The literature of a variety of areas, from foreign policy to the humanities, has offered a growing volume of materials about the so-called cultural turn, i.e., the continuous expansion and possible roles of culture. This paper will therefore not address general aspects of the multifarious opportunities inherent in foreign relations; rather I attempt to provide a specific overview of the past twenty years. By way of introduction, two statements should be made:

– Shaping and influencing the externally directed cultural strategy as well as bicultural and multicultural dialogues as the ever changing forms of interculturality has increasingly become an integral part of foreign policy and an indispensable component of the country image;

– Even if a distinction is made between “domestic” culture (cultural policy) and external cultural strategy directed to other countries the two lines are inseparable and one does not exist without the other.

Having stated these preliminaries, in what follows this paper specifically explores Hungarian-German cultural relations. I attempt to give an overview of the positions in Germany of the Hungarian culture which groups the cultural projects of the past twenty years around two major events and as such, it will naturally be incomplete and subjective; nevertheless, I hope it can serve as a starting point for drawing more general conclusions.

1989: The fall of communism – change of paradigm. Challenges and opportunities

When the Berlin wall was pulled down twenty years ago the side-by-side existence of the two German states came to an end. As a result of the reunification the German Democratic Republic (GDR) disappeared from the political stage. This required of Hungary to deploy not only a new foreign policy vis-à-vis Germany but also a new
cultural strategy. On the one hand, this meant a more uniform direction as the expectations of the “socialist brother state” GDR, the toughest and most ideologically driven of the cultural policies of the former communist countries offering the narrowest scope of movement. On the other hand, steps had to be made towards a “new”, now politically unified Germany, whose cultural structure relied on an extremely multi-faceted and colourful federal institutional system and highly regional cultural traditions and cultural codes; central intentions have been manifested at the level of the federal government only since 1998 through the Bundesbeauftragter für Kunst und Medien, the federal minister for culture and the media. In this complex cultural picture the so-called “new states” (i.e. the former GDR) assumed a greater regional cultural identity and have preserved it to date, a fact whose significance is not to be overlooked; indeed, in my opinion, it has an important relevance to Hungarian external cultural policy.

As in the new, unified Germany the supporting structure is the state-level cultural policy Hungary has had to, and did, develop relations and cooperation with various (political, historical and) cultural regions. Not only does it mean that a cultural agreement package must be concluded, and from time to time renewed, with each of the states if there is a unity of purpose, but also that in the context of the agreements a relatively homogeneous or rather concentrated Hungarian cultural background must be adjusted to meet differing regional ideas and expectations and the areas where this is possible must be found in the framework of cooperation.

Thus the Hungarian-German cultural agreement cannot be a comprehensive but only a framework agreement. On this basis the governments of the Republic of Hungary and the Federal Republic of Germany signed a Treaty of Friendly Cooperation and Partnership in Europe in 1992. Articles 20 and 21 lay down the provision and promotion of freedom of cultural exchange and cooperation and the opening of cultural and information centres in both countries. The Treaty was followed by an agreement on cultural cooperation signed by the government of the Republic of Hungary and the government of the Federal Republic of Germany on 1 March 1994, which, however, has not yet been ratified by the Bundestag because of the collision of Article 15 on restitution with German public law. On the other hand, a German-Hungarian film co-production agreement has been signed, which is very promising for the future.

As shown above, the specific contents are carried out at the level of the German states. After the fall of communism, as Hungary concluded separate treaties with the Länder a succession of joint committees were set up (Hungarian-Bavarian, Hungarian-Baden-Württemberger, etc.), which embraced culture as one of the areas of overarching cooperation.

In addition, there are central institutions that are responsible for federal level German external cultural policy, the most prominent being the Goethe Institute, with a worldwide network of 147 institutes in 83 countries. The Budapest Goethe Institute is
a keen player on the culture and science stage of the Hungarian capital and the country as a whole. Another organisation is the Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes) supports international, primarily Central and Eastern European cultural projects. (It played a key role in the events of the Hungarian Season in Germany.)

Another institution one of whose jobs it is to implement cultural strategy is the Institute for Foreign Affairs (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen – IFA). Its foreign relations activities include the organisation of exhibitions of artists and to publish the periodical Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch (Cultural Exchange). There are also renowned systems of institutions that promote the transfer of scientific research, the most prominent being DAAD, which, in addition to offering scholarships and fellowships and delegating native German teachers to academia, has also put exchange of artists and authors on its agenda for the past couple of decades (e.g. the Berlin Artists-in-Residence Programme). For instance, it was in the context of these programmes that a number of Hungarian authors (including Hungarian minority writers in neighbouring countries) spent some time in Germany.

But even organisations that appear to serve purely for cooperation in the field of science, such as Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft or the reputed Humboldt Foundation (whose Hungarian research fellows have created an association and publish a periodical in Hungary) have strengthened and expanded cultural relations, albeit indirectly. Another indirect non-governmental cultural factor is the cultural activity deployed in Hungary by the foundations of each of the three major German political parties: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (CDU), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (SPD), and Hanns Seidel Foundation (CSU).

This is broadly the German institutional system that has (had) to be taken into consideration not only in Hungary but also in the shaping of the new Hungarian external cultural policy. Forms of cooperation have (had) to be found that correspond to these institutions as much as possible and are capable of competent and adequate communication. At the same time, representatives of the Hungarian culture are faced primarily with the local/regional German institutional system when they try to implement their ideas of presentation.

On the Hungarian side, in addition to the state level cultural agreements mentioned above and the foreign missions (embassy and consulates) the two Hungarian cultural institutes operating on Germany soil, in Stuttgart and Berlin, have emerged as the pillars of the new Hungarian-German cultural relations. The very fact that both institutes survived after the reunification and thus Germany is the only country where the Hungarian State (through Balasssi Institute) operates two institutions of this kind indicates the importance of cultural ties. It became especially significant when the Stuttgart Consulate was closed down and the cultural institution had to shoulder a heavier load of foreign strategy.
Obviously we had here an essentially “eastern” and a “western” institution. Since its inception the Stuttgart institution had regional interest and affiliation in the core of its operation as the German ethnic minority population (Donauschwaben) displaced from Hungary after 1945 settled in the Stuttgart area in Germany. Conversely, in Berlin, capital of the GDR, in the House of Hungarian Culture the Hungarian State set out to acquaint local citizens with the Hungarian spirit that was considerably more liberal and varicoloured than the cultural policy of the GDR. Mention should be made of the fact that an ideology-based interest in the culture of a “fraternal country” had positive ramifications in the GDR: besides works of “socialist realism” major pieces by the classics of Hungarian literature were published and thus appeared in the German speaking book market in “GDR” translation. Although sadly, this possibility was more theoretical than real, yet in the sixties and seventies, and right until the early eighties a relatively large portion of the East German population had an opportunity to encounter with the Hungarian culture, primarily with literature as well as Hungarian classical and pop music.

Several factors influenced this basic scheme. Hungary became known in the West as the country of “goulash communism”: a country of relative welfare presenting the picture of the “merriest barrack”. It served as a meeting place uniting disrupted families in the two Germanys for a holiday at Lake Balaton – a role whose significance has been conspicuous in the Hungarian-German relations to date.

This favourable view of Hungary by both German States became even more positive in 1989 after the opening of the border to East Germans. The famous sentence by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, almost faded into oblivion in Germany today, that “It was in Hungary that the first stone was removed from the Berlin Wall” clearly indicates that after the German reunification the Hungarian foreign policy and external cultural strategy was met by a receptive and keen environment which not only made the necessary restructuring possible but demanded it and helped to promote and broaden Hungarian-German cultural relations for a good many years. This was the backdrop for the operation of the two cultural institutions: the Stuttgart institute was no longer only a regional cultural bridge to Hungary, and Berlin no longer needed an alternative for the East German cultural policy; instead, both institutes had to create the cultural context of European belonging, European reunification. In other words, from a foreign policy perspective the cultural arguments for European Union membership had to be developed. Added to this was the fact that Berlin became the capital of the reunified Germany; thus not only was the country’s political centre shifted “from the west”, but the lines of force of the German cultural orientation have gradually been redrawn in a process that is still going on. Consequently, the Berlin institute’s goal was not only to expand the former GDR audience by involving the former West Berlin but also the practical implementation of the cultural diplomacy vis-à-vis the new nationwide institutions in Berlin. This, in a city where social, cultural and attitudinal tensions and
András Masát

oppositions between the two former countries were conspicuous and tangible not only at a regional level but also from street to street.

In this – almost geographical – context the Berlin strategy had another essential element: in a lawsuit instituted in the mid-1990s against the City of Berlin, local legal successor of the GDR, the Hungarian State claimed the lot on which Collegium Hungaricum, an institution of historical significance had once been situated. In recent GDR times only a building of Humboldt University’s nursery school stood on the lot, which was soon returned to the Hungarian State. Plans were soon conceived to relocate the institute from its GDR premises on the ground floor of a large prefab block near Alexanderplatz to its historical place at 13 Dorotheenstrasse, which meant that new headquarters had to be built to replace the former mansion bombed down in the war. The plan had two advantages: on the one hand, the institute, resuming the name Collegium Hungaricum in 2002, would be located in the vicinity of the Berlin museum quarter, a UNESCO World Heritage site that included, among others, Pergamon Museum; on the other hand, it would be next to Humboldt University, which would enable it to rely on Humboldt students as potential audience, as in the old days, not to mention the proximity of Unter den Linden at a visible distance. But over and above these tangible benefits relocation of the Hungarian cultural institute in Berlin on the historical site of the old Collegium Hungaricum, founded by Róbert Gragger as the encapsulation of Hungarian cultural and scientific presence in Berlin and Germany before World War II also had a symbolic significance. The historical lot was returned to the Hungarian State in 1997 and the opportunity became a reality in 1998.

As shown above, despite the difficulties the new Hungarian cultural period after 1989 started from a good position in Germany, endowed with a conspicuous political and cultural “bonus”. In my opinion, this stage was concluded by the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Frankfurt ’99

Ten years after 1989 Hungary was guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. This German language book fair is of European importance as it is the pageant of literature, one of the most important segments of national culture. As literature is one of the most important media and a depository of national and cultural identity, perhaps more so in Hungary than in other countries, presenting the national literary standard at this major forum required tremendous efforts and at the same time triggered significant political and cultural policy strife and clashes. This is not the place to report on the latter, nor on the organisation and multiple changes in the team responsible for staging the Hungarian participation. It is more important to focus on what this opportunity meant in the Hungarian-German cultural relations, what achievements were scored in Frankfurt
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and the cultural policy lessons learnt. Needless to say, Hungary presented not only its books and literature at the Book Fair but provided vistas of the entire Hungarian culture. The 5,300 or so square metres of Frankfurt’s Hall 3.0 served as a kind of information centre offering a glimpse into Hungarian arts and science in addition to literature and the history of publishing. For example, statues of twelve prominent Hungarian scientists and artists were displayed: music was represented by Béla Bartók, literature by Attila József, medicine by Ignác Semmelweis. Besides the “music room” special concert events were devised, and the Frankfurt Film Museum started showing a selection of Hungarian films from May of 1999. Visitors were acquainted with Hungarian plastic art in Schirn Kunsthalle: the Museum of Fine Art offered its Esterházy collection and the National Gallery lent paintings by Rippl-Rónai.

What was the intent of the cultural administration and the organisers? What were the goals of the Hungarian attendance at the Book Fair? The obvious goal was to promote and expand the choice of Hungarian literature available in German. Direct preparations took about three years and were dotted with changes in leading positions and debates on concepts. More importantly, the ground had been broken to receive the seeds of Hungarian literature. DAAD in Berlin had made its Artists-in-Residence Programme available for Hungarian authors. As a result Miklós Mészöly was offered a one-year authorship grant in Germany followed by some of the leading Hungarian writers and poets, which gave them an opportunity to build relations with German publishers, book retailers and translators (the latter being a cardinal feature of the programme). By the time of the Book Fair contemporary Hungarian literature had become somewhat known and recognised in Germany. A new generation had grown up that conceived of the relative “eastern” isolation merely as linguistic confinement. In this generation not only our authors but also translators assumed an increasingly important role.

On the other hand, the German-speaking countries, i.e., translation into German has traditionally been the first and most important step towards international recognition, a springboard to worldwide fame. Many distinguished predecessors, from 19th century translator Károly Kertbeny through Róbert Gragger, first director of Collegium Hungaricum and patron of the arts Lajos Hatvany to Dezső Keresztury, Tibor Déry and Béla Balázs were fully aware of the fact that being published in German was not only an opportunity to be included in European trends but it also made the writers and poets “marketable”. “Today Berlin is our Paris: a city that has not yet played a part in Hungarian cultural history. Spree is our Seine,” wrote Aladár Komlós, the noted Hungarian poet, writer and literary historian in 1923. This period, particularly intensive between the two World Wars when Hungarian actors and film stars also played an important role was disrupted in 1933, then by World War II, and later by Germany torn into two. By 1999 the old positions were strengthened and the path between the two countries’ literature has widened to allow increasingly intensive transfer. This re-
sulted from traditions, the changing political and institutional frameworks, and also from the new type of relations of Hungarian authors. Consider some examples: Imre Kertész, the Hungarian Nobel Prize laureate writer was awarded the Leipzig Book Fair Prize in 1997 for his literary work to promote European understanding (Literaturpreis für europäische Verständigung); in the same year he received the Kossuth Prize, and was also awarded the Friedrich Gundolf Prize for the intermediation of German culture in foreign countries, a prestigious award conferred annually by the German Academy for Language and Poetry. György Konrád is another Hungarian-German-European “intermediator”. He was president of International PEN from 1990 to 1993; in 1991 he received the German Book Retailers’ Prize for Peace in Frankfurt. He was the first foreigner to be elected, in 1997, president of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Arts. In his office, which he held until 2003 he did a lot for the intellectual rapprochement between East and West, particularly in literature and arts. Péter Esterházy was elected Person of the Year in 1999 (Magyar Hírlap), he won the Austrian State Prize. On 12 October 1999 the prominent Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung wrote a critique of his volume of short stories Thomas Mann mampft Kebab am Fuße des Holstentors published by the Austrian Zsolnay Publishing House. On the same day Esterházy delivered one of the opening addresses of the Book Fair in German (interspersed with Hungarian to demonstrate the difference in the literary and rhetoric encoding of the two languages). The younger generation, for example, László Darvasi and László Garaczi as well as László Krasznahorkai had also made their first appearance in the German book market.

Direct preparations also included the 1997 invitation of applications for the support of deserving translators and publishers that set out to publish Hungarian literary works in foreign languages. Both streams are very important. Today, when literature (and music) are our most sought cultural export goods the importance of the translator and a person and the quality of translation has been as well as of the publisher’s marketing strategy and support cannot be overestimated. As regards support to publishers, pushing for Hungarian publishers to publish Hungarian works in foreign languages proved to be a failure as these works do not seem to find their way to the mainstream of European publishing. Instead, publishers in the target country should be attracted to publish translations of Hungarian works. Literary translation of a high standard of quality and its marketing are crucial in current cultural relations – this message has come across more clearly and unequivocally than ever before since the Frankfurt Book Fair. It is underscored by the studies and papers written about, or in connection with, the Frankfurt Book Fair. The balance of the Fair was a thousand new publications of 120 authors’ works by 80 publishing houses. Due to the Book Fair the numbers of Hungarian books published in foreign languages soared as did the number of books sold. The list of new works by Hungarian authors that appeared in the Frankfurt Book Fair in foreign languages is more than impressive. The illustrious list of names also indicates the dimensions of opportunity the Fair pro-
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vided. After the Book Fair our literature became the number one export item to the German speaking cultural markets. This could be seen as a paradox: we may have thought earlier that other forms of art, primarily music will be the area for easier penetration – after all, the structure and turns of our language are hard to render in the Indo-Germanic languages in such a way that the resulting cultural goods be “competitive and saleable in the European market”. Esterházy, too, alluded to this in his speech. However, it has been proved that if the quality of translation is adequate and the work is adopted by a major publishing/retail network, not only will it be saleable but its success is almost guaranteed. At the Book Fair well-known writers (Kertész, Esterházy, Nádas, Mészöly, Konrád) became even better known in Germany; but in addition the middle generation also strengthened its positions and a number of writers made a debut in Germany who attracted the attention of major publishers and/or managed to spend a year in Berlin after the Book Fair in the context of DAAD’s Artists-in-Residence Programme.

The rediscovery of Sándor Márai’s works was a special sensation of the Book Fair.\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Embers,} retranslated and published under the title \textit{Die Glut} was welcome by a furor. Here again, the synergy of translator’s excellence (Christina Viragh), publisher’s intent (Piper Verlag) and the unique opportunity resulted in weeks of success in the German book market that spilled over not only to other works by Márai but gave a new impetus to publishers’ purpose to “rediscover” Hungarian literature. This is why, for instance, \textit{Journey by Moonlight,} a novel by by Antal Szerb was published again in Germany.

\textit{Frankfurt and the Hungary image}

Naturally, the Frankfurt Book Fair was also about the country image: what picture of Hungary is propagated to the host country and visitors. Do we manage to present ourselves as a modern European country with “western” cultural traditions on its way to the European Union? Or will Hungary stay an agreeable but slightly patronised country, the country of Piroschka, goulash and csárdás? The German papers attempted to draw on the traditional perception but at the same time mediated between the old cliché and the new country image: \textit{Mehr als Puszta und Piroschka, Weit mehr als Piroschka.} In fact this dual orientation is – understandably – conspicuous in Hungarian-German relations as a whole. After all, both the reporting (Hungarian) and the receiving (German) parties rely on clichés as terms of reference, and that is the way it goes everywhere. No new strategy can ignore the traditionally embedded components of the Hungary image from the travelogue of Ernst Moritz Arndt through Herder’s prophecy to the feature film \textit{Ich denke oft an Piroschka}. This applied to the Frankfurt Book Fair: clichés could not be entirely dispensed with. Nevertheless, post-communist Hungary’s appearance in Frankfurt was a success. It led to a reinforcement of the new political and institutional context of our cultural relations, and Hungarian literature contributed to shaping the new Hungary image in Germany with particular intensity by international standards.
After Frankfurt and before the Hungarian Season: “We, too, have become a normal country, or have I already mentioned that?”
(Péter Esterházy’s Frankfurt address, 1999)

When Esterházy was speaking about Hungary as a literary country in Frankfurt he mentioned the prison of language. Linguistic vulnerability to Indo-Germanic languages was one of the key ideas of his speech. Yet this was not really the case even before Frankfurt: on the contrary, it was conspicuous that some of the contemporary Hungarian writers had gained public acclaim in Germany and the middle generation had not been unknown either in the German book market. After Frankfurt the attention focused on Hungarian literature and Hungarian culture in general held the promise of lasting solidity. Let us return for a moment to the personal kudos of writers and cultural relations nurtured on it. György Konrád, who presided over the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Arts until 2003 received the Karl Prize of Aachen in 2001 for his efforts as a “bridge builder of European justice and reconciliation” (Brückenbauer für Gerechtigkeit und Versöhnung in Europa). In 2002 Imre Kertész was the first Hungarian to win the most prestigious international literary award, the Nobel Prize in Literature, primarily for his novel *Fateless* retranslated into German (also by Christina Viragh!) in 1996. Here again, the process was long: Kertész (who had also worked as a translator earlier) had been available to German readers since 1990. In the year of the Book Fair seven of his books were sold in the German market along with works by Nádas and Esterházy. His Nobel Prize awarded in 2002 drew attention again to Hungarian literature (and its internal lines of force) and boosted interest in Hungarian writers and poets. In 2004 Esterházy received the German Book Retailers’ Prize for Peace (Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels) in Frankfurt. The eulogy was delivered by Michael Naumann, Secretary of Culture. The middle generation – Darvasi, Garaczi, Parti-Nagy – became definitively known and recognised in Berlin owing to DAAD’s grants and the publishers’ efforts. Thus, in the German speaking world at least, Hungarian authors were freed from “the prison of language”, and while the lack of gifted, high-quality translators is again becoming palpable the best of our literature are confident and reliable flag bearers of Hungarian culture through their permanent presence in the German book market. Added to this are events such as the Leipzig Book Fair, where Hungary has stepped up its attendance, and the Budapest International Book Festival, where in 2004 Germany was guest of honour and which Nobel Prize winner Günther Grass honoured with his participation.

Conversely, the picture is not so rosy in other cultural segments around the turn of the millennium. True, Hungary staged cultural shows at the 2000 Hannover Expo and the exhibition *Crown and Cross* presenting a thousand years of Hungarian-Bavarian relations
was opened in May 2001, and Hungary paraded eminent representatives of its culture in numerous places and on numerous occasions. Yet the political bonus received in 1989 has disappeared. Hungary is no longer seen as the nation that had just shed the manacles of the “eastern bloc” and done a lot for the Germans; the cultural field of the historical change of paradigm shows a totally different picture. Indeed, we have become a normal country, which no longer deserved special attention: Hungary has gradually become an integral part of a restructured Europe that has known economic problems, and joined the EU in 2004. Similarly to other areas, exploitation of the cultural opportunities brought by EU membership requires appropriate strategies as well as efficient and dexterous management. In the German context it is also to be taken into consideration that after the reunification the country focused mainly on solving its own social and cultural problems. This was particularly the case in the new capital, Berlin, where diverse historical and socio-cultural traditions were merged in the political and cultural process which ultimately united the former GDR capital and the special-status city of West Berlin to give rise to the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. Looking at the numbers of embassies newly settling or relocated from Bonn or refurbished in East Berlin, the international community was aware of this important geopolitical restructuring. It took place in one of the major European powers, whose political and economic potential soared especially in Central Europe. Cultural life likewise shifted to Berlin as several nationwide institutions relocated in the new capital city and also because of the foreign presence: almost every embassy has a cultural department or at least a cultural attaché or secretary, and several countries including Hungary have a separate cultural institute charged with the mission to implement the country’s external cultural policy in the newly emerging cultural space.

In this way the cultural market calls for ever more dynamic (and more vocal) involvement. Good strategy and predictable financial background are indispensable for participation in the newly emerging competition. Seven years after Frankfurt the time seemed opportune for another major Hungarian cultural appearance whose impulses would help the German audience embrace Hungarian culture as a whole and would promote long-term cultural relations.

**2006–2007: Hungarian Cultural Season in Germany – Ungarischer Akzent (Hungarian Accent)**

In my recollection, the idea emerged in Collegium Hungaricum in Berlin: the Hungarian cultural institute would be given a new building on the returned Dorotheenstrasse lot and the event, from the laying of the foundation stone to the grand opening, should be set in a complex cultural programme that would strengthen existing relations with Berlin as well as nationwide, and would pave the way to forming new ties. The chance
that the venerable Berlin institute of Hungarian culture could get rid of the prefab premises it had leased since 1973 amidst a housing block reminiscent of the GDR era was a unique opportunity to relocate Collegium Hungaricum from “le charme discret” of a post-communist prefabricated building to a modern building erected in a historic location, so that, at long last, Collegium Hungaricum could fulfil its current tasks in cultural diplomacy backed by the unity of form and content. Proponents argued that the elegance of the new building would live up to that of the new premises of the Hungarian Embassy next to the Brandenburg Gate, thus the special importance of the two country’s relations would be underscored by the appearance of Hungary’s missions in Germany. Moreover, such an event in the new Berlin would transfer modern contents while building on common Berlin and Hungarian scientific and cultural traditions and a such it would be an excellent starting point for a cultural strategy that vied for a part in the ever changing cultural space of the capital city and hoped to be an active participant modern Berlin’s (and Germany’s) cultural dialogue.

Once the government consented to the concept and after a longer period the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage (and later the Ministry of Education and Culture) passed a decision regarding the financial scheme of building the new Collegium Hungaricum, preparations of a concentrated cultural appearance commenced. Similarly to events of this kind launched in other countries it was named Hungarian Cultural Season in Germany with the difference that this Season lasted almost eighteen months in three stages with three distinct focuses/topics, and again directed by changing trustees.

From the laying of the foundation stone to the Football World Cup
The Season titled Ungarischer Akzent kicked off on 9 March 2006 with the laying of the foundation stone of Collegium Hungaricum. The double take of the German title is inherent in English, too. On the one hand, it refers to the Hungarian accent that is immediately recognisable for Germans. On the other hand – and this more subtle meaning is even more important –, it denotes the key concept of the Season: Hungarian-German relations have been so close over the years that there is no need for an introduction; instead, the old set associations (and clichés) have to be modified and completed – new accents, new emphases are needed so that, like so many times since the Book Fair, Hungary can again show itself as a country more than Piroschka, puszta and paprika. (In this respect, the German Season was different from the highly successful Magyar Magic Season in Great Britain, where the introduction aspect was strongest.) However, the stretched out time frame was contrary to traditions as until then, the point of the Season was a series of events concentrated in time and place.

It was putting the building of Collegium Hungaricum in the foreground that required as full eighteen months period. The Hungarian cultural administration wanted to draw attention to one of its biggest cultural investment projects (deployed in Germany for
good reason), and intended to position the new building in the reconstructed, dynamic old-new German capital. At the time of the old building, hardly suitable for all cultural purposes, needs were turned into benefits: many events were staged outside the institute with the cooperation of German partners. The new construction project relayed the message to the Berlin representatives of Hungarian and German culture that not only will past partnerships survive and deepen in the future but a new and eminently suitable facility will be added to the existing Berlin institutions which set out to introduce a national culture that can leave their mark on the Berlin cultural life. In other words, active participation in Berlin’s cultural life can take place in the new building of the well positioned and carefully introduced Collegium Hungaricum.

At the first stage the events were focused mainly on Berlin under the patronage of the two Heads of State. Already the first three days offered exciting musical and literary events: after the laying of the foundation stone the Hungarian Season was officially opened in the Federal Chancellery. At Brandenburger Tor and Pariser Platz in the heart of Berlin light art installations drew Berliners’ attention to the opening ceremony in the new building of the Berlin Academy of Arts and the ensuing exhibition and reception at the Hungarian Embassy premises.

Autumn of 2006: in the spirit of 1956 and the Essen Lichtwochen
The second stage significantly widened the scope of the Season. Events were organised around two main themes and both pointed beyond Berlin. One was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian uprising all around Germany; the other was the fact that Pécs was awarded the title of European Capital of Culture – 2010, which gave an opportunity to stage preparatory programmes that propagated the arts image of Pécs and modern Hungary primarily in North Rhine-Westphalia. The 1956 commemorative programmes truly encompassed the whole of Germany. Given the predominantly historical and political nature of the event the Hungarian foreign policy institutions headed by the Hungarian Embassy and the Consulates played a leading part. All areas of remembrance including science, literature, music and plastic art found their due place in the cultural structure and framework provided by the Season to commemorate the 1956 events. Thus this stage offered an unprecedented opportunity to implement foreign diplomacy goals and the cultural strategy of the Season at the same time.

The multitude of commemorative events strongly reflected the effort to create political, scholarly and personal testimonies together with German partners, and to depict the special contents on Hungarian-German relations in an international context. When it came to staging events to commemorate 1956 in most cases it was not the Hungarian organisers who needed to find partners – rather it was the German counterpart institutions that sought ways and means of cooperation in the spirit of historical re-
membrance. As a result jointly coordinated roving programmes emerged (book presentations, photo exhibitions about 1956, remembrance events with the participation of writers Péter Nádas and György Dalos). Also, due to the strong local regional involvement, a lot of the events were true German events that offered a Hungarian topic and accent with regional hues and aspects. They were weft in the fabric of the German cultural infrastructure and attracted many new target groups – this, in my opinion, was a strong indication of the present and future direction of cultural relations and of the forms of cultural dialogues. Major events were staged in 11 states including Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen, cities with state status. As they commemorated 1956 they took the opportunity to present contemporary Hungarian art. This leads us to the other key theme for 2006 but let us take a closer look at the commemoration of 1956.

It seems appropriate to list some of the central cultural events staged in the context of the 1956 celebrations. They were the result of cooperation between the Berlin and Stuttgart cultural institutes, the Hungarian ministry of culture, and Balassi Institute in Budapest, but no less important was the role of the Hungarian missions in Germany and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Hungarian Embassy in Berlin, the Consulate in Munich, the honorary consuls in the states, the local units of German-Hungarian societies, the Hungarian organisations in Germany (Bund der Ungarischen Organisationen in Deutschland), the twin cities all made an indispensable contribution to create a suitable framework nationwide to commemorate this momentous event of Hungarian history. As regards scholarly commemorative events, the Hungarian or Finno-Ugric Departments of the universities took their share of the organisation with their native Hungarian teachers at the helm.

Historians’ conferences featured prominently on the programme: in Berlin the Hungarian-German Historians’ Conference jointly organised at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences by Collegium Hungaricum and three German partner institutions (Zentrum für zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam, Stiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur and Bipolar); in Munich and Stuttgart; in Bremen the commemoration titled Zeitzeugengespräch (Witnesses’ Talks) staged on Imre Nagy Square and in the new City Hall, to mention but a few highlights. Important book shows were also in the centre of events, for example the German edition of János M. Rainer’s book on Imre Nagy was launched, as was Paul Lendvai’s book on 1956; both events were attended by the authors. Remembrance was backed by photo exhibitions, such as the very special show whose title alluded to the origin of photos mostly unknown until then: Versteckt, beschlagnahmt, als Beweismaterial beigefügt… (Hidden, Seized, Attached as Evidence). The collection put together by the National Museum in collaboration with Collegium Hungaricum was exhibited after Berlin in Paulskirche in Frankfurt, where the opening ceremony was attended by the Hungarian minister for culture and the mayor of Frankfurt, and the exhibition was equally a success in Dresden. Ein heißer Herbst im Kalten Krieg – Ungarn 1956,
a film created by the Institute of the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was shown at a number of sites or was a closing feature of the events; moreover, due to the cooperation between Collegium Hungaricum in Berlin and its partner institute in Thuringia (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen) it was also shown in schools.

The other stream of the Season’s events in the autumn of 2006 was connected to the Essen Light Weeks and denoted the strategic direction focusing on the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Hungary was guest of honour of the 57th Essen Light Weeks (29 October 2006–6 January 2007). This put Hungarian topics in the centre of a major regional event that again started by spectacular light painting. In addition, it gave an opportunity for the two 2010 European Cultural Capitals, Essen (and the Ruhr Area) and its Hungarian counterpart Pécs to get to know each other more closely and to develop joint programmes and strategies. Besides the introduction of Pécs featuring two prominent writers of the Hungarian periodical Jelenkor, shows by Bóbita Puppet Theatre and presentation of Zsolnay China Manufacture, the Essen events had a very strong element of classical and jazz concerts. The closing musical events included concerts by the Budapest Festival Orchestra and pianist András Schiff in January 2007.

Whereas the events commemorating 1956 strengthened the political and historical perspective, the varied shows in Essen and other states intensified the image of a modern Hungary. Such events were the performance of Roncsolt köpia (Scratched Celluloid) by Béla Pintér & Company in the context of the Euro-scene programmes in Leipzig; the Licht und Form exhibition in Dessau on modern Hungarian architecture and photography from 1927 to 1950; the Keller Quartet’s concert in Hamburg; the book launch of Berlin, meine Liebe. Schließen Sie bitte die Augen staged in Berlin’s Literarisches Colloquium by DAAD and Collegium Hungaricum – the book, a compilation of the experiences of DAAD scholarship holder authors in Berlin proved to be a roaring success; the Regensburg Jazz Days; the Munich Open Art Festival with Hungary as guest country; the István Szabó Film Week also in Munich, and so on. A special feature was the series of events related to famous Hungarian composers and literary figures: concerts in memoriam Liszt and Kurtág, and the exhibition of Janet Brooks Gerloff’s paintings inspired by poems by Attila József that opened in September 2006 in Würzburg-Schweinfurt – an event that tied in with the programmes started in 2005 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the poet’s birth. Meanwhile a series of programmes also started whose significance cannot be overemphasized. Independently from the Season in terms of time and concept, in September 2005 Kulturstiftung des Bundes issued a call for projects under the initiative Bipolar. With a budget of three million euros (!) allocated by the Federal Cultural Foundation, the goal of Bipolar was to support German-Hungarian cooperative cultural projects of individual artists and groups (not institutions!), to bring the joint projects to the audience through exhibitions and publication, and, just as importantly, to trigger long-term cooperation. The deadline of application was March 2006 and the
joint German-Hungarian jury announced the projects awarded support in July 2006. So along with, and independent from, the Hungarian cultural and diplomatic institutional network a strictly unofficial German-Hungarian system of relations developed that did not rely on any institution and initially stood apart from the Season, but also aimed at creating German-Hungarian art projects. Building on private initiatives and retaining its independence, this art network eventually greatly expanded the choice of events on the Season’s programme due to the unplanned coincidence. Several of the Season’s programmes in 2006 and 2007 were staged together with Bipolar network, yet because of the network’s conscious effort to preserve their autonomy from any official cultural institution they appeared rather as independent projects also featuring among the Season’s events. Examples include the exhibition Germans in Hungary – Hungarians in Germany. European Life Paths on show in Donauschwäbisches Zentralmuseum, the composers’ competition in memoriam György Ligeti, etc.

2007: the final stage – the new Collegium Hungaricum and the regional Season strategy

The third and last stage of the Season started with the roof-raising ceremony of the new Collegium Hungaricum building in May and finished according to plans in late November, early December. Collaboration with the German partner institutions was close in the first two stages and as a result, the events blended in the local cultural infrastructure. The 2007 stage expressed this in a more emphatic and concentrated fashion and indicated it in its slogan: Ungarn – fünf Positionen (Hungary – Five Positions). In the last stage of the Season Hungarian “accents” were laid “only” on five regions, where new Hungary images were communicated through five core topics.

In Karlsruhe in Baden-Württemberg the topic was culture and innovation. A major Wolfgang von Kempelen exhibition was organised. In Thuringia the series titled The Saint and the Blessed presented a socially sensitive Hungary in the context of contemporary programmes addressing social and religious topics focusing on the (“German”) Year of Saint Elisabeth, and the major exhibition in Eisenach titled Ohne Hort, which, given the two levels of meaning, explored the dual topic of treasures or worldly goods and the lack of a place under the sun. With a view to the European Capital of Culture – 2010 role, the focus in North Rhine-Westphalia was to tighten the links between Pécs and the Ruhr Area by launching several joint cultural projects and Pécs’s attendance at the Essen festivals. The Hamburg (Schleswig-Holstein) events made Hungary “audible” with the motto Tradition and Modernity, which primarily involved a strong participation at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, one of Europe’s most highly regarded musical events, where Hungry was guest of honour. I consider the prominence at this outstanding series of events as one of the greatest achievements of Hungarian cultural diplomacy, thanks to a large extent to the personal influence of Dr Sándor
Old and New Positions in the Appearance of Hungarian Culture in Germany: 1989-2009

Peisch, Ambassador of Hungary in Berlin. The Festival encompassed the entire region and provided multifaceted opportunities: for example, gifted young Hungarian musicians were offered grants; satellite literary and plastic art programmes were staged in a number of cities and smaller small towns, which were open to Hungarian authors and artists. In Berlin the slogan was *New Colours – New Contours* and the key theme was design (see the event *Designmai*) and contemporary architecture, putting in focus Péter Forgách’s exhibition *Danube Exodus* in the Jewish Museum of Berlin, and, naturally, the grand opening of the new *Collegium Hungaricum* building. The cultural administration launched an open invitation of projects in 2003. The architectural plans submitted by the winner Schweger Assozierte Gesamtplanung GmbH conceived of an impressive five-storey edifice with a total floor area of 3184 square metres constructed by German contractors. Hungarian culture was given a home that lived up to its traditions and tasks. The grand opening was a veritable Berlin event featuring Péter Esterházy and the Keller String Quartet followed by a concert of Bea Palya. On the following day Imre Kertész read from his books, then Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and Minister for Culture István Hiller took part in a round table discussion – these were the first events where prominent Berliners and Hungarians, representatives of the partner institutions and all those interested had their first taste of the new *Collegium Hungaricum*.

So the Season was concluded. Despite changes in the post of trustees, fuzzy scopes of competence and coordination and volatility of financing, all of which hindered the optimal unification of forces, the following significant achievements were scored (in no order of importance):

- Compared to previous Hungarian Seasons, the 2006-2007 Season was unusually extended in time and space: 220 Hungarian cultural events were staged in a total of 170 German cities and towns in 2006 and another 200 events in 2007. Five hun-
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dred Hungarian artists participated in 2006 and a thousand in 2007. While these figures are impressive there was obviously some concern that attention would be fragmented, funds would dwindle, and interest would lag as time draws on and also because of the geographical distances. In the event, the regional and thematic focuses managed to concentrate the Hungarian presence and the cultural message reached areas where the two cultures had never encountered before, or if they had, certainly not with such intensity. We managed to build solid cultural positions in states such as North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen, where the Hungarian cultural presence had been sporadic and occasional. A new cultural field of force took shape in many places, which can and will embrace future cultural encounters and continued cultural dialogue, thus creating a framework for sustainable relations.

- In Berlin the Hungarian culture was given new premises on a historical location. Evoking “German-Hungarian” Bauhaus traditions, the modern building is a suitable environment for the propagation of a modern Hungary image in the renewed German capital. The facility is complete with an exhibition hall, a multifunction hall suitable for film screening, theatre performances and conferences or lectures, a library, offices as well as a coffee shop and a restaurant and guest suites. Its characteristics make it suitable for not only strengthening Hungary’s cultural positions but also furthering them by providing a suitable location for Hungarian-German and multicultural encounters. When, in keeping with traditions, it supports the work of the Department of Hungarian Studies of Humboldt University in Berlin by inviting prominent figures of Hungarian intellectual life and offering its seminar rooms it promotes the synergy of science and culture. The three key events related to the new building in construction (laying of the foundation stone, roof-raising ceremony and grand opening) provided a framework for the Season and its positioning in Berlin was a huge success.

- Commemoration of the 1956 events was an important task and opportunity with respect to Hungary’s European position. Again, foreign policy and cultural policy worked in close cooperation and this synergy gave rise to memorable events in Germany. The Season coincided with the Year of Saint Elisabeth, the Barók Year that in 2006 commemorated the 125th anniversary of the composer’s birth, and the 2007 Kodály Year. The Season laid the foundations of this type of relations: preparations of the 2011 Liszt Bicentennial started with the Bonn and Weimar Festivals and the cooperation that started earlier between Pécs and the Ruhr Area grew new many shoots.

- Besides the middle generation and the great names the young generation was always present with gifted representatives and added a personal input to long-term relations.

- I believe the modern “accents” were a decisive step in the long process of transforming the traditional Hungary image of clichés and stereotypes: by relaying modern contents in up-to-date frameworks we plotted new positions for a
changing cultural paradigm. In this respect it is interesting and important to note that whereas the Frankfurt Book Fair put literature and its transfer into focus, 2006/2007 was the “audible Season”, the “Season of sounds”: almost half of the 420 events were musical. This indicates that besides literature our musical heritage and present can (again) constitute the main thrust of our cultural penetration.

• It has been clearly demonstrated that the strategy of reliance on local infrastructure through partnerships and dialogues when creating joint cultural products – a strategy originally induced by scarcity of funds – is infinitely more effective in terms of both funding and impact than outdated presentations.

**Outlook: Pécs ECC – 2010 and the future**

After the Season, the next occasion for Hungarian-German cultural encounters was 2009, 20th anniversary of the opening of the borders to East Germans. Obviously the political celebrations and historical reminiscences were organised at high levels of foreign affairs and primarily with the participation of historians and political scientists of the two countries. Nevertheless, these events have the fringe benefit of promoting direct cultural relations by attracting attention to the other country and the cultural context of events, and bridge the time leading to the next major Hungarian-German cultural enterprise, the joint act of Pécs and the Ruhr Area as European Capitals of Culture in 2010.

Preparatory programmes have been well underway: Pécs came forward with important events in 2009, where the German connection is highlighted by the international conference with the participation of the prominent philosopher Jürgen Habermas, cultural management training by Robert Busch, appearance at the Dortmund Festival and the North Rhine-Westphalia Summerfest (NRW Sommerfest) in Berlin. The Stuttgart Cultural Institute has also put the introduction of Pécs in Baden-Württemberg State on its agenda.

Fellbach, 5 November 2008: the Secretary of State for Science, Research and Culture of Baden-Württemberg announces the Pécs European Capital of Culture programmes
The multi-week Pécs 2010 events were launched in 2008 in the context of a three-year programme. The 2009 events included a Zsolnay ceramics and china exhibition in Fellbach (Pécs’s twin city), a concert by the Pécs rock band Kispál és a Borz at the important Summer Festival of Cultures and by the Villány String Quartet at the cultural institute, and the photo exhibition Homes and Dwellers presenting side by side lives of people living in one of the Pécs districts and in Berlin. As a matter of fact, these introductory programmes have been in process in the run-up preceding the ECC selection. For example, in Berlin all of the Hungarian ECC applicant cities and their applications were presented, and later Pécs was given numerous opportunities to outline its plans to the German audience. Awarded simultaneously to Pécs and the Ruhr Area, the European Capital of Culture – 2010 title is another prime chance for the Hungarian cultural policy to develop long-term, dynamic and modern relations with Germany and at the same time to acquire significant positions at European and regional levels. The fact that Istanbul, representative of a non-EU member state is also a European Cultural Capital in 2010 points beyond this dimension. It put Pécs, a city with a rich and “visible” Turkish heritage in a special position in the preparatory phase, and as Cultural Capital, Pécs will be at the cultural intersection of Essen and Istanbul. However, there is a legitimate concern that these great European and Hungarian-German potentials will be left mostly unexploited. The preparations of Pécs were ridden with constant strife about competences and changes at the helm (all that, of course, was the ramification of local and national political and cultural discord); it hindered planning and resulted in the fragmentation of the financial background. Notwithstanding these concerns, hopefully the collaboration of Pécs and the Ruhr Area will once again open new positions in the presentation and reception of Hungarian culture in Germany. In this respect the event Szene: Ungarn in NRW in May 2010 will be particularly important. This outstanding cultural festival of North Rhine-Westphalia will host Hungary as guest of honour after Austria, so the cultural bridge existing of old between Hungary and Germany will hopefully be further widened. Growing interest as well as renewed forms of cooperation are marked by our participation at the 2010 Karlsruhe European Cultural Days, where the Hungarian capital city and the European Cultural Capital Pécs have been invited and will participate under the title Budapest/Pécs zwischen den Zeiten und Welten (Budapest/Pécs – Between Ages and Worlds), or the project Kunst Unternehmen, also in Karlsruhe, where ten artists from Budapest and Karlsruhe will take part.

Thus there is hope that that in the period between the German EU presidency in 2007 to the Hungarian presidency in 2011 the cultural bridge mentioned above will be ever stronger and more modern, as it is being built from many sides. As seen, the coordination of foreign policy goals and external cultural strategy, i.e. the collaboration of the diplomatic and cultural institutions, supplemented by other points of contact from twin cities, Hungarian societies in Germany to science relations constantly give
new impetuses. The cultural and science policy dimension of political and historical relations is illustrated by the activity of Andrásy Gyula German Language University of Budapest, founded in 2001 by virtue of the Ulm Agreement. Founded on the basis of the financial partnership of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bavaria, the State of Baden-Württemberg, Austria, and to some extent Switzerland, it is the first German language higher education institution established outside the German speaking countries since World War II. The university and its programmes are a clear indication of the special nature of the Hungarian-German relations and their future potential.

Hungary’s cultural repositioning in Germany is an ongoing process. It calls for huge efforts, goodwill and receptivity from both sides. In this respect the Hungarian culture has had nothing to complain of for the past twenty years of its German ties. However, considering these (political and) cultural relations that run on a smooth track and needing only occasional “maintenance work” would be illusory and self-deceptive. EU membership did not facilitate external cultural policy: being a member state certainly has opened new opportunities, but at the same time has increased competition in cultural terms, too. Germany’s cultural role continues to increase in Central Europe; in line with their diplomatic goals countries of the region are seeking cultural links with Germany, because the economic, political or tourist proceeds of cultural relations is becoming increasingly important and tangible. For a long time we have been active in a European cultural space, and can make an impact on this space through our cultural activity in the way and to the extent our characteristics and potentials allow. If we want to communicate the image of the modern EU member Hungary (which, of course, cannot detach itself from domestic policy and internal cultural conditions, much as it would be desirable sometimes), we must participate in the constant development and renewal of European cultural spaces. Our road there leads primarily through Germany. Therefore Hungary needs a flexible long-term strategy that relies on the well-established relations with the German states and provides a constantly changing, innovative cultural choice. The natural phasing out of our political bonus in Germany requires the creation of new networks of cooperation and the development of new forms of cultural dialogues. Presentation of our national culture and identity in the Hungarian-German dimension presupposes a strategy and projects that build upon the European encounters inherent in Germany. In my interpretation, being European means primarily multicultural dialogues stemming from regional cultural codes, and in a wider sense, participation in large complex regional projects. Such a project could be, for instance, a development concept implementing an overarching Danube strategy, where economic, political and social goals would be inseparable from cultural links and cooperation strategies. Real long-term cultural transfer is only conceivable in a cultural field constructed with common effort; these are the structures that provide a framework for mutually open, joint products that represent and at the same time enrich both the Hungarian and German culture. It is in the interest of all of us.
Notes and References


2. Despite the fact that it was repeatedly quoted at this year’s celebration.

3. Hungary has participated in the Frankfurt Book Fair since 1955 and was Focal Topic in 1981, but at the time this did not involve a special exhibition and a cultural framework programme. (Cf. Bernáth, Árpád – Bombitz, Attila (eds.): Frankfurt ’99. Magyarország részvétele a könyvvásáron a német sajtó tükrében (Frankfurt ’99. Hungary’s participation in the Book Fair as reported by the German press). Szeged: Grimm Könyvkiadó, 2002.)

4. See page 60 of the catalogue of Petőfi Museum of Literature. In 2007 László Lakner, contemporary Hungarian painter gave the author of this paper his painting Berlin, my Bakony as a birthday gift, a title evoking Endre Ady’s poem Paris, my Bakony.

5. Including by the main volumes after the Book Fair Frankfurt ’99., op. cit.; Magyar irodalmi jelenlét (Hungarian literary presence) (2003); Miért olvassák a németek a magyarakat? (Why do the Germans read Hungarians?) (2004); Tanulmányok Márai Sándor német névelő utóéletéhez (Studies on the German language afterlife of Sándor Márai) (2005) edited by Árpád Bernáth and Attila Bombitz and published by Grimm Könyvkiadó of Szeged.


8. Already twenty-one works by Márai had been published in German translation before the Frankfurt Book Fair.

9. It is to be mentioned that the then director of Collegium Hungaricum, the author of this paper was the first head of the association Gemeinschaft der europäischen Kulturinstitute in Berlin, established to unite the various national cultural institutes in Berlin so that they make an impact on the cultural choice and infrastructure of the German capital. This activity is currently continued in the framework of the EUNIC network.

10. These examples picked out by way of illustration do not include the multitudinous events commemorating 1956 organised and coordinated by the Embassy; the limitations of this paper does not allow us to go into greater detail.

11. Consider who will replace the “Balaton generation”.

András Masát