

Relatives and/or friends?

Conclusions from the history of cultural relations of Finno-Ugric peoples

Imre Lázár Ph.D.

The value of cultural diplomacy is closely tied to the preservation of diverse cultures and the intention of civilizations to choose to work together. This paper aims to examine how the awareness of linguistic kinship influenced cultural cooperation between the three Finno-Ugric nations with statehood: Estonia, Finland and Hungary and how this affinity changed during history and how other fields of relations influenced them.

Cultural relations under the trilateral Finno-Ugric cooperation are particularly active. There are regular contacts between the academic workshops and civil organizations of the three countries and representatives of the Finno-Ugric language groups in Russia. The special case with the cultural diplomacy of Finno-Ugric Countries is that the civil factor has always been there even from the beginning, side by side with the involvement of the state.

Bilateral relations between the three countries are still perceptibly pervading the Finno-Ugric sympathy, though it is challenged by new trends of international cultural relations, especially by globalisation and the advancement of communication technology. The appreciation of the role of visualization and visual information over the centuries-old dominance of language requires the restructuring of cultural diplomacy. The changing geometry of the international system, the advancement of economic interests or the broader interpretation of culture itself requires the continuous adaptation of cultural foreign policy in the relations of the Finno-Ugric peoples.

FULL TEXT

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Cultural diplomacy demonstrates values and interest in values. It enables partners to share aspects of their own cultural life, mutually influence each other and enrich their own culture by other cultures, thus contributing to the universal development of culture. The value of cultural diplomacy is closely tied to the preservation of diverse cultures and the intention of civilizations to choose to work together. Culture covers activities that have a broad appeal to ordinary people, traversing boundaries and distance. People have always been interested in cultures and lifestyles that contrast with their own. Geography, social anthropology and cultural comparisons are customarily part of the basic education systems in each country. The new element in the past decade is that the global electronic accessibility of information, providing superficial familiarity with life and events in other nations. This encounter often takes place through short, easily digestible clichés, which almost invariably lead to the creation and reinforcement of national stereotypes. Over-simplification of complex issues is another danger cultural diplomacy has to face. Cultural diplomacy helps create a “foundation of trust” with other peoples, which policy makers can build on to reach political, economic, and military agreements. It encourages other peoples to give the projecting country the benefit of the doubt on specific policy issues or requests for collaboration, since there is a presumption of shared interests.

Affinity of different local cultures, national, cultural or ethnic entities shown towards each other depends on several factors. Affinity can be influenced by political, economic, geographical, historical, ethnological, ethnographical, religious, linguistic etc. factors. As language is one of the most important factors of shaping personal or group identity, linguistic kinship is among the strongest stimulators of affinity. This paper aims to examine how the awareness of linguistic kinship influenced cultural relations of Finno-Ugric peoples. It is also target of this examination how this affinity changed during the history and how other fields of relations influenced them.

Due to shortage of time I will restrict my investigation to the cultural cooperation between the three Finno-Ugric nations with statehood: Estonia, Finland and Hungary. Involvement of Finno-Ugric ethnic groups in Russia into the research would also be important, but due to their special status it would need a separate investigation.

The beginnings of Finno-Ugric Cooperation

The interest of Finno-Ugric People in each other's culture is not based on historical experiences or the tradition that has been filtered and preserved in folk memory. It derives from the fact that modern linguistics has shown that these languages belong to the same branches of an ancient language family tree. The cause of Finno-Ugric sympathies would deserve a more serious study.

The acceptance of the linguistic affinity of Finno-Ugric peoples was a gradual process, spreading slowly among the educated circles of Europe and became gradually known in the 18th century. It was accepted even later by the Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian intellectuals. The 19th century was still a time for cooperation between small groups of linguists and other representatives of national studies. This was the time of the European peoples to find themselves, a period of the making of the nations. In forming of national identities the search for the origins and the ancient homeland played an important role. There were more and more people, especially students and advanced intellectuals, who wanted to study their country, their history, their language, and, last but not least, the origins of their people. So besides searching for linguistic proofs of the kinship a great interest towards the history of the peoples speaking Finno-Ugric languages was also an aim that was pursued by the elite. It was during this period that scholars and also the advocates of popular education made the public at large aware of the life and conditions of their kindred peoples.

The enthusiastic and highly educated Finnish audience founded the Finno-Ugric Society in Helsingfors in 1883 with the aim of creating a center for research into the linguistics and ethnography of the Finno-Ugric peoples. Similar developments took place in Hungary, too. The Turanian Society was founded in 1910 to study the history, literature, science, economics, etc. of the Turanian peoples. The Society organised several expeditions to Asia Minor and Central and Eastern Asia.

By the interwar years Hungary, Finland and Estonia all had gained independence (although Estonia only for a short time) and there was a firmer basis for the Finno-Ugric peoples to get to know one another. It was quite understandable that independence provided for these countries with new impetus for both bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The period was marked by search for common routes that stressed the kinship and sought for contacts for other peoples of Finno-Ugric origin. The 1920s saw the beginning of a series of Finno-Ugric cultural congresses organised by Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian scholars, teachers and students interested in Finno-Ugric studies.

Bilateral cultural and scientific relations were revitalized and deepened by companies such as the Finnish-Estonian-Hungarian Association established in 1925. Interest in the origin of our language and the supposed Turanian, Oriental, and even Far Eastern relationship was, by the way, very strong throughout the whole period, primarily as a consequence of the disillusionment in the West following the Treaty of Trianon.

The first Hungarian-Finnish Society was founded on September 25, 1937. However, there was a Finnish-Estonian Institute before the First World War within the aforementioned Turáni Society. The journal *Turán* published regularly news on Finnish, Estonian and other Finno-Ugric topics.

The founding of the Hungarian-Finnish Society was an integral part of the preparation of the Hungarian-Finnish cultural agreement that was signed in October 1937 (Agreement on Intellectual Cooperation between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Republic of Finland). As far as Finland was concerned it was significant in that it was the first cultural agreement with another country. In the same year a cultural agreement between Estonia and Hungary was also signed.

This promising cooperation was unfortunately ended by the Winter War and the occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Finnish-Hungarian Society played a major role in coordinating Finland's sympathy during the Winter War. In war times, the Hungarian-Finnish Society was also engaged in publishing activities. Most of the books dealt with the combat situation, and the income from these books was received by the Finnish Red Cross.

Hungarian-Estonian Cultural Relations

In 1921 Hungary recognized the independent Republic of Estonia and opened an embassy in Tallinn in 1923. After the Soviet occupation, there was more than 50 years of forced break in relations between the two countries. The resumption of diplomatic relations took place in 1991.

Cultural, educational relations have developed intensively between the two countries. Cultural cooperation is organised on the basis of the Agreement on Cultural, Scientific and Educational Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Republic of Estonia signed on 28 April 1994. On the basis of the Agreement cultural cooperation programmes are renewed regularly for a period of three years. The current Cultural Cooperation Program between the Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Estonia for years 2017-2019 was signed on 23 January 2017 in Tallinn by Estonian Minister of Culture Indrek Saar and Hungarian Ambassador Vince Szalay-Bobrovniczky.

On October 5, 2009, a working plan for cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Hungary and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Estonia was signed during the meeting of Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia and President László Sólyom in Budapest, for the years 2010-2012. The renewal of this document is under consideration. There has been a cooperation agreement also between the scientific academies since 1990.

The primary and most important player and tool of the Hungarian culture's presentation in Estonia is the Hungarian Institute in Tallin. The predecessor of the Institute was opened in 1992 as a Hungarian language and literary office, a philiiale of the Hungarian Cultural and Scientific Centre in Helsinki. It was expanded in 1999 and became independent in 2001. The new headquarters of the Hungarian Institute were inaugurated in 2004. The Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Republic of Estonia signed an Agreement on the status and operation of cultural institutions on 29 November 2005. As a result – like other foreign cultural institutes in Tallin – the Institute does not have diplomatic status. This, however, does not cause any problems in day-to-day operation and does not reduce the weight of the institute. By January 1, 2016, it was integrated into the the Hungarian Embassy in Helsinki in terms of the unified foreign representation system. The Hungarian Institute of Tallinn is well embedded in the local cultural and artistic life.

The Estonian government also opened its cultural and information office in Budapest in February 1998. The Estonian Cultural Week was held for the tenth time in Hungary between March 14 and 25, 2017, which includes film screenings, exhibitions of fine art and architecture, concerts, theater performances and literary readings both in Budapest and other locations.

Thanks to all this, the Hungarian cultural presence in Estonia and Estonian cultural presence in Hungary is active and continuous, their values are mutually highly recognized.

The major Hungarian cultural programs realized during the last few years in Estonia were conferences, concerts, exhibitions, special issues of a periodicals and film shows. There were a series of events related to the 60th anniversary of the Revolution and War of Independence of 1956. The singers Márta Sebestyén, Bea Palya and the pianist Dénes Várjon performed at several concerts in Estonia. In September 2016, a Hungarian-Estonian translation conference was hosted by the University of Tartu. In February 2017 a “Gulag Exhibition” was theld in the Museum of Invasions, dedicated to the memory of those Hungarians who were deported by Soviet Forces to labor camps. On the occasion of the Hungarian National Day of 15 March and the occasion of the Estonian mother tongue choruses and soloists performed works by Bartók, Bárdos and Kodály, and poems by Sándor Petőfi were also recited in Estonian. As part of the “Cseh Tamás Programme” Hungarian rock bands also gave concerts in Tallin clubs. Lauri Eesmaa's translation of *Book of Memoirs* by Péter Nádas in 2016 won the translator prize of the Estonian Cultural Fund.

Hungarian culture appears in Estonia not only through government sponsorships but in a considerable part also on a market basis. Concert organizers and cultural managers often organize programs and concerts independently, without public or institutional involvement. Several Hungarian ensembles arrive in Estonia on such basis, eg, the Hundred-member Gypsy Band, operetta performances, progressive bands, theater professionals, dramaturgists, contemporary artists, etc.

The novel *Pál Street Boys* by Ferenc Molnár is part of the Estonian elementary school curriculum. The unusually rich Finno-Ugric exhibition of the Tartu National Museum opened in September last year and the Hungarian language is also presented there among kindred languages.

Hungarian studies in Estonia look back on a nearly 80-year history. Hungarian language, literature and culture is taught at the University of Tartu with the contribution of a Hungarian lecturer. Every year there is usually one person who receives MA degree in Hungarian language and culture. In Hungary, the ELTE, the University of Szeged and the University of Debrecen receive an Estonian lecturer. The Technical University of Tallinn has a partnership agreement with five Hungarian universities. There is a continuous exchange of scholarship-holders and trainees in public administration.

The opportunities offered to scholarship exchanges are reciprocally used by both parties, and cooperation is exceptionally good. In the academic year 2016/2017 a total of 16 Estonian students studied in Hungarian higher education institutions.

The Munkácsy Mihály Estonian Cultural Association which comprises of nearly 50 families of Hungarian origin has been active in Estonia since 1988. Its activities are aimed at the cultivation of the traditions of Hungarian culture and language. The Association is active and has a significant role in the community life of local Hungarians. On October 1, 2016, the Association and the Hungarian Institute of Tallinn organized the conference “On 1956 Without Borders”, with the support of the Memorial Committee of the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence. An Estonian politician, a former dissident, Enn Tarto, who as a student stood for the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and therefore was persecuted, also participated.

Individual initiatives include Hungary-related local photo exhibitions, Estonian-Hungarian friendly gatherings. In this respect the Fenno-Ugria Association and the Estonian-Hungarian Society also play an important role. Hungarian-language Reformed Church worship services are also held in Tallinn several times a year.

Hungary's rating in Estonia can still be considered good in public opinion in Estonia. The Estonian media basically comment on the Hungarian-related news, mainly in fact news and reports appear at times from Hungary on the topic of culture, tourism and gastronomy.

Hungarian-Finnish Cultural Relations

Between the two World Wars a great, emotionally heated sympathy could be experienced between Finns and Hungarians. Works by János Kodolányi on his visit to Finland in the 1930s exactly document that sympathy for Hungarian culture, which has a great tradition in Finland.

After the Second World War cultural cooperation with Estonia became impossible. Even fostering Finnish relations was a sign of political unreliability for a while. Relations with Finland were often maintained by the tradition of kinship and even those on a limited scale.

In Finland, the Finnish-Hungarian Society was founded in 1950 to strengthen the amicable relations that had traditionally existed between the two countries. The Finnish-Hungarian Society has arranged lectures, exhibitions and various events, visits to Hungary and meetings for members on Hungarian themes.

Our contacts have slowly revived, and the sciences have begun to take the initiative. In the summer of 1956 a twin-town relationship was established between Pécs and Lahti. In 1957 Székesfehérvár and Kemi, in 1963 Miskolc and Tampere followed the example, today the number of twin city couples is 50.

As cultural contacts between Finland and Hungary became established in the 1950s, it was proposed that a new cultural agreement be made between the two countries. This was signed in Budapest in 1959. On the basis of the Agreement a Finnish-Hungarian Cultural Joint Committee was proposed, with sub-committees in Budapest and Helsinki. It was stipulated that the joint-committees must meet for a joint session at least once a year in the two capitals alternately, at which time the working plan for the following year would be accepted. Later the working plans were made for two years, again later for three years. The cooperation on the basis of these working programs became very intensive.

A significant turnaround was the so-called folk diplomacy, the institution of friendship weeks. For the first time in 1970, 300-300 Hungarians and Finns could stay for a week in a country that was familiar to them in their homeland. Although organisation of Hungarian-Finnish Circle of Friends was allowed only in the shadow of the People's Patriotic Front and only in rural cities. Budapest still had to wait for the so much desired institutionalization of social relations. Finally, in October 1984, due to the great popularity of the Kalevala in Hungary, the Kalevala Friendship Circle of the Friends of Finns in Budapest was founded. The number of Friendship Circles is approx. 50 today. The Hungarian-Finnish Society founded in 1937 was re-established on February 28, 1989, on the day of Kalevala.

In Finland, besides the Finnish-Hungarian Society, there are also other friendly associations like the Hungarian Friends Club, the Petőfi Society and the Transsylvania Society. The first two were formed between the two World Wars and the latter in the Ceausescu era to gather the Transylvanian Hungarians, many of whom found a new home in Finland.

The Hungarian-Finnish Agreement on Cultural, Educational and Research Cooperation, currently in force, was signed on March 9, 1995. The last Cooperation Program on Education, Science, Culture and Sports Relations for 2004-2008 was signed on January 15, 2004. The Cooperation Program expired on 31 December 2008, but its validity was automatically extended by 5 years. The Finnish party did not show interest in renewing the Cooperation

Programme, however, in the event of their initiative the Hungarian party would be open for the renewal.

The Hungarian Cultural and Scientific Centre in Helsinki is active throughout Finland, promoting the traditional and modern values of Hungarian culture. Since 2002, the gallery of the institution operating in the downtown of Helsinki has seen 6-8 new exhibitions each year. Each year the Institute organizes the Hungarian Culture Week in a different city, and its traditional programs also include the Kodály Week held annually. In addition, performances of several Hungarian artists and companies are organized at prestigious festivals and cultural institutions of Finland.

Finnagora Foundation, supported by the Finnish Government, was founded in Helsinki on May 29, 2002. Finnagora operates a Finnish cultural and scientific and economic institute at 17 points around the world. The cultural, scientific and economic center of Budapest was opened in 2004. The center's primary task is to promote the development of mutual relations between Finland and Hungary in the fields of culture, science and economics, and the creation and development of a wide range of cultural, scientific and economic projects. Finnagora's artistic and cultural activities focus on contemporary arts, the latest trends in culture and innovative projects in all areas of art. Finnagora is part of the Finnish cultural export network.

In Finland, the multifaceted presentation of Hungarian culture is primarily the task of the Hungarian Cultural and Scientific Centre in Helsinki (hereinafter referred to as HCSC). The Centre participated in the organization and realization of 143 Hungarian programs in Finland in 2016. This figure significantly exceeds the number of programs during the years before 2013 (approximately 50-70 programs a year). Half of these programs are at the Centre, approx. a quarter of them in other locations in Helsinki, and approx. a quarter of them were realized in other towns.

The anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and the War of Independence was commemorated in 2016 with an oral history project and an associated exhibition. After the change of the regime in Hungary, Örs Csete began to photograph the former armed men of the Revolution in Budapest, and he also recorded conversations with them. The portraits were exhibited along with portraits and stories of contemporary Finnish people who actively protested against the oppression of the Revolution. The exhibition "1956 Faces and Fates: Hungarians and Finns" was presented in Helsinki and further four cities in Finland and a bilingual volume was also brought out for the anniversary. Also for the anniversary the first ever stage performance of the opera *Kaivos* (Mine) by the Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara was prepared for the Hungarian State Opera House in Budapest and also for Tampere. The Budapest premiere took place with great success in October 21, 2016. The Finnish Minister of Education and Culture Sanni Grahn-Laasonen also visited Budapest on this occasion and participated at the event. However, the performance planned for Tampere was unfortunately cancelled by the Finnish Partners due to financial reasons. The anniversary was finally commemorated with the concert of Dezső Ránki and Edit Klukon in the Finlandia Hall in Helsinki. There were also 11 film screenings on communist repression and revolution in three cities.

The HCSC celebrates Hungarian culture in a different Finnish city every year, in cooperation with local partners. The Week of Hungarian Culture was held in 2016 in the town of Lahti, which celebrated the 60th anniversary of the twin-town relationship with Pécs. The highlight of the events was the concert of the Sinfonia Lahti with conductor Huba Hollókői and violinist Barnabás Kelemen. In the year 2017 the Hungarian Cultural Week will be organised in Vantaa.

To celebrate the Béla Bartók anniversary in 2016 and the Zoltán Kodály anniversary in 2017 a series of concerts, masterclasses were organised in cooperation with several prestigious conservatories and other music institutions.

Hungary and Finland were mutually honorary guests at each other's book festivals. The Helsinki Book Fair was attended by Minister Zoltán Balog between October 25 and 28, 2012.

Hungary joins the celebrations of Finland's centenary with the exhibition of photographs by József Timár and watercolours by Nándor Mikola. Both projects are officially part of the "Finland 100" series of programs. The Government of Hungary has decided to donate a Bogányi Concert Piano to the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Finland's state sovereignty as a gesture worthy of the anniversary and the specialty of Hungarian-Finnish relations. This symbolic gesture is aimed to contribute to the further development of Hungarian-Finnish cultural relations. The brand new grand piano was designed by Gergely Bogányi, eminent Hungarian pianist who grew up in Finland and completely revolutionised the sound, mechanics and outlook of the instrument. The ceremonial handing over of the piano is planned for autumn, 2017.

At present, the University of Debrecen, Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, University of Szeged and University of West Hungary have the right to start a master degree course in Finno-Ugric studies. Finnish lecturer is teaching at the Eötvös Loránd University, at the University of Debrecen and at the University of Szeged. There is currently no Hungarian guest lecturer in Finland sent by the Balassi Institute (BI). Till the end of 2008 there was a total of 3 lecturers and 1 guest teacher working in Helsinki, Turku and Jyväskylä on the basis of the valid Cooperation Programme.

The mutual donation of scholarships was based on the educational, scientific and cultural cooperation programme between the two countries for the years 2004 to 2008. In June 2013 CIMO informed the Hungarian party that the Finnish government's scholarship program was offered from the academic year 2014/2015 with different terms. The Hungarian party will continue to provide scholarships to Finnish citizens on the basis of the Unified Grant Scheme established in 2005.

Hungarian Theme Weeks in Finnish schools started in 1984 and is organised every year. The event is coordinated by the Finnish-Hungarian Society, with the help of the Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities.

Hungary is not in the forefront of interest in Finnish media. As far as the image of our country is concerned, there has been no significant change in the past year, but the mediated image is still not favorable.

Finno Ugric Cooperation with Estonia and Finland

The Estonian-Finnish-Hungarian cultural relations under the trilateral Finno-Ugric cooperation are particularly active. There are regular contacts between the academic workshops and civil organizations of the three countries and representatives of the Finno-Ugric language groups in Russia.

Finno-Ugric language relationship plays a significant intellectual and psychological role for Estonia. This is not questioned at any level, and always mentioned during bilateral meetings as a surplus that has an important role in bilateral relations based on mutual sympathy.

Though Finland also performs its duties regarding multilateral Finno-Ugric cooperation and its commitment to language relatives cannot be questioned, she refrained from certain projects due to financial reasons.

The attitude of Hungary toward Finno-Ugric cooperation is ambivalent. On the one hand the Hungarian government supports morally and financially the Finno-Ugric movement and represents the country on the highest level on symbolic Finno-Ugric gatherings. There is also a strong civil support for the Finno-Ugric cooperation. On the other hand there are loud and emotionally heated opponents of the Finno-Ugric kinship in the country, both among politicians and the public.

Estonia, Finland and Hungary are actively working together in the framework of the World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples. The 6th World Congress was held on 5-7 September, 2012 in Siófok. The event was attended by the President of Estonia, Finland and Hungary, the Speaker of the Finnish Parliament and the Russian Minister of Culture. The 7th World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples was held in Lahti on June 15-17, 2016. The Congress was attended by the Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian Presidents, the Minister of Culture of Finland and Estonia, the Deputy Minister of Culture of Russia, The Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary was represented by a delegation led by Minister of State for Culture Dr. Péter Hoppál. The next World Congress will be held will be in Tartu, Estonia in 2020.

The Finno-Ugric Kindred People's Day has been celebrated In Estonia, since 1928. Since 1931 the celebrations are fixed for the third Saturday of October. The Estonian Legislature declared the date of the Kindred Peoples' Day a Public Holiday in 2011. Kindred People's Day is celebrated with a series of events lasting for a whole week. On these occasions a Hungarian folk ensemble regularly participates sponsored by the Ministry of Human Capacities under the Hungarian-Estonian Cultural Cooperation Programme. In October 11-17, 2016 Erzsébet Mészáros and Vince Mészáros, Mátyás Mészáros and Csenge Konkoly

musicians represented Hungary at the events. In April 2013, the Hungarian Parliament also adopted a decree on making official the celebration of the “Day of Peoples with Finno-Ugric Linguistic Relation”. There are also a number of cultural and scientific programs on this occasion in Hungary, mainly organized by the Hungarian National Organization of the World Congress of the Finno-Ugric Peoples and the Reguly Society. Finland has not yet joined the official observation of the day.

The Federation of Finno-Ugric Literatures organizes the Finno-Ugric Writers’ Congress every two years, in which both Hungarian and Estonian writers participate. The location of the last Finno-Ugric Writers’ Congress was Badacsonytomaj in 2015 and now it is held in 2017 in Tartu.

Conclusions

There are many actors in cultural diplomacy, beyond the official agencies. As with diplomacy in general, recognition of this plurality of actors is central to acknowledging also the limits of government-sponsored cultural diplomacy. In general terms, we could say that cultural cooperation, especially in Europe has shifted from direct governmental action to activities proposed by private or non-profit cultural organizations. Support for non-governmental activities is seen increasingly as the preferred form of indirect cultural diplomacy, benefiting the governments, the cultural operators and the audiences.

Direct government-to-government cultural cooperation has lost some of its political, historical, diplomatic and cultural importance. Resources for intergovernmental cultural cooperation in Europe have diminished steadily since the end of the Cold War. In recent decades, intergovernmental cultural cooperation has aligned itself more with wider educational and scientific agendas, and it has increasingly been acknowledged as that “third pillar” (alongside politics and economy) in some international negotiations.

In spite of the above mentioned tendencies, the state keeps on playing role in determining policies regarding cultural diplomacy and harmonizing it with other aspects of diplomacy, creating infrastructure for cultural diplomacy, providing financial resources for state-run institutions of cultural diplomacy (ministries, embassies, cultural centres) and a favourable legal environment for non-government cultural diplomacy.

Finno-Ugric nations traditionally needed state support in their cultural contacts. Mutual interest was mostly based on the theory of linguistic kinship proven through the methods of historical comparative linguistics. That means, the relations were based on scientific foundations, on the commonly accepted knowledge of the “apostles of the science”, which has benefited from the powerful support of the state and society both between the two world wars.

The special case with the cultural diplomacy of Finno-Ugric Countries is that the civil factor has always been there even from the beginning, side by side with the state. This civil factor faded and strengthened from time to time, from country to country according to the political

and social situation. However, we have to state that Finno-Ugric cultural diplomacy is still flowing in the traditional channels. This is mainly due to the fact that civil initiatives in this field can hardly survive without state support.

The cultural diplomacy of the Finno-Ugric countries can also be seen as a coincidence that this area has become a major source of compensation for loss and defeat. The axiom of social sciences is that serious political and economic crises bring about identity crises, which also brings about the appreciation of cultural issues and relationships. The turbulent history of these countries (Trianon for Hungary, the Winter War for Finland, losing and regaining independence for Estonia) cried for the strengthening of identity through Finno-Ugric contacts. We have to take into consideration that making Finno-Ugric heritage the basic of their identity was evoked by fear from the threatening Indo-European “Big Brothers”, Germany and the Soviet Union.

Bilateral relations between the three countries are still perceptibly pervading the Finno-Ugric sympathy, though they are losing power by the newer and newer generations. The sympathy among our peoples is challenged by new trends. New generations are children of the multicultural consumer society. They are mostly influenced by global trends, thinking in nation seems to give way to a cosmopolitan identity where the Finno-Ugric kinship is only one element of the great, colourful mosaic. There are also opposite trends, the strengthening of national identities. These two trends of globalisation and localisation are progressing parallel.

There are new trends of international cultural relations that will definitely influence Finno-Ugric relations as well. The complexity of the structure of cultural relations depends to a great extent on the strength of domestic civil society in the country. The self-activity of society, and communities (church, minority) is reflected in certain segments of international cultural relations (eg language teaching). Cultural industries have become a major sector in developed national economies and show a faster growth than average. These industries, the “new” economy (innovation and creativity-based economy) are important components and are well used to show the face of a creative and modern nation to the world. The business approach is becoming more and more emphasized today. Culture has a strong marketing potential that governments are increasingly awakening in, and recognizing this, economic players are willing to sacrifice this area. New trends in culture can also cause changes in international cultural co-operation. The appreciation of the role of visualization and visual information over the centuries-old dominance of language requires the restructuring of cultural diplomacy traditionally based on language teaching, but cultural external relations must also respond to the democratization of the work, as more and more people have technical accessibility (eg smart phones).

The role of the state in Finno-ugric cultural cooperation will be maintained, although the activity of governments will be different in this area. The changing geometry of the international system, the advancement of economic interests or the broader interpretation of

culture itself requires the continuous adaptation of cultural foreign policy in the cultural relations of the Finno-Ugric peoples.

However, Finno-Ugric kinship continues to be a strong foundation for building relationship between these nations. Whether these trends will go for or against Finno-Ugric relations, is a question of the future.