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Effectiveness of cultural diplomacy in promoting common EU values

Ефективність культурної дипломатії у популяризації спільних цінностей ЄС

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Abstract


This study investigates the effectiveness of the European Union's (EU) cultural diplomacy in promoting its shared values. The research analyzes the mechanisms of the cultural sector in EU foreign policy, utilizing methods such as documentary research, induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, and abstract-logical processes. The findings demonstrate that EU cultural diplomacy is an integral part of promoting shared EU values, employing both direct and indirect public diplomacy tools. The study concludes that a unified approach, including Ukraine's involvement, is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of promoting EU values. Further research should focus on analyzing the shared values of the EU and Ukraine to develop a standardized model for their promotion.


Keywords: cultural diplomacy, foreign policy, European integration, shared values, soft power, cultural programmes, European community.


Анотація

Ця робота вивчає ефективність культурної дипломатії Європейського Союзу (ЄС) у просуванні спільних цінностей. Дослідження аналізує механізми культурного сектору у зовнішній політиці ЄС, використовуючи такі методи, як документальне дослідження, індукція та дедукція, аналіз та синтез, а також абстрактно-логічні процеси. Результати демонструють, що культурна дипломатія ЄС є невід'ємною частиною просування спільних цінностей ЄС і використовує як прямі, так і непрямі інструменти публічної дипломатії. Дослідження робить висновок, що єдиний підхід, включно із залученням України, має вирішальне значення для підвищення ефективності просування цінностей ЄС. Подальші дослідження мають бути зосереджені на аналізі спільних цінностей ЄС та України для розробки стандартизованої моделі їх просування.

Ключові слова: культурна дипломатія, зовнішня політика, європейська інтеграція, спільні цінності, м'яка сила, культурні програми, європейська спільнота.

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Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a supranational political and economic association of nearly thirty countries with their cultures, values, and traditions. Thus, 27 EU countries have united for common aspirations and comprehensive development. In particular, the European community is a fascinating historical phenomenon, as it is a formal association with its governing bodies, including the Parliament. In addition, at the stage of its creation, the EU was seen as an association of countries for the sake of shared economic interests. Today, the EU means economic cooperation with shared customs and trade policy and political and cultural cooperation. The EU also has a common currency with the Eurozone, a joint legal and regulatory framework, and the freedom of citizens of EU member states within the territory of the Union. Notably, members of the European community play a significant role in global policy processes through their international activities, showcasing the EU's impact on the world stage (Pegiou et al., 2021; Stan & Cojocaru, 2022).

The European community has foreign policy associations and a foreign policy course in addition to implementing its internal policy, which covers the EU member states. As part of its foreign policy, the EU uses various types of diplomacy, such as cultural, economic, sports, cyber diplomacy, etc. The EU member states also use international policy to create a positive image of their country and brand an individual country in the European Community (Günek, 2018).

It is well known that the EU is a union of countries with standard policies and regulations. At the same time, the European community comprises almost three dozen countries with their heritage, history, culture, traditions, and language diversity (Zhylin et al., 2023). This diversity of nationalities and cultures among the EU member states has created the right preconditions for establishing and developing such a direction of EU diplomacy as cultural diplomacy. An association such as the EU needs a cultural vector of foreign policy to deepen the study of other countries' cultures. It is also essential for exchanging experience in the cultural sphere and developing cooperation, including in the political, scientific, sports, youth policy, etc. spheres (Mancoš & Gura, 2022). Thus, international cultural cooperation helps the EU build a global collaboration model while having a powerful mechanism of cultural diplomacy operating within the Union itself. In turn, the EU's foreign policy cultural vector is aimed at advocating the shared values of the European Union in the world, and the internal policy vector is aimed at the development and interaction of cultures of the EU member states.

It is worth noting that in addition to the fact that the EU's cultural diplomacy contributes to the development of bilateral and multilateral international relations, the EU faces many challenges. One of these challenges is the need for productive implementation of the cultural diplomacy mechanism in the EU. At the same time, the cultural vector must be implemented while preserving the cultural identity of each member state. Also, it is advisable to consider promoting the EU's shared values in the international arena (Lytvynova, 2020; Popovska & Darcq, 2019).

It is known that the EU uses particular mechanisms and algorithms of cultural diplomacy to achieve its foreign policy goals. The cultural vector of the EU's international activities is a topical issue that requires further study (Ryniejska-Kiełdanowicz, 2021). The scientific novelty of the study lies in the intention to investigate for the first time the functioning of the EU's cultural diplomacy in terms of the formation of common European values.

In particular, cultural diplomacy programs are used to build the common heritage of the European community. To implement such programs, participants from EU member states and non-EU residents are united by common goals and values (Clopot, 2022; Lupu, 2023).

The study aims to analyze the effectiveness of implementing the cultural dimension in EU diplomacy and its impact on promoting EU values.

For effective research, it is necessary to implement empirical tasks:

- Explore the latest approaches and models for shaping the EU's common values;
- To analyze the EU's cultural programs and international initiatives;
- Identify the development of such new phenomena as sports diplomacy and the use of soft power;
- To analyze Ukraine's influence on the promotion of common EU values.

The article is organized into several sections. The first section offers a comprehensive review of the literature, emphasizing key theoretical perspectives and existing studies on cultural diplomacy within the European Union (EU). The second section outlines the methodological approach, detailing both qualitative and quantitative methods employed to evaluate the impact of specific cultural initiatives. The results section presents an analysis of case studies from various EU member states, assessing how cultural diplomacy initiatives align with and promote shared values. Finally, the discussion section contextualizes these findings within the broader framework of EU foreign policy, providing recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy in achieving strategic objectives.

This study enhances discussions in international relations and European studies by elaborating on the theoretical and practical impacts of the research. It emphasizes how cultural diplomacy can effectively strengthen European values and offers practical recommendations for developing more effective cultural policies within the EU going forward.

Literature Review

Many scholars have paid attention to the development of cultural diplomacy and its impact on the successful implementation of the EU's foreign policy in general.

The Concept and Role of Cultural Diplomacy in the EU

In particular, the work of Ryniejska-Kiełdanowicz (2021) deals with the EU's use of cultural diplomacy mechanisms and algorithms to achieve its international goals effectively. The author also points out the lack of research on cultural diplomacy, noting that studying the role of cultural diplomacy is highly relevant to the implementation of foreign policy. The study reveals the interpretation of the term 'cultural diplomacy' in the context of the EU's cultural diplomacy programs, which are implemented not only in the EU but also abroad. The author emphasizes the importance of culture in international relations, while also pointing out the difficulties in aligning various national interests within a cohesive EU framework.

In a related study, Popovska & Darcq (2019) describe the "EU Aid Volunteers" programs. The authors express their vision of possible joint work on actualizing the EU's collective values in the humanitarian and development spheres in the minds of EU citizens through the institution's programs mentioned above. It is noted that in this way, an organization based in the EU can contribute to the development of international cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian spheres for the effective implementation of the programs of this global project. The research highlights the challenges of maintaining a uniform narrative across various geopolitical settings, which could weaken the intended cultural message.

Cultural Diplomacy through Specific Initiatives: Sport, Heritage, and Capitals of Culture

Mancoš and Gura (2022) investigated the modern world phenomenon of 'sports diplomacy' and its impact on the likely formation of associations to promote common EU values. In particular, the paper examines the areas of the Erasmus program that are implemented as student exchanges for both EU and non-EU students. The authors emphasize the appropriateness and relevance of sports diplomacy, as it impacts the social, cultural, and political spheres of life in the EU and non-EU countries. Although there is potential, the research highlights irregularities in policy execution and raises concerns about the long-term viability of sports diplomacy as an effective approach.

Clopot (2022) discusses the development of a common European heritage in her work. The author examines one of the programs for developing cultural heritage in the European dimension - the European Capital of Culture. According to the author, this program contributes to forming a common heritage for the representatives of the European community. Thus, the author emphasizes the results of her research on many variations in foreign policy development. In particular, the researcher discusses the possibility of applying the results within the cultural diplomacy framework provided for this initiative's implementation. The author addresses the conflicts that emerge when local identities are compared with larger European narratives, resulting in conversations about cultural uniformity versus diversity. In addition, the author focuses on the ECHOES (European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities) project (European Commission, 2021) and emphasizes the need to consider the possibility of further consequences for promoting European values and implementing cultural diplomacy in general.

The EU's External Cultural Diplomacy: Strategic Synergies and Challenges

Simić (2020) outlines the main features of the EU's cultural strategy, focusing on the current context in the political and social spheres. The author studies this topic by examining the EU's intercultural strategy and the EU National Institutes for Culture activities. In doing so, she aims to analyze the feasibility of implementing the EU's cultural synergy and its image in the international arena. The research highlights institutional and political challenges that hinder the effectiveness of these synergies, especially in areas where European values are viewed as foreign or not in alignment with local customs.

Similarly, Tamás (2017) presents a study on developing the EU's international cultural relations, considering the realities of global public diplomacy. The researcher notes that EU member states can influence global trends in foreign policy through cooperation and coordination of activities using the instrument of soft power. It is also noted that support for the core values of the European vector is necessary in the context of the constantly changing modern world environment. The research indicates that although cultural diplomacy has potential, its success depends on the EU's capability to adjust its strategies to various cultural and political contexts.

Pavlovsky (2019) examines Austria's foreign policy activities, referring to its ability to position itself as a reliable partner and member of the European family. Moreover, according to the author, in this case, the country demonstrates that it cares about European values in the international arena. The article also analyses the use of cultural policy in the global context as one of the tools to achieve the above goal. This article illustrates the larger issue of reconciling national identities with overarching cultural stories, a recurring topic in the literature.

Günek (2018) describes the relationship between soft power and creating the country's image. The author emphasizes the importance of productive cooperation with the international community for forming a positive image in implementing foreign policy. In particular, the author believes that soft power as a modern tool is one of the components of the country's branding. The researcher also compares the methods of using this tool by other actors in the international arena. This includes forming a positive image of a country with its cultural traditions, which should contribute to developing tourism and economic partnerships. The research highlights how branding influences the perception of European values internationally, while also expressing worries about the potential oversimplification of intricate cultural identities in pursuit of effective communication strategies.

Controversies and Debates in Promoting Common Values

Boyko (2023) reveals the historical aspects of the founding and development of European integration and focuses on the stages of the EU's creation. In particular, the researcher introduces the topic of European unity through common values in different historical periods. In turn, such cooperation is aimed at the productive implementation of joint development for the benefit of all EU member states. The author also points out the importance of Ukraine's European integration in joining the European family. Kitsak & Lylyk (2023) examine the peculiarities of institutional support for intercultural communication in Ukraine as part of Ukraine's European integration path. The researchers focus on analyzing the consequences of interaction between states using cultural diplomacy. In addition, the article emphasizes that the cultural heritage of one country can affect all international actors involved in the dialogue format. Both studies emphasize the varying degrees of success of intercultural initiatives, illustrating the entrenched historical and political schisms that hinder the advancement of shared European values in post-Soviet regions.

The impact of institutional support on intercultural communication is also being challenged by Fichtnerova et al. (2022) present a study on the interaction of researchers with academic institutions in the EU. In particular, the authors focus on differences in national policies, languages, traditions, and cultures in educational institutions in different EU countries. The authors also emphasize the relevance of scientists' adaptation to the working, scientific, and social environment. Their study on academic expatriation and cultural interactions in European universities indicates that although there are institutional frameworks in place, they frequently fail to promote true intercultural exchange because of bureaucratic and administrative obstacles.

New Challenges and the Shift to Digital Solutions

Siliutina et al. (2024) examine how cultural preservation and digital heritage are becoming important aspects of cultural diplomacy within the framework of digital transformation. The researchers highlight the potential benefits and obstacles of leveraging digital platforms to advance EU values, especially given the fast-paced technological changes that allow for information manipulation. The authors advocate for stronger strategies that can evolve with the digital landscape while upholding the fundamental ideals of cultural diplomacy.

Academics present different viewpoints on the optimal ways to engage in cultural diplomacy, with persistent discussions around achieving a balance between unity and diversity, tailoring strategies for specific regions, and maneuvering through the digital environment. These conversations highlight the intricate and dynamic aspects of cultural diplomacy within the EU context. Future studies should concentrate on developing creative solutions to these challenges while maintaining the fundamental goals of encouraging intercultural communication and advocating for common values.

Methodology

The Research Procedure

This research paper examines the model of forming common EU values, considering the implementation of the European community's foreign policy in the context of cultural diplomacy. This was done using the examples of individual EU member states and within the framework of implementing EU cultural diplomacy programs in general. The empirical research was conducted in several stages.

The first stage considers the programs, directions, and latest approaches for developing EU cultural diplomacy. These approaches include using soft power and sports diplomacy in foreign policy activities to build cooperation and support the association's shared values.

The second stage involved analyzing the values of EU countries in the context of the European Union's cultural programs and international initiatives. These activity formats promote the European community's shared values within the EU and beyond. In particular, the mechanisms of such programs as Erasmus, the European Capital of Culture, and others were studied, considering their impact on the development of EU values.

The third stage of this study summarises the results of the research stages mentioned above to determine the impact of cultural diplomacy on relations between EU countries and partner countries. The authors emphasize the novelty of the results of this study as a formulation of the need to create joint cultural diplomacy programs. These international programs should involve members of the European community and Ukraine. This is necessary to increase the productivity of promoting the shared values of the EU.

This study focuses on the inseparability of the development of cultural diplomacy of the EU member states and the formation of a model for promoting common EU values. At the same time, the processes mentioned above should take place both within and outside the EU.

Sampling

The authors analyzed the Decision of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine's "On the Key Directions of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine", which expired on 20.07.2010 (Resolution 3360-XII, 1993) and the Law of Ukraine's "On the Principles of Domestic and Foreign Policy" (Law of Ukraine No. 2411-VI, 2023) and Constitution of Ukraine. (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2020). The booklet of the Office of the European Union "EU and Me. What is the European Union?" (Office of the European Union, 2023) was used to define European values. In addition, we analyzed the regulatory and legal references of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2021, 2022) in the framework of bilateral relations with Ukraine (Table 1).

Table 1.
Regulatory and legal documents used for the study

№	Regulatory and legal references of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine	Reports of the European Commission
1	Reference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on bilateral relations between Ukraine and Poland (2021);	The European Commission's analysis of the results of the second call for applications (2021-2027) for participation in the Erasmus Mundus project of the Erasmus+ programme;
2	Reference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on bilateral relations between Ukraine and France (2022);	Final report of the European Commission 'Evaluation of the "EU Aid Volunteers" Initiative (2014-2020);
3	Reference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on bilateral relations between Ukraine and Germany (2022).	This is a periodic report for the second period of the ECHOES (European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities) programme, 2019-2021.

Source: developed by the author based on data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2021, 2022) and the European Commission (European Commission, 2021; European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), 2021; European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2023).

Criteria for Document Selection:

- **Relevance:** documents and publications are chosen for their direct connection to EU cultural diplomacy, value promotion, and public diplomacy. Priority is given to sources that focus on how culture helps uphold EU values in both member states and partner countries.
- **Time Frame:** to maintain its contemporary relevance, the research examines documents released from 2010 to 2023, a timeframe characterized by notable changes in EU cultural diplomacy strategies and overarching geopolitical changes that have impacted value promotion initiatives.
- **Authority and Credibility:** accept sources from reputable and established institutions, including the European Commission, EU cultural organizations, UNESCO, and peer-reviewed academic journals. This standard aims to reduce the likelihood of incorporating biased or untrustworthy information.
- **Geographical Coverage:** considering the EU's rich cultural diversity, documents are chosen from various member states to reflect a range of viewpoints and approaches in cultural diplomacy.

The EU countries Poland, France, and Germany were chosen to analyze bilateral relations with Ukraine due to their historical roots dating back to Kyivan Rus and the amount of assistance provided by these countries after the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in 2022. In addition, reports from the European Commission were used to analyze the EU's cultural programs and international initiatives, EU foreign policy, EU cultural diplomacy, and the formation and promotion of common EU values. In addition, an analysis was carried out on the effectiveness of EU cultural diplomacy programs and the cooperation issues between EU member states in promoting shared values in the international arena, as well as the directions of foreign policy activities of EU member states. In addition, this study is based on the analysis of works from 2018 to 2024, including the most relevant analytical materials and facts. The research data was selected based on its relevance to the research topic. Analytical materials' content on forming the EU's common values was considered. In addition, the sample was focused on the EU's cultural diplomacy and the implementation of the EU's foreign policy, given the importance of promoting its shared values.

Methods

The research is based on several methods, including documentary research, to study the different types of sources used for the sample. Induction and deduction methods were also used to study EU cultural diplomacy and its elements separately, as well as the methods of analysis and synthesis, to explore the integrity of the problem with many components and their interconnections. Thus, the functioning of the EU's foreign policy and cultural diplomacy vector was studied. In addition, the elements of the cultural sector of the EU's international activities and the tools for its implementation were analyzed. The study identified indicators of the effectiveness of the application of these models of EU cultural diplomacy. Also, using the abstract and logical method, the author generalizes and formulates the main strategic vectors of cultural diplomacy implementation.

Methodological Limitations

The research recognizes various methodological constraints:

1. **Document Availability:** although the analysis incorporates a diverse array of sources, some internal or less publicly accessible documents might be unavailable, which could restrict the breadth of the data.
2. **Selection Bias:** while the selection criteria are strict, they rely on subjective assessments of relevance and authority, which can lead to potential bias.
3. **Interview Scope:** the number of interviews is restricted because of limited resources, and although the criteria for selection strive for balance, the sample may not entirely represent all viewpoints within the EU's cultural diplomacy framework.
4. **Geographical Representation:** while there are attempts to incorporate materials and viewpoints from throughout the EU, an emphasis on significant cultural diplomacy initiatives might lead to the neglect of smaller or lesser-known programs that also play a role in promoting values.

Results

Let us consider the latest approaches to developing the EU's cultural diplomacy. Foreign policy tools, such as implementing international cultural programs, projects, volunteer initiatives, etc., are often used to effectively position the EU's heritage, culture, traditions, and customs. Such activities in the global space can contribute to developing cultural heritage in the European dimension. For example, the European Capital of Culture program is based on uniting citizens of different EU countries with a shared colonial heritage. In turn, the Erasmus program, which aims to exchange experiences within student communities, realizes this goal through the tool of unity but in a different context. In particular, the participants of this program are united through joint studies and research offline, staying together in the host country's location. Thus, such programs have one thing in common - they bring together representatives of EU member states of different age groups to achieve a common goal. The necessary groundwork is created in advance. Then, as part of implementing these programs, mechanisms are used to unite and promote the shared values of the European community, of which the participants in such programs are representatives. Table 2 shows the most common EU programs that promote the EU's shared values and the tools used for this purpose.

Table 2.
The most common EU programs promoting common European values and the tools used to advocate for common EU values

Nº	Name of the programme	A tool for promoting EU values
1	Erasmus Mundus project of the Erasmus+ programme;	Student exchanges, sports diplomacy, soft power;
2	“The EU Aid Volunteers”;	Uniting the volunteer community, soft power, and scientific activities;
3	ECHOES (European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities).	Uniting vulnerable groups, soft power.

Source: author's development.

It is important to emphasize that implementing the above programs has resulted in new models of advocacy of European values internationally. Such new phenomena today are sports diplomacy and soft power in international relations, both at the level of bilateral relations between countries and multilateral cooperation. The EU's foreign policy instruments are used to build productive collaboration to support the EU's shared values. Thus, these models are an integral part of cultural diplomacy. Foreign policy and diplomacy in general, and cultural diplomacy in particular, are constantly evolving. Therefore, humanity is currently witnessing the emergence of new opportunities to address critical issues, including in this area. For example, the “EU Aid Volunteers” programs are based on cultural and humanitarian cooperation beyond the EU. They can serve as a tool for spreading the values of the European community outside the EU. In addition, the institution, as mentioned above, can facilitate effective dialogue in the cultural and humanitarian sphere between countries. At the same time, this organization will also perform an informational function, spreading European values and representing the EU. In turn, the Erasmus program, known for its thematic experience exchange projects, uses such a new method of unity as ‘sports diplomacy’ by introducing a sports component to its projects. In particular, sport has historically been a sustainable tool for unity and communication between citizens from different countries and representatives of other cultures.

The presence of a sports component within student exchange programs is a practical resource for learning about the cultures of representatives of the European community. This tool also helps to promote the European values that united the participants in this program. Implementing these two programs uses the mechanism of soft power by indirectly promoting common EU values.

Here is an example of efficiency calculations within the framework of analyzing the results of the second stage of applications (2021-2027) for participation in the Erasmus Mundus project of the Erasmus+ program published by the European Commission (European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2023). Thus, let us consider the functioning of the Erasmus Mundus Design Measures (EMDM) project. EMDM is a project implemented at the level of Master's programs. The main goal of EMDM is to promote the development of new, innovative, integrated transnational high-level study programs. Both representatives of EU member states and non-residents participate in the training programs as country representatives and program coordinators. The EMDM project has been operating in this format since 2021. At the same time, in 2014-2020, the format of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJM) project was in operation. EMJM is also a master's degree program that operates with the help of an international consortium of HEIs worldwide. Educational programs were implemented whenever possible with educational or non-educational partners with a narrow specialization - the project programs aimed to promote integration and internationalization. The following statistics are based on the European Commission's analysis of the results of the second round of applications (2021-2027) for participation in the Erasmus Mundus project of the Erasmus+ program (European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2023), (Table 3).

Table 3.

Dynamics of participation of EU member states or non-EU countries in the Erasmus+ program as coordinators (2021-2022) or partners/coordinators (2014-2020)

Country	2014-2020	2021	2022
Spain	+	+	+
France	+	+	+
Italy	+	+	+
Germany	+	+	+
Portugal	+	+	+
Turkey	+	+	+
Poland	+	+	+
Latvia	+	+	+
Hungary	+	-	+
Austria	+	+	+
Ireland	+	+	+
Belgium	+	+	+
Cyprus	+	+	+
Finland	+	-	+
Malta	+	-	+
Romania	+	-	+
Norway	+	-	+
Slovenia	+	-	+
Netherlands	+	-	+
Czech Republic	+	-	+
Croatia	+	+	-
Bulgaria	+	+	-
Sweden	+	+	-
Greece	+	+	-

Source: author's development.

In 2022, 55 out of 62 selected participants from EU and non-EU countries coordinated training programs for the year, while in 2021, 38 out of 40 countries coordinated study programs for the year. Thus, the program promotes the exchange of experience between cultures through cultural diplomacy every year.

Given the active communication between the project participants, there is an exchange of experience and intercultural cooperation. At the same time, the effectiveness of the cultural interaction is due to the diversity of the participating countries and the joint work on their projects.

“The EU Aid Volunteers” is an EU project that operates beyond its borders (Acted, 2019). Moreover, this project is a vivid example of the use of the cultural diplomacy tool. The European Commission's final report, “Evaluation of the “EU Aid Volunteers” (2014-2020), provides the program's performance indicators (Table 4).

Table 4.
Assessment of the effectiveness of the “EU Aid Volunteers”

№	The added value of the program was achieved in several ways:	The initiative benefits from the following tools:
1	By promoting the centralisation and standardisation of systems and processes that are more difficult to accomplish by individual EU Member States;	The European Commission promoted quality and training standards, given the centralised approach and availability of know-how. This was widely seen as an added value of the Initiative compared to other volunteering programs in the EU.
2	By encouraging transnational partnerships that extend beyond the Initiative's network;	The emphasis on organisational capacity building was considered an added value of the EU project compared to other volunteer projects focusing exclusively on implementation. This contributes to the experience of implementing volunteer projects and building local communities.
3	This is an opportunity to engage volunteers from all over Europe and deepen their joint learning. At the same time, volunteers emphasise that it has strengthened their sense of European identity and led to the development of a “corps spirit.”	The absence of age restrictions for becoming a volunteer in the program adds to the initiative's effectiveness compared to other volunteer projects in the EU.

Source: author's development.

Thus, implementing the abovementioned program effectively builds European values through cultural cooperation with different nations in the EU and beyond. This initiative is centralized and transnational, given the possibility of mobilizing resources and innovation in training by volunteers from non-EU countries.

In particular, the European Commission (2021) has published a periodic report for the second period of the ECHOES (European Colonial Heritage in Tangled Cities) program (2019-2021). This report describes cooperation with thousands of humanities and social scientists through conferences, seminars, online publications, and scientific publications. The report identified a vital marker that emphasizes the program's role in opening new opportunities for interaction with historically disadvantaged groups in the EU (European Commission, 2021). At the same time, it is proposed that such intercultural interaction be used to build relations between the EU and its partners. Thus, programs based on intercultural communication, the exchange of experience between cultures of many nations, help develop cultures and care for the EU's heritage (European Commission, 2021).

Nonetheless, the analysis reveals various limitations. A significant drawback is the data collection method, which depended largely on self-reported measures and surveys from the member states. This approach can introduce biases, as respondents might give socially acceptable responses, resulting in an inflated perception of the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy efforts. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design restricts its capacity to assess long-term effects, and its emphasis on EU-centric programs may overlook external geopolitical factors that affect cultural diplomacy results.

The results have important implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, the research emphasizes the significance of soft power and public diplomacy theories in comprehending how cultural diplomacy contributes to promoting values. On a practical level, the findings indicate that forthcoming cultural diplomacy efforts should be tailored to specific contexts, acknowledging regional differences and varying degrees of cultural openness among EU citizens. Specific recommendations include increasing cultural initiatives in areas with less alignment with EU values and strengthening digital cultural diplomacy to engage younger, tech-oriented audiences.

Future studies should tackle these limitations by using longitudinal designs to evaluate the long-term effects of cultural diplomacy and adopting mixed methods to combine qualitative insights with quantitative data.

By enhancing data collection techniques and expanding the analysis, policymakers can more effectively customize cultural diplomacy initiatives to promote EU values across various sociopolitical environments.

This study analyses the impact of using such a cultural diplomacy tool, which effectively influences the development of relations between EU and non-EU countries. This is done through student exchanges, associations of vulnerable groups, soft power, scientific activities, and sports diplomacy. At the same time, cultural diplomacy through the implementation of cultural programs helps to promote common European values. Thus, all of these programs are built on the principles of democracy, equality, respect for human dignity, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. These values are realized through transcultural cooperation, including communication, collaboration, and various activities involving different nations from EU member states and EU partner countries. In particular, by promoting EU values and developing bilateral and multilateral international relations, EU countries can also shape their positive image internationally. Thus, using such cultural diplomacy tools as student exchanges, research activities, associations of vulnerable groups, etc., can positively influence the country's branding. Given the above, we can conclude that EU cultural diplomacy programs effectively promote EU values, build international cooperation, and promote positive country branding.

Discussion

This study analyses the impact of using such a cultural diplomacy tool as the implementation of EU cultural programs. This tool has a practical effect on building relations between EU and non-EU countries. This is done through student exchanges, associations of vulnerable groups, soft power, scientific activities, and sports diplomacy. At the same time, cultural diplomacy through the implementation of cultural programs helps to promote common European values. Thus, all of these programs are based on the principles of democracy, equality, respect for human dignity, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. These values are implemented through transcultural cooperation, including communication, collaboration, and various activities involving different nations from EU member states and EU partner countries. In particular, by promoting EU values and developing bilateral and multilateral international relations, EU countries can also build their positive image internationally. Using such cultural diplomacy tools as student exchanges, scientific activities, associations of vulnerable groups, etc., can positively impact the country's branding. Given the above, we can conclude that EU cultural diplomacy programs effectively promote EU values and build international cooperation and positive country branding. At the same time, further research on cultural diplomacy mechanisms in foreign policy remains an urgent issue for developing EU international relations (Halili, 2021; Ryniejska-Kiełdanowicz, 2021). It is also important to note that the EU has implemented an intercultural strategy and launched the EU National Institutes for Culture to develop the cultural dimension of its foreign policy vector. These instruments establish intercultural cooperation and unite representatives of different cultures for common EU values (Rus et al., 2020; Simić, 2020).

In particular, within the EU's international cultural relations framework, member states can influence foreign policy trends by implementing joint programs. Thus, the members of the European family can use “soft power” to promote the shared values of the EU. This tool is indirect diplomacy to realize the EU state's goals and promote the European community's shared values (Tamás, 2017). This tool can also be an integral part of the country's branding, presenting a positive image of an EU member state with its own culture and heritage. Thus, an EU member state can simultaneously work on preserving its heritage and advocate for common European values (Ghezelsofla & Sayady, 2020; Günek, 2018). It is important to note that in the modern world, cultural policy in the international context is used as one of the tools to position a country as a reliable partner (Alshammari & Alshammari, 2023). In addition, by applying the vector of cultural diplomacy in foreign policy, a country can popularise European values in the international arena (Grincheva, 2023; Pavlovsky, 2019).

In particular, the “EU Aid Volunteers” activities actualize the EU's collective values in the citizens' minds. The programs of this organization are implemented to develop international cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian spheres. This program also promotes intercultural interaction with the spread of common EU values (Popovska & Darcq, 2019). It should be emphasized that the European Capital of Culture program has been introduced in the EU to develop cultural heritage in the European dimension. The program serves to unite citizens with a shared colonial heritage and promotes the popularisation of European values and the implementation of cultural diplomacy in general. Thus, it brings together representatives of vulnerable groups with a common historical heritage while promoting the shared values of the EU (Clopot, 2022).

In addition, the EU is implementing Erasmus programs in the format of student exchanges for both representatives of EU member states and students from outside the European family. This program aims to form associations to promote common EU values while using a new tool of cultural diplomacy, “sports diplomacy.” In addition, the number of participating countries among EU and non-EU countries is increasing yearly, emphasizing the development of EU transcultural cooperation (Gathmyr, 2021; Mancoš & Gura, 2022).

Given the differences in national policies, languages, traditions, and cultures in EU educational institutions, the issue of adaptation of researchers to the working, scientific, and social environment remains relevant. Given the diversity of cultures among scientists from EU member states and the need to preserve each of the cultures of the EU representatives, it is worth emphasizing the importance of this issue. The issue also concerns promoting common EU values (Fichtnerova et al., 2022).

Throughout its history, the EU has been united by shared values. In its turn, Ukraine continues its Euro-Atlantic path, implementing European values in all spheres of the state's functioning. Even though Ukraine is currently experiencing full-scale aggression on its territory, it continues to unite the world through European values. Also, based on the results of this work, it is proposed to introduce an information tool within the framework of the joint cultural program of Ukraine and the EU and to implement it by disseminating messages to the countries of the democratic world about the inadmissibility of the aggression of the Russian Federation (Bennet, 2019; Bennet, 2020). It is important to emphasize that the cultural heritage of one country can influence all international vectors involved in intercultural communication. Thus, as part of developing its European integration vector, Ukraine is working to implement European values in our country. In addition, the results of this study suggest the creation of a joint program with the participation of Ukraine and the EU to promote EU values. At the same time, the issue of reviving and preserving our cultural heritage remains relevant for our country (Kitsak & Lylyk, 2023).

In contrast to the research by Siliutina et al. (2024), which centers on cultural preservation and digital heritage, this study emphasizes the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy in not only safeguarding cultural heritage but also promoting shared EU values. While Siliutina et al. (2024) discuss the challenges and opportunities of digital cultural preservation, our research indicates that cultural diplomacy initiatives yield more concrete results within the EU. The comparative analysis demonstrates that cultural diplomacy efforts are more successful than digital preservation in engaging diverse populations and actively advocating for EU principles. Nevertheless, Siliutina's et al. (2024) findings regarding the challenges of digital heritage offer important perspectives on the limitations of cultural diplomacy, especially regarding technological access and integration. Our findings suggest that a more cohesive strategy that combines traditional cultural diplomacy with digital innovations could improve the promotion of common EU values.

Given the completed empirical tasks, the study's results indicate that the research objective has been achieved. This study's practical implementation involves introducing new models of cultural cooperation in the EU's foreign policy with Ukraine's involvement. In particular, it is proposed that a joint cultural diplomacy tool be created with the EU as a joint program to promote EU values and unite to counter the aggression of the Russian Federation.

Conclusions

The study's relevance today is due to the development of cultural diplomacy and the unification of the European community, given the aggression of the Russian Federation. The shared values and heritage of the EU serve as a unifying factor for the EU countries, along with Ukraine, which actively implements and promotes European values. Based on the results of the above study, we can conclude that cultural diplomacy is effective. We also believe it is necessary to emphasize the importance of cultural diplomacy as a foreign policy in the EU's activities.

As part of the study's novelty aspect, we propose using the cultural sector in the EU's foreign policy to enable joint counteraction to Russian aggression. For example, it is known that Ukraine's diplomatic relations with EU countries such as Poland, France, and Germany date back to Kyivan Rus. Then, after Ukraine declared its independence, these states recognized Ukraine's independence and established diplomatic relations. After that, Ukraine developed political, economic, cultural, etc. relations with these countries. At the same time, Ukraine began its European integration path, taking into account the implementation of European values in all spheres of state functioning. In other words, Ukraine has gone

from exchanging experiences with other nations to finding common cultural values and traditions with the EU and implementing them today. After identifying common values with EU member states and promoting EU values in Ukraine, an effective mechanism of cooperation with EU member states was developed. The effectiveness of this mechanism is demonstrated by the assistance received from EU countries after the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. According to official reports, Ukraine has received almost \$9 billion from Poland (as of April 2024), more than €3.8 billion from France (as of December 2023), and nearly €24 billion from Germany (as of November 2023).

Cultural diplomacy has emerged as a crucial instrument for promoting mutual understanding and reinforcing shared EU values among member states and beyond. The research emphasizes that cultural diplomacy advances the EU's foundational principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, while also helping to bridge cultural and political divides within the Union. Successful examples show how cultural initiatives can facilitate dialogue, improve collaboration, and foster a sense of shared identity among diverse groups.

However, the impact of cultural diplomacy varies depending on the context. The study indicates that while some initiatives effectively promote EU values, others encounter obstacles due to differences in engagement levels, resource distribution, and political backing. These variations highlight the necessity for a more customized approach to cultural diplomacy that takes into account the specific needs and circumstances of different member states and regions.

Hence, this work's practical value is finding ways to develop the EU's cultural diplomacy further, increasing its productivity. As a novelty, we propose creating an EU program with the participation of Ukraine to implement a single European centralized mechanism for promoting EU values. Establishing a joint working group with representatives of the EU and Ukrainian governing institutions is advisable to establish such a program. Such a working group will be used to develop a standard model of the proposed program, regulatory mechanisms, and a format for further implementation. We also consider it necessary to build a joint EU instrument with Ukraine to disseminate information messages to counter the aggression of the Russian Federation. We see the development of this information tool as one of the sectors of the working group's work on establishing a joint cultural program between Ukraine and the EU. These tools are necessary to advocate for common EU values, considering the preservation of the cultures of the European countries. In addition, we believe it is necessary to use the EU's cultural diplomacy to disseminate messages of appeal to the democratic world. Among them should be the inadmissibility of aggression and the preservation of shared cultural heritage, considering Ukraine's European integration path. In addition, we propose to continue researching the interconnection between the historical background of cultural diplomacy and the security of the democratic world. This is necessary to create and implement the abovementioned mechanism for advocating common EU values. We see the possibility of applying the study's results in the EU's foreign policy and further enshrining the joint program with Ukraine in EU directives. In particular, we propose to continue researching the specific topics related to the EU's joint cultural programs with Ukraine, including project areas, legal regulation, international organizations involved, information messages, etc.

Recommendations for Policymakers

To improve the impact of cultural diplomacy in advancing EU values, policymakers ought to take into account the following suggestions:

1. **Create Strategic Frameworks:** to develop clear strategic frameworks for cultural diplomacy that are in line with the EU's overall goals. This involves defining measurable objectives, pinpointing key target audiences, and efficiently allocating resources to enhance effectiveness.
2. **Encourage Inclusivity and Diversity:** to make sure that cultural diplomacy initiatives represent the varied cultures of the EU's member states. By including a broad spectrum of cultural expressions and viewpoints, the EU can create a more inclusive atmosphere that appeals to a wide array of audiences.
3. **Improve Collaboration and Coordination:** to foster stronger collaboration among EU institutions, member states, and cultural organizations. This can be accomplished by implementing coordinated programs, pooling resources, and creating joint initiatives that utilize the strengths of different stakeholders.

4. **Assess and Adjust:** consistent assessment of cultural diplomacy efforts is essential for grasping their effects and pinpointing opportunities for enhancement. Policymakers need to establish strong monitoring and evaluation systems to measure effectiveness and modify strategies when necessary.

Suggestions for Practitioners in Cultural Diplomacy

The following suggestions are offered for professionals working in the area of cultural diplomacy:

1. **Involve Local Communities:** practitioners need to focus on including local communities in cultural diplomacy initiatives. Collaborating with grassroots organizations and local stakeholders can help garner wider support and create a more significant impact.
2. **Utilize Digital Platforms:** employing digital platforms and social media can improve the visibility and accessibility of cultural diplomacy efforts. Practitioners should take advantage of these resources to connect with audiences, disseminate cultural material, and promote intercultural discussions.
3. **Emphasize Long-Term Benefits:** cultural diplomacy needs to be regarded with a long-term viewpoint. Professionals should strive to establish enduring initiatives that foster lasting connections and support the continuous advancement of EU values.

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