

While discussing the rise of supranational diplomacy one needs to have in mind that it was the Holy See that first introduced this kind of representation. In this respect, the Vatican—as much as royal courts and trading posts—was instrumental in creating modern diplomacy. It is worth remembering, though, that the criterion the Holy See has always used while sending its nuncios and missionaries to their posts, as well as while sponsoring scholars, was not that of their nationality, but of their competences and loyalty to the common good of the Church.

According to some observers, the existence of supranational and transnational diplomacy, accompanied by dynamic multinational relations, is obvious evidence of the decline of the importance of the state and the nation in international relations. Particularly the nation—just like the family or religion—ceases to be considered as a natural, God-given, and everlasting environment of a human being. The concept of nation is regarded now as a product of history, human imagination, and formal culture (sustained by means of schooling and state churches). As a result, patriotism has lost its position as part of high, or even mass culture, and is slowly declining in public education and discourse. The question of national identity, or patriotism, is perceived as a realm of individual choices and experience, and often manifested nowadays only in cuisine and language. On the other hand, though, patriotism conceived as devotion and commitment to one's mother country is welcome and used by governments, both at home and overseas, for their own purposes.

The idea of a nation seems to be outdated today and gives way to those of federation, alliance, or a super state, consequently leading to cosmopolitanism. Particularly within the European project, there have been attempts at reducing (and later abolishing) states as separate political units, as well as nationhood as an element of political considerations and practice. The postwar Europe has already turned from nationalism to pooled sovereignty. The ideal is promotion of cosmopolitanism together with multiculturalism, environmental protection, human rights, secular values, and transgender equality. The slogan calling for no borders, no religion, and no private property as the guarantee of global peace and happiness is well known from John Lennon's song *Imagine*. Diplomats, no doubt, enjoy the tune but they realize that once Lennon's dreams about a world without borders and with a brotherhood of men and women come true, none of them will be needed any longer. However, the social and political life seems to constantly confirm that the need for, or obsession with, identity and national interests will never die down.