

Conclusion. The image of the Russian Federation in the context of Russian-Ukrainian relations is covered by the global media, taking into account the actions taken by this state towards Ukraine. The BBC and CNN represent the annexation of the Crimea and Russia's aggression in the Donbas as illegal acts blamed by the international community and must be accompanied by sanctions against the aggressor country. The case of MN-17 and the escalation in the Sea of Azov contributed to even greater condemnation of Russia and certain losses to the country's authority. Trends in the image of the Russian Federation in recent years have been characterized by a partial shift in emphasis on Russian-Ukrainian relations to the global pandemic, economic, Russian-US relations, and the world community's response to Alexei Navalny's poisoning of Russia's violating fundamental rights and freedoms.

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Inna Babii

*Vasyl` Stus Donetsk National University
Vinnytsia*

*Research Supervisor: I.V. Bohinska, PhD in History, Assoc. Prof.
Language Advisor: V.I. Kalinichenko, PhD in Philology, Senior Lecturer*

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF POLISH CITIES AS A COMPONENT IN PROMOTING THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF THE STATE

Introduction. Considering changing tendencies in international relations and transition from fight for territories and zones of influence to competition for the hearts and minds of people, Poland in its foreign policy also pays considerable attention to public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as main voices of “soft power”. It is interesting that given general trends of urban development in the EU, Polish cities try to be more active and rational in establishing contacts with other international actors. They regard themselves as non-state international actors. Admitting important part of cities in cultural diplomacy Republic of Poland facilitates strengthening their subjectivity. It also joined to such initiatives of European Commission as Amsterdam partnership 2016, Urban agenda for the EU 2020 and a lot of other initiatives, that demonstrate its willingness to support comprehensive urban development.

Review of recent publications. In general a few number of works published by Ukrainian researchers are devoted to “city diplomacy”, but among them it is worth mentioning such scholars as O. Bohorodetska [5], who comprehensively researches relations of Ukrainian and Polish twinning-cities; M. Stromowska and A. Skorupska [13] draw attention to Polish cities as actors; B. Ociepka [10] analyses broad forms of local public diplomacy (voivodships, municipalities), whereas M. Bierzyńska-Sudoł [4] argues, that municipal diplomacy is one of the most efficient ways to improve governance in the city in general.

Objectives of paper: to find out specificities and capacity of Polish cities, as actors of “city diplomacy” in the sphere of culture and complementary role of “city diplomacy” in promoting the cultural influence of the state.

Result of the research. Since the beginning of the democratization process in Poland and its joining to European and Euro-Atlantic structures, the new window of opportunities has been opened for municipal authority, to follow the road of “city diplomacy”. This was facilitated by the state’s accession to the European Charter of Local Self-Government (1993) and by adopting the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (1997), where the main principles of local self-government and cooperation of cities with local authorities of other states were listed. First of all this allowed cities, especially municipal centers of Polish voivodship, which are the main objects of our research, both qualitatively and quantitatively expand intercommunication on the level of twinning-cities. Thus, every city has at least one twinning-city from Germany (usually they are two or more) and Ukraine. The cooperation with German cities stands at 15 per cent of total amount regarding municipal contacts. And the location of Polish local actors does not matter. At that time concerning Ukraine it was the specificity of Polish-Ukrainian relations and great amount of Ukrainian of Poles extractions, who live in the western part of Ukraine [12] that really mattered. Polish cities in contact with cities of these states work on representing themselves as an equal partner for the German municipalities and as an advisor in process of democratization and euro-integration to Ukrainian twins.

Furthermore, the networks of contact with cities in other European countries, especially in the Baltic Sea region, as well as in the United States and China have expanded considerably. This made it possible to hold book fairs (one took place in Poznan in 2018) or festivals (Beer Festivals in Opole) with representatives from twinning-cities. Krakow has special, new level types of inter-cities contact, because it is the only city in Poland that has office in Nurnberg that leads its work to promotion and representation of culture and tourism of Krakow. However, it is also known an example of opening by the representatives of Lower Silesia region in cooperation with Alsace region under work of ALDA – European Association for Local Democracy and Congress and CORLEAP – Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership office in Dnipro, aimed at sharing the experience of democratization and development of self-government in Europe to Ukrainian cities [10: 10]. This once again confirms the stated thesis about one of the features in positioning Polish “city diplomacy”.

Krakow should be mentioned as an active member of international cities networks (it is a member of 15 trans-municipal networks). Eurocities is one of the main among them, and 10 Polish cities are its members. At now they are engaging in the main forums of organisation, the most active are Warsaw and Wroclaw. In the cultural sphere Poland’s cities are represented in such working groups as *Culture and young people*, *Culture as resource*, *Culture for cities and regions*. Other major city networks for Polish cities are *Hanseatic League* and *the Union of Baltic Cities*. Within the frame of cooperation with the Union of Baltic Cities Szczecin has every year “Scandinavian days” having been organized since 2013, a similar initiative has put into practice Lublin, that is called “Eastern European Initiative Congress”

As well as other European cities, centers of Polish voivodship compete for the right to be called *European Capital of Culture*. The very first cities, that had acquired this status before Poland’s EU membership was Krakow with the program “*Though – Spirit – Creation*”. Participation in the program assisted in integration process. In 2016 another winner was Wroclaw; its project was entitled “Space of beauty” and was focused on representation an innovative, beautiful and creative city to the world. The internationalization of important cultural events such as *Theatre Olympics* or choir meeting “Singing Europe” was made to achieve the European dimension of the project. In the frame of the project *Deutsche Bahn (German Railway)* launched an extra train from Berlin to Wroclaw, in order for Berliners to be able to visit different cultural event within ECC. It had to run in 2016, but due to the popularity of the “cultural train”, routes had been valid until 2018 [10: 9].

The fact that *City of Poland* won this program and broadened the circle of connection with other cities has created a positive image and raised their profile among other cities. Moreover, the Polish municipalities try to find their own niche in creating a municipal brand, usually it is related to some kind of art: Szczecin is famous as a jazz capital, Bydgoszcz relies on theatre, Torun focuses on affinity between cities of the Baltic sea region and it is famous for festival of cultures and arts “Probaltica”. Lodz is recognized as a filmmaking centre, Katowice was recognized by UNESCO as a city of music, Wroclaw was the world capital of books. Although

B. Ociepka argues that city public diplomacy differs from promotion city as a brand: branding is focused on a city as a unique object, city diplomacy is focusing on the interests of its citizens and aiming to influence on political decisions in the international environment. In our opinion, creation of the brand is intended to make an impression on foreign respondents and draw attention to the city, in that way providing particularly economic or image benefits to the city itself.

Conclusion. After considering the specificity of Polish cities as actors of cultural diplomacy and the “soft power” sources one can estimate a significant increase in municipal activity and broadening spheres and mechanisms of their work. As a result, cities have become increasingly active in the European and regional city networks, contributing both to integration processes and to the image of the Polish city as an innovative, democratic urban center. And drawing attention to the key challenges and directions that urban diplomacy sets for itself in the field of culture, one can assume that in many fields they are intersected with goals of Poland in Europe. That is why city diplomacy is able to strengthen cultural influence of the state, rather than opposed to its ideas.

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Viacheslav Osadchyi

Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University

Vinnytsia

Research Supervisor: I.Y. Charskykh, PhD in History,

Assoc. Prof.

Language Advisor: V.I. Kalinichenko, PhD in Philology,

Senior Lecturer

UKRAINE-NATO RELATIONS IN 2014-2020

Introduction. A sovereign and independent Ukraine, steadfastly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is paramount to Euro-Atlantic security. Relations between Ukraine and NATO began to develop in the early 90-s of XX century and have since become one of NATO's most significant partnerships. Since 2014, as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, cooperation between Ukraine and NATO has been intensified in a number of key areas, namely capacity building. Allies continue to condemn Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea, as well as its destabilizing and aggressive actions in eastern Ukraine and the Black Sea region. NATO's presence in the Black Sea has been increased and cooperation in the naval field between NATO and Ukraine has been intensified.

In June 2017, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed a law recognizing the country's membership in the Alliance as a strategic priority of national foreign and security policy. In 2019, the relevant amendment to the Constitution of Ukraine came into force.