

Two decades of diplomatic representation of the Slovak Republic in the world – political-geographic perspective

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Abstract: *The aim of the paper is political-geographical evaluation of the institutional representation of the Slovak Republic abroad. The geographical (complex) point of view on the foreign policy and localisation of the embassies significantly influence the way of understanding the nature of the network of diplomatic representation of the small state in central Europe. In the first section, we compare and evaluate government documents regarding the establishing, cancellation, or planning of the Slovak embassies in the world in three main periods. Subsequently, we compare official data with the real steps of diplomacy and the government of the Slovak Republic, especially in terms of time and space. In the next section, we point out the other diplomatic representations and their progressive increase. The last section identifies and defines the main factors affecting spatial changes in the localisation of the Slovak embassies abroad by most frequently mentioned reasons in government documents. We pointed out embassies and their effectiveness by economic relations, tourists and other factors. This article is a contribution to the Slovak political geography and the evidence of the undoubtable role of geography in foreign political decisions on the example of the embassy network of the Slovak Republic.*

Keywords: *Political Geography, Diplomatic Representation, Foreign Policy of the Slovak Republic*

Introduction

Diplomacy has several tools to promote the interests of the state beyond its borders. One of them is the institutional aspect – diplomatic missions. Diplomatic missions, as a specific type of permanent state diplomatic bodies operating abroad, can currently perform a number of important diplomatic tasks. From political intelligence involving the continuous monitoring and analysis of the political situation in the receiving state, to promote business and investment contracts between business entities, and from the explanation and defence of the sending state's policies to the overall representation of the sending state in the receiving state (Pajtinka 2019). The presence of an embassy in a given country is not a matter of course and its establishment depends on a wide range of factors. The very presence of the embassy, the highest diplomatic office in the country, is of great importance for practicality, but also has a symbolic nature. In diplomacy, such an act is perceived as highly positive and favourable. The establishment of an embassy presupposes an increase in political dialogue, economic ties, and all-round cooperation. By examining the spatial aspect of the location of the embassies of the Slovak Republic in the regions of the world, we will be able to understand the orientation of the foreign policy of Slovakia and identify changes in the network of embassies in time and space, and factors affecting these changes.