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## **Cultural Diplomacy of Ukraine in Conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian War**

### **Dyplomacja kulturalna Ukrainy w warunkach wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej**

#### **Abstract**

The article studies the peculiarities of the development of cultural diplomacy of Ukraine in the conditions of war. For a long time, cultural diplomacy of Ukraine developed unsystematically. The importance of increasing attention to cultural diplomacy during the war is emphasized. Cultural diplomacy forms a platform for interaction between different cultures and aims at mutual understanding, tolerance, and collaboration between states. The main goal of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war is to strengthen subjectivity, to form a positive image of the country. Convincing examples of cultural diplomacy during the war are considered. The SWOT analysis of the cultural diplomacy model of Ukraine is carried out. The strong points and ways of neutralizing the weaknesses of cultural diplomacy are defined. A number of problems it currently faces are analysed. The importance of a clear strategic approach of the state to the development of cultural diplomacy is emphasized.

**Key words:** *cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, model of cultural diplomacy, hybrid war, state image, "soft power".*

## Abstrakt

W artykule dokonano analizy specyfiki rozwoju dyplomacji kulturalnej Ukrainy w warunkach wojny. Dyplomacja kulturalna Ukrainy przez długi czas rozwijała się niesystematycznie. Podkreślono znaczenie zwracania większej uwagi na dyplomację kulturalną podczas wojny. Dyplomacja kulturalna stanowi platformę interakcji między różnymi kulturami i ma na celu wzajemne zrozumienie, tolerancję i współpracę między państwami. Głównym celem dyplomacji kulturalnej Ukrainy w warunkach wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej jest wzmacnianie podmiotowości, kształtowanie pozytywnego wizerunku kraju. Rozważane są żywe przykłady dyplomacji kulturalnej podczas wojny. Przeprowadzono analizę SWOT modelu dyplomacji kulturalnej Ukrainy. Wskazano mocne strony i sposoby neutralizacji słabych stron dyplomacji kulturalnej. Analizie poddano szereg problemów, z którymi obecnie się boryka. Podkreślono znaczenie jasnego strategicznego podejścia państwa do kształtowania dyplomacji kulturalnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *dyplomacja kulturalna, dyplomacja publiczna, model dyplomacji kulturalnej, wojna hybrydowa, wizerunek państwa, "soft power".*

In the conditions of intensity of the processes of globalization and strengthening of international interdependence, the main goals of the foreign policy of states are not only the provision of national security and the promotion of national economic interests, but also the implementation of foreign cultural policy. The present period demonstrates the significant influence of culture on interstate relations and global socio-economic processes. Countries pay a lot of attention to cultural diplomacy, this makes it possible to improve the country's image, strengthen ties, and establish trusting relations between countries. Cultural diplomacy encourages the establishment of a dialogue, the exchange of cultural values and traditions, the creation of a basis for collaboration and mutual support.

With the beginning of the Russian military aggression, the cultural diplomacy of Ukraine receded into the background. But today, with Ukraine in the focus of the world's mass media attention, it is unacceptable to neglect the development of cultural diplomacy. There is a good example that for a long time when abroad they were speaking about Ukraine, it was associated there with a part of Russia, or the region with ineffective power and an unknown development strategy. The relevance of the development of cultural diplomacy in Ukraine is extremely important for the creation of a positive image of the country, understanding of ways to counteract disinformation and the possibility to use "soft power" in the foreign policy of Ukraine.

Cultural diplomacy plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of international relations, contributing to the establishment of trust and cooperation. It helps destroy stereotypes and prejudices; it creates a favorable environment for mutual understanding and development. Cultural diplomacy is an important tool for achieving peaceful and stable balance of interests between countries.

The usage of culture as a foreign policy instrument of the country had started much before the theoretical basis for cultural diplomacy was formed. The theoretical justification of cultural diplomacy was proposed in 1990 by the American professor *J. Nye* in terms of the concept of "soft" power, that is, the system of resources of "soft" influence – "cultural, ideological and institutional resources". (Nye, 2004) At the same time, "soft" power was considered as an alternative to "hard" power, which is associated with the use of military, economic and other manifestations. Unlike the "hard" one, the "soft" power uses mechanisms of attraction, cooperation, and collaboration. The term "cultural diplomacy" was introduced in the 1930s by the American researcher *F. Barghoorn* in the context of evaluating the policy of the USSR. In his opinion, cultural diplomacy is "manipulation of cultural materials and personnel for propaganda purposes". (Barghoorn, 1960) At the same time, a broader concept of cultural diplomacy was proposed by American researcher *M. Cummings* as "the exchange of ideas, information, values, traditions, beliefs and other aspects of culture that contribute to the development of mutual understanding". (Cummings, 2003) Wherein, *M. Cummings* considers cultural diplomacy as a component of public diplomacy, which is presented as a complex of practical actions with strategic goals in the field of cultural interaction of states.

The International Institute of Cultural Diplomacy considers the concept of cultural diplomacy as "a course of actions that is based on the exchange of ideas, values, traditions, other aspects of culture or identity and it is used to strengthen relations, expand social-cultural cooperation, and advance national interests". (Manor, 2020)

Domestic researchers *M. Ozhevan* and *O. Kuchmiy* consider cultural diplomacy as

"a foreign cultural policy, the purpose of which is to promote national culture on the international arena, to defend national and cultural identity in international cooperation; combination of state policy regarding certain spheres of cultural activity, culture of foreign policy activity; taking into account in the foreign policy of the state cultural factors of cultural sensitivity by achieving interstate understanding by overcoming cultural barriers; the use of various factors of culture, art, and education in order to protect and promote national interests in the international arena". (Ozhevan, Kuchmiy, 2004)

It can be said that cultural diplomacy is the collaboration of states in the cultural sphere, aimed at achieving non-humanitarian goals.

In the context of modern challenges, cultural diplomacy is an integral part of the diplomatic activity of many countries. It is a tool that allows countries to conduct foreign policy for achieving certain political and economic goals and influence the international arena, using culture, science, education, sports, etc.

Among the main tasks of cultural diplomacy, researchers single out: promoting and defending the foreign policy interests of the state; formation of a positive image of the country; demonstration of historical and cultural heritage; informing about the intellectual and cultural potential of the country; creation of new aspects for a dialogue; economic development of the state. These tasks reflect the main goal of cultural diplomacy of Ukraine in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which is to strengthen subjectivity and to form a positive image of the country.

The tasks of cultural diplomacy are implemented through networks of cultural institutions. Currently, cultural institutions are key participants in the foreign cultural policy of many countries. For example, the British Council, the French Institute, the Goethe Institute, the Polish Institute and others operate in Ukraine.

Thus, the British Council cooperates with foreign representatives at the level of ministers, university rectors and business representatives. It interacts actively with influential representatives of mass media and pays particular attention to work with a youth audience. One of the priority areas of cultural diplomacy is the promotion of education in Great Britain. Cultural diplomacy also actively uses the appeal of UK pop culture in the world.

The Goethe Institute was created to develop and maintain the dialogue in the field of culture and education with the aim to develop a positive image of Germany; to increase an interest in German culture; to popularize the German language; to promote the dialogue between cultural figures of Germany and other states. Due to an effective cultural policy abroad, Germany got rid of the negative image of the last century and created a new image in the eyes of the international community.

The French Institute, in collaboration with the Alliance Française, popularizes the French language and culture, promotes the development of international cultural exchange. Institutions carry out their activities with the support of the Embassy of France. The close connection between French foreign policy and culture is traced here.

Poland's foreign cultural policy is implemented abroad through the Polish Institutes, which work in close cooperation with Polish cultural institutions. The mission of the Polish Institute is spreading knowledge about Polish culture and history; promotion of the study of the Polish language; development

of collaboration with other countries in the field of culture, education, and science.

However, the main task of the mentioned institutions is "to lobby the foreign policy interests of the state through providing intercultural communications, the production of values in various social-cultural contexts". (Lutsyshyn, Honcharuk, 2017)

For a long time, cultural diplomacy of Ukraine developed unsystematically. Systematicity began to appear in 2016, when the Department of Cultural Diplomacy was organised as a part of the Department of Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in 2017, the Ukrainian Institute was created as a specialized state institution.

The Ukrainian Institute is "an expert, permanent and authoritative organization that has a system-creating role in the international representation of Ukraine through the potential of culture". (*On approval*, 2021)

The mission of the Ukrainian Institute is to promote a better understanding and a dignified attitude towards Ukraine, to create opportunities for Ukrainians to interact with the world, as well as the implementation of state policy in the field of cultural diplomacy and the protection of national interests in conditions of information warfare. That is, by means of instruments of cultural diplomacy, this institution contributes strengthening of the international and domestic subjectivity of our state. The first representative office of the Ukrainian Institute was opened in Germany in 2023. The representative office reveals to the German audience first of all the important topics of our history – the Holodomor, the Revolution of Dignity and others. There are no Ukrainian language courses yet. Currently, the representative office is financially supported by the Goethe Institute and the Open Society Foundation.

The creation of a number of representative offices of the Ukrainian Institute would provide an opportunity to systematize the work of forming a new image of Ukraine, solving national security issues, developing cooperation with other countries in the fields of culture, science, education, sports, and more. Today, in the conditions of the war with Russia, we became convinced of the importance of the organisation and effective use of cultural and informational institutions at diplomatic institutions.

The creation of the Ukrainian Cultural Fund in 2017 marked another important event, with its various grant programs in the field of culture and creative industries, contributing to the development of Ukrainian culture and providing opportunities to integrate into the world cultural space. For example, the Ukrainian-Austrian project "Chernobyldorf" is a Ukrainian archaeological opera that reveals the post-apocalypse world. Among the programs planned for 2024, the grant inclusive program "Culture without barriers" is important, which allows to support and strengthen the moral stability of Ukrainian veterans through culture. (*Culture*, 2024)

Ukrainian cultural diplomacy is based on international legal documents and foundational legal acts: the Law of Ukraine "On Culture" and the Law of Ukraine "On the Basics of Internal and Foreign Policy". An important step in the development of cultural diplomacy is the "Concept of Popularization of Ukraine in the World" and "Doctrine of Information Security of Ukraine" approved in 2016. "The concept of popularization of Ukraine in the world" provides an opportunity to ensure the integration of Ukraine into the global information space and the creation of a positive image of Ukraine. Among the important interests of society and the state, the doctrine of information security singles out the formation of a positive image of Ukraine in the world, the delivery of operational, reliable and objective information about events in Ukraine to the international community. These legal acts confirm the state's gradual steps towards the formation of a policy of cultural diplomacy and this, in turn, speeds up the processes of Ukraine's integration into the European space.

Cultural diplomacy is one of the areas of public diplomacy. According to the Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for 2021-2025, the dimensions of the work of public diplomacy subjects in the field of cultural diplomacy are as follows:

"1) promotion of modern Ukrainian cinema, especially the promotion of the participation of Ukrainian films in international film festivals; 2) promotion of modern Ukrainian classical and popular music, facilitating of joint international projects; 3) promotion of modern Ukrainian theater and performative art, in particular through participation in international theater festivals; 4) promotion of modern Ukrainian literature, facilitating Ukraine's participation in leading international book exhibitions, promotion of translation and publication of works of Ukrainian writers abroad; 5) promotion of publishing projects for the publication in foreign languages of books and brochures on the popularization of the history and present of Ukraine; 6) promotion of Ukrainian classical and modern visual art, in particular with the help of exhibition projects abroad, artistic exchanges and collaborations; 7) promotion of Ukrainian creative industries, in particular design, fashion, architecture, etc.; 8) presentation of the diversity of Ukrainian art, in particular the presentation of Ukrainian culture and art within the framework of international festivals, forums, conferences; 9) facilitating international research projects in the field of culture and art, encouragement of foreign specialists to study Ukrainian culture; 10) promotion of Ukrainian cultural heritage; 11) popularization of the Ukrainian language in the world; 12) promotion of projects in the field of culture and art of representatives of indigenous peoples and national minorities". (*Public*, 2021)

This Strategy offers a sequence of actions to strengthen the positive image of Ukraine. Thus, *Dmytro Kuleba* noted that the Strategy is a document that "for the first time systematizes to whom, when and how Ukraine will deliver key messages, audiences and channels". (*MFA*, 2021)

Culture, cultural heritage of Ukraine is unique, it reflects the identity of our nation. Currently, it is through forums, exhibitions, festivals and other cultural events that it is possible to raise awareness about Ukraine, the horrors of the war and the challenges facing our state. A vivid example of the popularization of Ukrainian culture was Eurovision 2022. Performing the song *Stefania*, the Kalush Orchestra band demonstrated the strength of the spirit of the Ukrainian woman, her indomitability and thirst for victory in this hybrid war of Russia against Ukraine. The song *Stefania* is dedicated to the mother of the band's frontman Oleg Psyuk. The band's performance was accompanied by a bright exposition: Ukrainian ornaments, lighting with the colors of the Ukrainian flag, as well as huge female hands and eyes were used. According to the Kalush Orchestra, they dreamed "that a song in Ukrainian would be performed again at the Eurovision Song Contest". (*The band*, 2022) This song found a response in the hearts of people all over the world, it began to be translated into other languages, and bands from other countries began to sing it. This speech drew the attention of the world community to Ukraine.

The exhibition "The Captured House" helped convey to the international community reliable information about the realities of the war in Ukraine. Ukrainian artists who continue to live and work in war zones have documented and demonstrated through presented installations, photographs, and sculptures, the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine that the military invasion of the Russian Federation led to. The exhibition featured the works of Alevtyna Kahidze, Daria Koltsova, Yuriy Bolsa, Yevhen Maloletka, and others. The exhibition was displayed in Brussels, Berlin, Rome, and Amsterdam. Co-organizer and curator of the project, Katya Taylor, noted that the interest of the audience and the media in the events in Ukraine changed every month that "the rhetoric of the victim is attracting less attention, and therefore it is necessary to look for new methods and approaches to express one's position". (*Small Talk*, 2022)

An important aspect of cultural diplomacy was the holding of the first exhibition about space exploration "Cosmos of Ukraine" in France. The exhibition was held in Toulouse thanks to the partnership of the National Cosmonautics Museum named after S.P. Korolyov with the Cite de L'espace museum in 2022. It was through the membership of museums in the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) that it was possible to establish partnership relations with the National Museum of Cosmonautics named after S.P. Korolyov with the Cite de L'espace museum.

The exhibition was devoted to the achievements of Ukraine in the field of scientific space research and rocket science. A special role was given



"to the philosophical and cultural aspects of space exploration, as well as the role in popularizing Ukraine's achievements in the international space environment". (Klavdienko, 2023) The main task of the exhibition was to show that Ukraine is a state with high scientific and technical potential and human capital, since Russia has been trying to reduce the attention of the world community on this very factor since 2014. In order to preserve and develop existing space technologies, establish new dialogues and cooperation in the space sphere, it is extremely important to form the image of Ukraine as a highly developed technological state with high scientific and technical potential and human capital. This, in turn, can ensure the country's entry into the European Space Agency.

One of the notable examples of cultural diplomacy is the project "Books without Borders", overseen by the first lady of the state, Olena Zelenska, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, and the Ukrainian Book Institute. The project aims to provide children who are being abroad due to Russia's military aggression with Ukrainian books. The peculiarity of the project is that Ukrainian publishing houses create book layouts, and, thanks to agreements, foreign printing houses produce these books.

As the first lady mentioned, she always joins such events because it is an opportunity to tell about Ukraine and its resistance through culture. Also, O. Zelenska noted that it is particularly pleasant that in the annual competition Best Baltic Book Design 2023, at which Ukraine was present as a visiting country, one of the awards was won by "the Handbook of Barrier-Freeness – a unique publication about equality and correct interaction, emphasising that Ukrainians share common values with the free world". (*The project*, 2023)

There are also other similar initiatives for the distribution of Ukrainian books, for example, the project of the Goethe Institute "Suitcase with books from Ukraine", "Ukrainian books in the Czech Republic" and others. Such projects strengthen the cultural presence of Ukraine and involve the state in the international cultural exchange. Most of such projects were implemented with the involvement of sponsorship or philanthropic funds.

In modern conditions, Ukraine uses all possible ways of conveying truthful information about Ukraine and its culture to the international community at various levels and in various formats. But there must be a consistent, clear position of the state regarding the implementation of the policy of cultural diplomacy. A model of cultural diplomacy is currently being formed in the state, which is based on the principle of state control with the involvement of funds from non-state institutions. Competitive advantages and problematic aspects of the Ukrainian model of cultural diplomacy are presented by the author in Table 1.

The subjects of cultural diplomacy are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ukrainian Institute,



the Ukrainian Book Institute, the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting, non-governmental organizations, other institutions, scholars and researchers, experts, artists, politicians, representatives of the diaspora and others.

**Table 1. SWOT analysis of the cultural diplomacy model of Ukraine**

Strong points	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● rich historical and cultural heritage;</li> <li>● tourist attractiveness;</li> <li>● essential scientific and cultural potential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● low level of interest of foreigners in Ukraine, Ukrainian cultural product;</li> <li>● the meager level of state funding of culture and cultural diplomacy;</li> <li>● weak institutions of cultural diplomacy abroad; - a small number of established international relations for the implementation of long-term cooperation programs.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● international, including financial, support of the cultural sector of Ukraine;</li> <li>● involvement of the Ukrainian diaspora in spreading knowledge about Ukrainian culture, history, science, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● there is no strategic approach to the formation of cultural diplomacy at the state level;</li> <li>● Russian armed aggression;</li> </ul>

On conditions of adequate funding, a clear strategic approach of the state to the formation of cultural diplomacy foresees:

- unification and clear coordination of subjects of cultural diplomacy. This will speed up the process of communication and making effective decisions;
- monitoring and analysis of the perception of Ukraine in host countries, research of demand for Ukrainian cultural products;
- development of strategic and current plans;
- development of programs for the popularization of Ukraine;
- involvement of experts in the development of programs;
- steady organization, coordination and control of cultural diplomacy events.

The experience of Poland will be useful for Ukraine. For example, in 2011, thanks to an effectively developed cultural strategy, the level of recognition of Poland in the world increased intensively. The successful implementation of the foreign cultural program of the EU Polish Presidency "I, CULTURE" is interesting. Thus, *T. Peresunko* noted that the staff of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, together with the leadership of the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of International Cooperation of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, implemented "400 global international actions in 10 time zones in 100 days". (*Peresunko*, 2014) Under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland has a special advisory body that monitors, develops and adjusts the directions of cultural diplomacy.

In order to eliminate the weakness of cultural and information centres, it is necessary: to adjust their financing, to develop criteria for the effectiveness of the centers' work, to improve the qualifications of personnel. These institutions help to establish ties for mutual understanding between states, to promote the development of culture and intercultural communications. Cultural and information centers are a kind of platforms for cultural exchange that will help Ukraine demonstrate its history, customs, traditions, achievements in science, sports. These are cultural institutions that strengthen the ability to spread the country's cultural values, contribute to establishing new and strengthening existing international ties for further long-term cooperation.

To make a foreign audience interested in Ukraine, it is possible to develop various Ukrainian scholarships and grant programs, to organise various online tours, create reference materials, presentation content of Ukrainian life. For example, after the TV series "Chernobyl" was shown in 2019, the number of visits to the exclusion zone considerably increased. Journalist Yu. Kletsova notes that "in almost a year, 107,000 people visited the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, 80% of them being foreign tourists". (*Chernobyl*, 2019)

Financing of culture and cultural diplomacy, especially now during the war, when the lion's share of funds is directed to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, is exercised according to the residual principle. Therefore, the main source of financing of cultural diplomacy is international organizations, foundations, associations and other institutions of partner countries. It is international partnership and support that ensure the development and strengthening of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy. In the conditions of war with the Russian Federation, cultural diplomacy of Ukraine will not survive without international financing.

One of the important areas of Ukraine's foreign policy is maintaining relations with the Ukrainian diaspora. The policy of collaboration with Ukrainians abroad involves collaboration on joint projects of cultural diplomacy, support of various cultural exchange programs, creation of discussion platforms

in host countries, etc. All this affects the formation of Ukraine's positive image, lobbying of Ukrainian interests. Cultural initiatives of the Ukrainian diaspora are diverse. An important aspect is the involvement of the Ukrainian diaspora in the creation of academic centres. Thus, O. Rozumna emphasizes the need for the state to use "the experience of engaging Ukrainian scientific centres, in particular, departments of Ukrainian studies at the world's largest universities", for example, the Ukrainian Scientific Institute of Harvard University, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, etc. (Rozumna, 2016) With the beginning of the full-scale Russian aggression, the majority of Ukrainians abroad became more active and united in order to popularize Ukrainian culture and convey key messages of Ukraine to the world community.

Cultural diplomacy plays an important role in international relations. It forms a platform for interaction between different cultures and aims at mutual understanding, tolerance, and collaboration between states. Cultural diplomacy helps to form a positive image of the country, establish a dialogue and cooperation, to use "soft" power to influence other countries.

Using the tools of cultural diplomacy, Ukraine is trying to demonstrate its identity, values and ideas to the democratic world. Thanks to the intensification of cultural diplomacy of Ukraine during the war, the recognition of our state in the world increased. We received the support and help of democratic countries in resisting Russian aggression. That is, cultural diplomacy helped and helps to convey Ukraine's messages to the world audience and maintain defense against the aggressor.

Currently, there are a number of problems related to insufficient financing, the lack of a systematic approach of coordinating institutions to the formation of cultural diplomacy, and the war in the country. A clear strategic approach of the state to the formation of cultural diplomacy will help to overcome these problems.

The main goal of cultural diplomacy of Ukraine in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war is to strengthen subjectivity, to form a positive image of the country, which in the future will allow integrating into the European space.

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