risk analyses into their business decisions. International society is in need of content-sensitive orientation knowledge to reassess, adjust and accommodate diplomacy's essentials (human factor interactions) to new expectations of the public sphere. In a qualitative leap towards a change of mind set, decision-makers should learn to think and act responsibly through the middle of conflictual situations towards compromise and consensus, thus managing politics through diplomacy. Transnational corporations can profit from traditional state diplomacy in order to create a reliable working environment and to anticipate and avoid costly conflicts, if they practice Corporate Diplomacy as a key concept of trusted and coordinated collaboration with government and local host communities. Corporations adhering to the diplomatic communication tool of Corporate Diplomacy are also gaining legitimacy and political influence over the development of societies.

The second paper is authored by Prof. Sevin and talks about soft power and city diplomacy. The paper explores and identifies how cities generate soft power for nation-states through their communicative and diplomatic practices. Building on the relatively nascent studies of city diplomacy and city branding, the main objective is to establish a taxonomic categorisation of cities as soft power assets. The reason for conducting a research is three-fold. First, cities have proven to be viable diplomatic actors in the recent years and continue to increase their prominence in the international arena. But the excitement about the potential of cities to lead in providing solutions to global problems overshadows their role as sub-state units. Second, mega-cities and metropolitan areas dominate the research carried out in tourism and city branding studies. However, small cities also actively engage in branding activities, promote their cultures and influence the way their countries are seen in the international arena. Third, cities and nations do not have to share the same policy priorities, images, or even landscape. Given the viability of city diplomacy and variation of cities, the research asks one main question: What are the different ways through which cities generate soft power assets? The answer is presented as a taxonomic categorisation that defines five different roles for cities to generate soft power.

The third paper is co-authored by a group of researchers from Austria and Slovenia on the topic of Belt and road initiative (China and Euro-Mediterranean countries). The authors state that the European Union (EU) is facing several challenges, including the disparities in the development, the rise in the populist political parties, and the debt crisis from Greece and Italy. China's One Belt and One Road Initiative provides an opportunity for the EU to overcome the challenges and offers a cooperative strategy for Eurasian countries. It will significantly benefit the lagging behind EU countries by orienting them for culture, commerce, technique, exhibition, and logistics centres for Eurasia. The Mediterranean ports (e.g., Trieste in Italy and Piraeus in Greece) should be revitalised. While the dominant exports from the EU to China are still machinery and electrical products and the room to export them are becoming smaller in the future, the most potential in China is vegetables and food products due to the huge consumer market and

the concern on a combination of environmental pollution and food safety. The railways and the seaports from the Mediterranean are the key networks under One Belt One Road to improve the market connectivity and facilitate bilateral trade between the EU and China.

The fourth paper is authored by a USA professor Jordan and talks about the Chinese role towards North Korea. While the trajectories of China and North Korea are very different, both countries remain Communist nations. Even with this shared political ideology, China is not the ally Western powers wish it to be. As North Korea continues its nuclear weapons program and to push the limits of peace on the Korean peninsula, China appears to hold an unpredictable foreign policy. In reality, its foreign policy is one that is focused on protecting Chinese interests. To understand China's reactions to North Korean aggression, it is important to reflect on the history of diplomatic affairs between China and North Korea. For China, maintaining peace and economic stability is more important than North Korea denuclearising. With that in mind, the United States and other Western powers must develop strategies that recognise the balancing act China is in. The more China pushes North Korea, the more North Korea will turn away from China, the author states.

The fifth paper talks about change management and is authored by Prof. Sedej from Slovenia. The success of change management is vital to every organisation as it ensures changes are implemented smoothly and have the planned impact. The literature review raises different questions regards to the change management process as only a few of articles copes with it profoundly. The fact is that organisations have been experiencing tremendous pressure for strategic change in last decade and even more intense in the last year. The central aim of this article is to provide a critical review of the main theories to change management with the focus on the change process. The article also provides fresh empirical data on change management process from top management point of view. The article concludes with constructing a change process model and recommendations for managing change in the contemporary fast-changing environment.

In addition, a group of authors from Belgium and Spain has prepared a book review on the topic of City Diplomacy.