

Two decades of Polish and British cultural diplomacy in the 21st century: conclusions and recommendations for Poland

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Abstract

The article analyses and compares the cultural diplomacy of Poland and Great Britain in the 21st century. Its main objective was to identify the areas for improvement in Polish cultural diplomacy and to determine what actions, drawing inspiration from the UK's cultural diplomacy efforts and expertise, Poland should take to improve its cultural diplomacy. The article consists of three parts. Part one comprises a theoretical introduction. Part two consists of two subsections: the first subsection discusses the structure of British and of Polish cultural diplomacy; the second subsection focuses on coordination and evaluation of the activities of Polish and British cultural diplomacy institutions. Part three includes the conclusions and recommendations for Poland. The research methods used were the source analysis and the comparative method. The following recommendations can be proposed for Poland: to create one coordinating institution with legal power to oversee the performance of cultural diplomacy institutions; to establish a platform for consultation and cooperation among the entities conducting cultural diplomacy; to change Polish law so as to allow more involvement of the interested ministries in the activities of cultural diplomacy institutions; to define clear goals and invent a coherent system of evaluation of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and other cultural diplomacy institutions; and to harmonise the activities of these institutions with Polish foreign policy.

Keywords: Foreign Direct Investments, Brexit, economic growth, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Western Balkans

JEL Classification: Z10, Z13, Z18, F50, F54

Introduction

This article discusses the cultural diplomacy of Poland and Great Britain in the 21st century, and the related issues—the methods of implementation, organisation, and coordination of the actions of the institutions responsible for cultural diplomacy. The aim of this paper was to analyse and compare the cultural diplomacy conducted by Poland and Great Britain in the 21st century, so as to verify the thesis that there still are certain

areas in Polish cultural diplomacy that can be improved taking inspiration from the solutions present in the cultural diplomacy of the United Kingdom, which has vast experience in this field; and also to be able to answer the question what actions should the Polish side take to improve the effectiveness of its cultural diplomacy. The research methods used in the article were the comparative method and source analysis. The source materials include literature on the subject, case studies, scientific articles, reports and statements of Polish and British institutions, and information posted on government websites.

Public diplomacy is not a novel concept and its roots date as far back as antiquity and evidence of shaping an image of a nation can be found even in Biblical texts. A number of diplomatic endeavours made by ancient civilisations such as Greeks and Romans, as well as later Renaissance Italians, resembled today's strategies of influencing the international community. In the late Middle Ages Venetians efficiently distributed information among diplomats. Later, Gutenberg's printing press expanded the scope for international public relations pioneers, like Cardinal Richelieu in the seventeenth-century France (Melissen 2005a, 3). Public diplomacy can be generally defined as the actions of an international actor which include influencing and creating links with the global environment. Public diplomacy involves the actions that influence communities abroad, carried out by the ministry of foreign affairs, and aimed at achieving the goals of a given country (Cull 2009, 12). According to James Pamment (2013, 1), public diplomacy aims to affect government-to-government relations in specific foreign affairs contexts by connecting with people whose opinions and interests can influence another government's position. It also involves an international actor communicating its policies to foreign citizens, including civil society representatives, specialists, NGOs, media institutions, and the general public – with the use of media outreach, conferences and cultural exchanges. In recent years, public diplomacy has undergone significant changes, shifting the focus from government-society interactions to society-society relations (Cull 2009, 13). This shift is called the “new public diplomacy”, in contrast to the “old” public diplomacy of the twentieth century. The old model was characterised by a one-way flow of information, where public diplomacy actors controlled the message using media channels. This resulted in limited interaction between communicators and recipients, and the main focus was on specific, short-term aims. On the other hand, the new public diplomacy, which emerged in the early twenty-first century, is more inclusive, dialogical, and takes advantage of social media to establish two-way engagement with the public. It departs from the old “broadcasting” models, and acknowledges that effective diplomacy involves not only speaking, but also listening and adapting to diverse viewpoints (Pamment 2013, 3). As Beata Ociepka (2015, 7) points out, it is important that the citizens of a particular country have their say in public diplomacy and are kept informed about it. Their active participation plays a significant role in international relations through citizen diplomacy. Additionally, individuals who are very well-known can be regarded as figures in what is referred to as “celebrity diplomacy”. One of the key components of public diplomacy is cultural diplomacy (US Department of State 2005). It can be defined as influencing the international environment by spreading national cultural resources and achievements abroad, and by facilitating the export of culture (Nye 2007, 77). Cultural diplomacy also involves sharing information, ideas, culture and art, so as to build mutual understanding between nations (Cummings 2003, 1). Jan Melissen (2005b, 19-25) argues that cultural relations, traditionally linked to diplomacy, have become more closely aligned with recent trends in the new public diplomacy than concepts like nation-branding or propaganda. The concepts of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are closely tied to “soft power” – the ability to influence the international community and achieve goals using the attractiveness of a given country. This attractiveness can be shaped by culture, ideals or policy of a given state. Soft power encourages other countries to model themselves after a particular state or organisation, recognise it as attractive, and aspire to achieve a similar standard of living (Nye 2007, 77). Hence cultural diplomacy is an important component of “soft power”.

The organisational structure of British and Polish public and cultural diplomacy

The institution directly responsible for overseeing British public diplomacy is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which is a government unit. British cultural diplomacy is mainly carried out by two institutions: the British Council and BBC World. The British Council (BC) was established in 1934 (Foreign Affairs Committee 2006, 20-24). The *Royal Charter* of 1940 entrusted the British Council with the mission of promoting mutual relations and understanding between different cultures in the United Kingdom and other countries; promoting knowledge of Great Britain abroad; promoting the English language worldwide; encouraging cooperation with Great Britain in the fields of education, culture, science and technology; and promoting the development of science (British Council 1993). The BC's headquarters are located in London, but the organisation has its branches in over one hundred countries, through which it conducts its foreign activities. The BC regularly publishes various documents summarising its activities, such as *Annual Reports*, *Corporate Plans*, or *Financial Statements* (British Council 2023a).

While the British Council has the status of a registered charity and a non-governmental organisation, thus having considerable freedom in setting its priorities and ways of achieving its goals, it is also a public corporation financially supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is therefore obliged to act in agreement with state institutions (Rivera 2015, 22; British Council 2023a). The organisation is held accountable to the Parliament, and its *Annual Reports* and performance are examined by the Foreign Affairs Committee. The BC must also participate in a *Tailored Review* at least once during each Parliament's term. The main objective of these reviews is to confirm that public organisations are well-managed and effective (UK Parliament 2018). The Foreign Secretary is responsible before the Parliament for the BC's performance, endorsing its strategic goals outlined in the *Corporate Plans*, and for authorising the financial support provided to the BC (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2019, 34; Rivera 2015, 24). Despite its considerable financial autonomy and the ability to generate significant revenue through partnership contracts, teaching English, administering exams and fundraising (British Council 2023b, 35), the BC's autonomy has been declining in recent years, due to increased supervision and closer alignment with the British government's goals. Tim Rivera (2015, 34) believes this may result in reducing the BC's freedom in carrying out its activities. The British Council's organisational structure consists of several key components. The Board of Trustees, which is at the top of the institution, is the ultimate authority within the organisation, with Dr Paul Thompson taking up the position as the Chair in 2024. The main task of the Board is to oversee the strategy, policy and performance of the institution. The Board of Trustees also ensures that the Senior Leadership Team performs effectively (British Council 2024a). Lower in hierarchy, is the aforementioned Senior Leadership Team, which oversees the activities of the institution. The Team's task is to determine the overall strategy and direction, and to manage the BC's operations. Each member of the Senior Leadership Team has specific responsibilities based on their role (British Council 2024b; British Council 2024c). The Senior Leadership Team is currently led by Scott McDonald, who assumed the role as the Chief Executive of the British Council in 2021. Within the British Council's structure, there are also the Sector Advisory Groups and the United Kingdom Country Advisory Committees. The Advisory Groups give expert advice to help the BC achieve the goals and plan its strategy, but do not have the decision-making authority. The key working areas of the Advisory Groups include, i.a., education, arts, and the English language. The Advisory Committees, on the other hand, are supposed to provide strategic advice and share their expert knowledge (British Council 2024d). As already mentioned, the British Council is required to operate in accordance with several state institutions, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The objectives of the BC's activities, in accordance with the UK foreign Policy, are determined through consultations with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Secretary of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office holds the BC accountable for its actions and their results before Parliament. Taking into account the audit results and suggestions, the BC issues multi-year strategies titled *Corporate Plans* in order to adapt the institution's activities to the

changing international situation and the priorities of Great Britain's foreign policy (British Council 2016, 1-5). The second main organisation responsible for conducting British cultural diplomacy is the radio station BBC World Service, also based in London. The station operates on the basis of a document called the *Royal Charter* (BBC 2023). BBC World Service has observer status in the Public Diplomacy Strategy Board committee. Observer status, on the one hand, is to ensure the station's participation in the forum of British public diplomacy institutions. On the other hand, excluding the radio station from membership in the Public Diplomacy Strategy Board—guarantees the BBC World's independence in creating and conducting its programmes (Foreign Affairs Committee 2006, 3).

As far as Polish cultural diplomacy is concerned, its current structure has been shaped as a result of the evolution and changes in Polish public diplomacy since the early 1990s. After 1989, Poland, which had primarily been a recipient of public diplomacy from other countries, especially the United States and Western Europe, gradually transitioned into a more active sender (Ociepka 2015, 13). Although the number of the Polish Cultural Institutes increased from 11 in 1990 to 15 in 1996, the cultural promotion of Poland did not intensify significantly. Substantial economic transformations, a shift away from socialism, and the creation of democratic state structures—emerging as new government priorities at that time—resulted in cultural diplomacy temporarily receding in the early 1990s. However, in the mid-1990s, as Poland's political ambition to join the European Union intensified, discussions were initiated on national strategies for promoting Poland and its culture within the EU (Jurkiewicz-Eckert 2014, 266; Umińska-Woronecka 2015, 115). The term “public diplomacy” began appearing in Polish government documents at the turn of the 21st century, alongside the more frequent concept of “promotion” (Ociepka 2015, 8). The unsatisfactory state of Polish cultural promotion abroad, the country's ambitions to access the NATO and EU, and the increasing necessity of positive image-building abroad led to the introduction of the “reform of Polish cultural diplomacy” and formulation of the assumptions of a new model of cultural diplomacy in the late 1990s; a model which has gradually evolved into the current shape of Polish public and cultural diplomacy (Umińska-Woronecka 2015, 128-129). The new organisational model has relied on structures created by diplomatic institutions governed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the Polish Cultural Institutes or institutions under the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. A significant development in modern Polish cultural diplomacy was the establishment of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in 2000, tasked with improving interministerial cooperation in promoting Poland through culture (Langowska 2014, 222). In 2001, the document titled: *Zagranicznopolityka kulturalna Polski i jej priorytety na lata 2001-2003* (English: Poland's Foreign Cultural Policy and its Priorities for 2001-2003) was endorsed by the Polish government. This strategic document identified culture as one of the cornerstones of Poland's foreign policy, and, for the first time, outlined the direct and indirect objectives of Poland's foreign cultural policy (Jurkiewicz-Eckert 2014, 268-269).

When it comes to Polish cultural diplomacy, it is conducted in a dispersed manner, with a number of coordinating institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Polish Cultural Institutes, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (AMI), and other entities, including the International Cultural Centre, the Film Art Institute or the Book Institute (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2011, 5; Ziętek 2010, 65-83). The organisational structure of Polish cultural diplomacy also comprises the Interministerial Team for the Promotion of Poland (formerly the Council for the Promotion of Poland), which is an advisory body to the prime minister. It coordinates activities promoting Poland and provides its opinions to the Council of Ministers (Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2021). It is currently the only forum that aims to facilitate real cooperation between the institutions of Polish cultural diplomacy and relevant ministries (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019, 16-17). Another important government unit is the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which carries out activities aimed at promoting Polish science and culture worldwide. In order to fulfil its tasks, the Department cooperates with Polish embassies and consulates, and the Polish Cultural Institutes. Additionally, the Department cooperates with foreign media and non-governmental organisations (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2024a). It is worth mentioning that the activities aimed at promoting scientific research and studies in Poland abroad, as well as the activities aimed

at internationalising Polish higher education, among others, are also carried out by the National Academic Exchange Agency, established in 2017. The agency's activities are supervised by the minister responsible for higher education (Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej 2024). The main tasks of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in the field of Polish cultural diplomacy are as follows: promoting Polish culture; initiating and supporting activities which promote Polish culture abroad; and coordinating foreign cooperation and cultural exchange (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego 2022). Within the Ministry, the Department of International Cooperation is responsible for supervising the implementation of international programmes commissioned by the minister— with a particular focus on those carried out by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (Ziętek 2010, 79).

Another crucial component of Polish cultural diplomacy is represented by the Polish Cultural Institutes. As institutions governed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institutes implement the guidelines of Polish foreign policy (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019, 5). Their mission is to promote cultural and scientific cooperation, Polish culture, knowledge of Polish national heritage and history abroad; conduct educational and informational activities; ensure Polish presence in international cultural programmes and participate in cultural events; establish cultural relations with foreign and Polish partners; influence foreign scientific, opinion-forming, and artistic circles; maintain contact with the media and cooperate with local cultural institutions. Often acting as departments of science and culture at Polish embassies, the Institutes work with foreign government institutions or NGOs, along with Polish cultural institutions, e.g. the Polish Book Institute or the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. Hence their role in Polish cultural diplomacy should not be underestimated. Currently, there are 26 Polish Cultural Institutes worldwide (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2024b).

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is a state cultural institution established in 2000 by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Its main goal is to promote Polish culture and heritage abroad and support international cultural cooperation. The Institute conducts various projects, such as cultural seasons, concerts, film screenings, exhibitions, festivals, or workshops. The AMI also manages the *Culture.pl* website, translated into a number of languages, which serves as a comprehensive source of information about Polish culture. The AMI cooperates with Polish and foreign partners, such as the Polish Cultural Institutes, diplomatic posts, cultural institutions, media, artists, and experts (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza 2017). The Institute has legal personality and operates on the basis of the *Statute of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute*. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is supervised by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. The main activities of the Institute should be implemented in accordance with the guidelines of Polish foreign policy and foreign cultural policy. The AMI achieves its goals mainly by: spreading knowledge of Polish cultural heritage and history internationally; participating in and organising national and foreign cultural events; implementing and creating Polish cultural programmes during international events abroad (commissioned by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage or the Minister of Foreign Affairs); representing Poland at important world conferences on cultural issues; and by obtaining extrabudgetary funds for carrying out the Institute's objectives (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza 2017). The director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute is appointed and dismissed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. Since 2020, the role of the director of the Institute is held by Barbara Schabowska (Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2024).

From the description of the competences of the above-mentioned Polish institutions, it does not seem clear enough which of them, in the executive sense, is the main one responsible for coordinating the activities within the framework of Polish cultural diplomacy. In the report titled *Informacja o wynikach kontroli promocji kultury polskiej w świecie* (English: Information on the results of the audit of the promotion of Polish culture in the World) from 2011, the Supreme Audit Office (Polish: Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, abbreviated as NIK) released the results of an audit assessing the performance of institutions responsible for conducting Polish cultural diplomacy. The NIK stated that there is neither an appropriate system for monitoring and evaluating the tasks carried out by the relevant state institutions, nor a comprehensive programme defining coherent directions for the activities and objectives of these institutions. The NIK also pointed out that the institutions primarily responsible for representing Polish culture abroad have not been adequately identified. Moreover,

there is no sufficient interinstitutional coordination of the tasks at both the government and local levels. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and implement a strategic document indicating the main directions of activities and objectives, as well as indicators and tools for measuring the effectiveness of the activities carried out. Furthermore, due to the lack of a coherent concept of the national brand, there is a need to define and promote, in a professional manner, the foreign image of Poland. In terms of values and identity, the image should maintain consistency with the image promoted within the country. The NIK emphasised that currently, when multiple entities are involved in the promotion of Polish culture abroad, there is an urgent requirement for enhanced coordination of the activities of relevant institutions. Furthermore, a single leading institution, equipped with the appropriate authority and tools to ensure the proper implementation of the objectives of Polish cultural diplomacy should be designated (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2011, 2-34). Almost identical conclusions were presented by the NIK in a more recent report titled *Promocja Kultury Polskiej za Granicą* (English: Information on the results of the audit of the Promotion of Polish Culture Abroad) from 2019, which covered the years 2013-2018 (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019, 9-12).

Institutional coordination and evaluation of British and Polish cultural diplomacy: a comparison

From the analysis of the available sources, it can be argued that there are notable differences between Poland and Great Britain in terms of conducting activities in the field of cultural diplomacy. In the UK, the main institution for British cultural diplomacy is the British Council, which has a high degree of autonomy in planning and organising most of the activities in this field—despite being obliged to act within the framework of and according to the assumptions of British public and cultural diplomacy. In the case of Poland, there is no single institution that independently coordinates most of the tasks of cultural diplomacy. Moreover, there is still little coordination of the joint activities of Polish cultural diplomacy institutions. As a result, most promotional projects are undertaken independently by specific ministries and carried out without consulting other institutions. Such a lack of collaboration does not seem to facilitate interinstitutional cooperation or enhance the effectiveness of Polish cultural diplomacy. Poland's activities in the field of cultural diplomacy in the last two decades were carried out by nearly 120 different units, with little or no cooperation among the institutions, which resulted in an institutional dispersion, a lack of proper planning of activities or a proper monitoring of the effects (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019). However, a significant shift in the collaboration between Polish cultural diplomacy institutions occurred in 2011, during Poland's presidency of the Council of the European Union. At that time, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Polish Cultural Institutes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Culture and National Heritage worked in close coordination to implement a comprehensive cultural program associated with Poland's EU presidency. This clearly demonstrated that while such effective interinstitutional and interministerial cooperation is indeed possible, it typically occurs in exceptional circumstances in the case of Polish public and cultural diplomacy (Fischer 2012, 90-113). One of the significant steps towards a better coordination of the activities in the field of promoting Polish culture was the establishment of the Rada Promocji Polski (English: the Council for the Promotion of Poland), which operated in the years 2004-2015 as an advisory body to the government. The Council formulated recommendations for improving the activities in the field of promoting Poland in the document titled *Kierunki Promocji Polski do 2015 r.* (English: Directions for the Promotion of Poland until 2015). In 2016, due to the lack of satisfactory outcomes and the need to increase the intensity of the activities in the domain of Polish cultural diplomacy, the entity called Międzyresortowy Zespół do spraw Promocji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (English: the Interministerial Team for the Promotion of Poland), which replaced the previous Council, was established. Its two most important strategic documents, comprising the objectives of the activities for the promotion of Polish culture in the world, are *Kierunki promocji Polski na lata 2017-2027* (Directions for the Promotion of Poland for the years 2017-2027) and *Marka Polska – Koncepcja* (Polish Brand—Concept). The Interministerial Team for the Promotion of Poland is headed by the selected secretary of state in the

Prime Minister's Office. The Interministerial Team's deputy chairman is the secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for matters related to public diplomacy (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019, 17-19; Monitor Polski 2020).

Despite the actions taken by Poland to improve the institutional coordination of its cultural diplomacy, a single institution that would have formal powers to enforce the implementation of its recommendations on the other cultural diplomacy institutions has not yet been established. This contributes to the lack of effective coordination of the conducted cultural policy. Moreover, both strategic documents *Directions for the Promotion of Poland until 2015* and *Directions for the Promotion of Poland for the years 2017-2027* have not been adopted as a government programme, nor were they submitted to the government's deliberations (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019, 18). According to the NIK, Poland still has not developed a properly integrated system of promoting Polish culture in the world. Moreover, the interministerial meetings, aimed at improving the interinstitutional collaboration, do not bring concrete results due to the lack of proper cooperation— as ministries often tend to solely follow their own priorities (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019, 19). What is more, Poland has not yet adopted a coherent system of the evaluation of the activities of cultural diplomacy institutions. In the case of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, there is no information on the indicators adopted as the basis for the evaluation of the Institute's achievements. At the same time, in the AMI's documents (including the Annual Reports), no clear rules for the evaluation of the institution's activities were given (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza 2021, 4-21). This is also where the methods of assessing the achievements of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the British Council diverge. In its annual reports, the British Council provided transparent information on the degree of implementation of the assumed objectives and, based on the results, clearly defined its plans for each subsequent year (see: British Council 2022a). As far as evaluation of cultural diplomacy institutions is concerned, Polish actions are different from British ones. The main Polish institutions of cultural diplomacy (the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and Polish Cultural Institutes) operate on the basis of guidelines from ministries and are evaluated on the basis of world rankings (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2011), such as the Country Brand Index or the Nation Brand Index. On the other hand, the British Council, the most important British cultural diplomacy institution—introduced the *Performance Scorecard*—the main tool used by the BC to measure performance and the degree of task implementation. This tool completely replaced the previously existing indicators. It means that the BC, based on defined, stable indicators, accounts for the degree of implementation of the tasks that had been planned earlier, taking into account the suggestions of the British parliament and government. What is more, the BC actually operates in accordance with the guidelines of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as the objectives of the institution's activities are determined during consultations with the minister and must be carried out in line with the assumptions of Great Britain's foreign policy (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013; Rivera 2015, 14). Furthermore, in contrast to the BC, it must be stated that there is no clear evidence to confirm that the AMI actually operates in accordance with the programme of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (despite the fact that the institution provides such information, e.g. in its annual reports). This can be confirmed by the lack of specific references to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' plans in the AMI's documents, the subordination of the Institute's director to the minister of culture and national heritage, and the fact that in the current legal situation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs does not have the authority to intervene or interfere in the Adam Mickiewicz Institute's activities. On the one hand, this can be a chance for the AMI to maintain independence, while on the other hand, it can pose an obstacle to the stricter coordination of the Institute's activities (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2011; Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2019). As for the Polish Cultural Institutes, there is no precise information available to evaluate to what degree they realise the priorities of Polish foreign policy (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2024b).

During the surveyed period, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Polish Cultural Institutes were actively engaged in promoting cultural exchange through various events. It is worth noting that these cultural events extended beyond Europe and took place on different continents, including Asia. These activities primarily included exhibitions, theatre performances, and concerts. Below are some examples of Poland's cultural

events organised by the Polish Cultural Institutes and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute: the “I, Culture” Programme, which included ca. 400 cultural events, organised by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in 2011 during Polish presidency of the European Council, (Culture.pl 2012); the “Polska! Year” Festival, organised in 2009 by the AMI in the UK, promoting Polish culture through audiovisuals (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza 2010, 21-61); the Polish exhibitions organised by IAM during the 2011-2012 “Venice Biennale” (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza 2012, 92); an exhibition of Polish posters in New Delhi in 2019 organised by the Polish Institute in India (Instytut Polski w New Delhi 2019); the piano concerts, “Stepping towards the Chopin Piano Competition” organised by the Polish Institute in Beijing to commemorate Chopin’s 211th birthday and the 18th Chopin Piano Competition in 2021 (Instytut Polski w Pekinie, 2021);

The United Kingdom has been conducting its cultural activities on all continents, especially in the areas of the former British Empire. Its promotion in the world is carried out mainly through cultural events related to art, language promotion or culture. An important element of British cultural diplomacy is also international exchanges of students and scholars, cooperation with world universities or social actions for education and supporting the development of individual regions of the world through, among other things, building education centres and conducting trainings. Furthermore, for the British Council, special events, e.g. the 2014 Commonwealth Games, were an opportunity to make only minor adjustments to the strategy of conducting cultural diplomacy activities, and to slightly adapt its cultural diplomacy tools to current needs, without changing them (British Council 2014, 2-28; The National Archives 2012). The examples of major events and special events in British public diplomacy in the surveyed period comprised: the 2012 Summer Olympics held in London, in which the British Council closely collaborated with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, organising various educational and cultural activities (British Council 2013, 12); the 2012 GREAT Britain Campaign in which the British Council was also involved. The goal of the campaign was to show the high quality of British education and motivate students from abroad to study at universities in England (British Council 2013, 36-42); the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, accompanied by international cultural and educational events organised by the British Council, mainly aimed at school and university youth from the Commonwealth, especially students from India, Africa, and Scotland (British Council 2014, 2-28); the UK-Australia Season, launched in September 2021, a joint effort with Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose main objective was to strengthen the UK-Australia relationship under a new Free Trade Agreement. It included over 200 events in both countries (British Council 2022b, 15).

Conclusions and recommendations for Poland

The United Kingdom has profound expertise and boasts centuries of experience in the field of cultural diplomacy, while the Polish system of cultural diplomacy is still evolving. British cultural diplomacy activities operate on a significantly larger scale than Polish ones. However, it is crucial to emphasise that the global importance of the United Kingdom differs considerably from the international position of Poland. Importantly, the aim of the comparison presented in this article was not to portray Polish cultural diplomacy as less successful than its British counterpart. Instead, it aimed to identify valuable methods and recommendations for Poland, drawing inspiration from the United Kingdom’s experience in the field of cultural diplomacy, while also taking into consideration constructive suggestions from Polish institutions (mainly the Supreme Audit Office). After comparing and analysing Polish and British cultural diplomacy practices and strategies in the 21st century, specific recommendations can be put forward for Poland. Firstly, it is vital to establish a single coordinating institution, which has legal power to issue binding recommendations for other institutions of Polish cultural diplomacy. Such an entity would act as a platform for facilitating interinstitutional consultations and cooperation. Establishing one coordinating institution, aligned with the assumptions of Polish foreign policy, and inspired by the British Council’s model, could enhance the system of Polish cultural diplomacy. Moreover, amendments should be made in Polish law to allow interested ministries to engage with the activities taken by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Polish Cultural Institutes, and other relevant institutions of Polish cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, it seems crucial to empower the Adam Mickiewicz Institute to fac-

tually implement the assumptions of Polish foreign policy in its activities. Also, specific objectives should be defined for both the Polish Cultural Institutes and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, along with adopting a single coherent system of the evaluation of these institutions' performance. It is also advisable to increase the activity of Polish parliamentary committees in proposing changes to the operation of Polish cultural diplomacy institutions— following the example of the British parliament, whose recommendations are included in strategic documents and are binding for state institutions (Foreign and Commonwealth Office and British Council 2013; Rivera 2015, 14). In conclusion, recent efforts to improve Polish cultural diplomacy herald positive changes and signal a growing awareness of the importance of cultural diplomacy and its potential. However, Poland needs to take further steps to maximise this potential. In this context, British effective strategies and expertise may serve as valuable inspiration for Poland's future endeavours.

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