

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF UKRAINE IN WARTIME AS A TOOL FOR MOBILIZING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

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Цитування:

Honcharova O., Brahina T., Brahin Y. Cultural diplomacy of Ukraine in wartime as a tool for mobilizing international support. *Ukrainian culture : past, modern ways of development* 2026. № 52. С. 483–489.

<https://doi.org/10.35619/ucpmk.52.1182>

The study aims to analyze the main institutional mechanisms, forms, and practices of the cultural representation of the Ukrainian experience of war in the global public space, and to determine the roles of state and non-state actors in the implementation of cultural diplomacy initiatives.

The methodological basis of the research consists of general scientific and specialized methods. In particular, the methods of analysis and synthesis were used to generalize regulatory documents and scholarly approaches to understanding cultural diplomacy; the historical-comparative method was applied to compare the practices of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy before and during the full-scale war; institutional analysis was used to examine the activities of state bodies and cultural institutions; and content analysis was applied to cultural and media projects aimed at international audiences.

The results of the study demonstrate that under wartime conditions, Ukraine's cultural diplomacy performs a set of interconnected functions: communicative, representational, mobilizing, and value-integrative. It has been determined that a key role in implementing the cultural diplomacy policy is played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, diplomatic missions, and state cultural institutions, which coordinate international cultural projects and ensure the representation of Ukrainian culture abroad. The study also shows that the activities of non-governmental organizations, professional communities, and volunteer initiatives constitute an important complement to state policy, actively participating in the implementation of cultural and informational projects at the international level. The article substantiates that cultural diplomacy contributes to integrating the Ukrainian wartime experience into global cultural discourse, fosters international solidarity with Ukraine, and strengthens its position as an independent subject within the European cultural space.

Key words: cultural diplomacy; public diplomacy; international communication; Russian-Ukrainian war; cultural representation; international cultural projects; countering propaganda.

Problem Statement. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, which began in 2014 and acquired a particularly full-scale character on February 24, 2022, has become not only a serious military and political challenge for the Ukrainian state, but also a significant test for the system of international communication, humanitarian interaction, and the global information space. The war has underscored the need to seek new ways to present the Ukrainian experience on the international stage, capable not only of informing the global community about ongoing events but also of fostering a broader understanding of the causes, consequences, and humanitarian dimension of Russian aggression. Under these conditions, cultural diplomacy has gained particular importance as a significant instrument of international communication and of Ukraine's representation in the global public sphere. Through cultural initiatives, artistic projects, public history, museum and exhibition practices, literature, cinema, and other forms of cultural representation, Ukraine has gained the opportunity to convey its own experience of the war to international audiences and to demonstrate its human, social, and civilizational dimensions. In this context, culture has become not only a means of preserving national identity but also an important channel of communication with the world. Through cultural events, an emotionally resonant and value-oriented image of Ukraine's struggle is being shaped. Such initiatives contribute not only to informing the international community about the course of the war but

also to mobilizing political, humanitarian, and societal support for Ukraine, while reinforcing the narrative of the Ukrainian people's struggle for freedom, democracy, and the right to their own existence in global discourse.

Review of Recent Publications. The study of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy in the context of war has developed significantly in recent years, reflecting the growing scholarly attention to the interconnection between culture, international communication, and national security. One key group of studies examines the experience, challenges, and prospects of Ukrainian cultural diplomacy during the armed conflict. In particular, M. Kushnariova [7], A. Rudnieva, Yu. Malovana and M. Arseniuk [13], as well as A. Khomenko [17], systematize Ukraine's experience in cultural diplomacy and identify the main challenges and directions for its development. Another direction in the historiography consists of works devoted to the institutional and regulatory aspects of cultural diplomacy. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the studies of D. Viedienieiev [2], S. Hololobov [3], and Yu. Mateleshko [9]. A third group of studies focuses on international projects and practices of cultural diplomacy as instruments of "soft power" and global communication. H. Andres examines international museum projects and cultural diplomacy formats after 2022, noting their contributions to promoting Ukrainian culture and strengthening international support [1]. M. Rohozha analyzes practices of preserving Ukraine's cultural heritage in wartime, emphasizing the role of international cooperation and cultural projects in drawing global attention to losses and destruction [12]. Thus, the existing studies highlight certain aspects of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy, particularly its institutional foundations, regulatory framework, and its role in shaping the country's international image. At the same time, the functioning of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy during wartime as an instrument for mobilizing international support remains insufficiently explored, which determines the relevance of further scholarly analysis of this issue.

The article aims to analyze the role of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy in the context of war as an important instrument of international communication and mobilization of international support, and to identify the main forms and practices of cultural representation of the Ukrainian experience of war in the global public sphere.

Presentation of the Research Material. Cultural diplomacy during wartime performs several interrelated functions that go far beyond the traditional framework of cultural exchange. In contemporary international relations, it is regarded as an important instrument of public diplomacy and «soft power», involving the use of a state's cultural resources to shape a positive international image of Ukraine, promote national culture globally, foster intercultural dialogue, and strengthen political support. In Ukraine, cultural diplomacy enjoys stable state support and regulatory recognition. In this context, an important role is played by such legislative and strategic documents as the Law of Ukraine «On Culture» (2010) [4], the «Concept for the Promotion of Ukraine in the World and the Advancement of Ukraine's Interests in the Global Information Space» (2016) [6], the «Strategy of Foreign Policy Activity of Ukraine» (2021) [14], and the «Strategy for the Development of Culture in Ukraine until 2030» (2025) [15]. These documents define state policy in international cultural exchange, support for translations of Ukrainian literature, the participation of artists in international festivals, exhibitions, and cultural projects, and the promotion of Ukrainian art, cinema, music, and other cultural practices abroad. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, cultural diplomacy has gained particular significance as a component of Ukraine's strategic communications on the international stage. It has become an instrument not only for presenting the Ukrainian experience of war in the global public sphere, but also for mobilizing international support, countering propaganda, and shaping an emotionally and value-laden image of Ukraine as a state defending freedom, democracy, and international law.

An important role in implementing these functions of cultural diplomacy is played by both state institutions and civic and volunteer initiatives, whose activities during the war often complement one another. At the state level, this is carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, its central office, and its diplomatic missions abroad. The main tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this area include protecting the state's cultural and humanitarian interests, developing international cultural, scientific, and humanitarian ties, disseminating reliable information about Ukraine, and fostering a positive international image of the country. In 2015, the Department of Public Diplomacy was established within the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It included divisions responsible for cultural diplomacy, image-building projects, and public relations. Since then, the activities of this unit have gradually expanded, and in 2019, in accordance with a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and an order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a new structure of the MFA apparatus was introduced, including the Directorate of Public Diplomacy [2; 18] (currently the Department of Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications), whose responsibilities include cultural diplomacy, image-related initiatives, and engagement with foreign publics. The tasks of the department include implementing international cultural and informational image-building projects, coordinating the activities of state and public cultural institutions, supporting the Ukrainian Institute, and organizing exhibitions, film screenings, lectures, and other events to promote Ukrainian culture abroad. At the same time, the Department of Global Ukrainians and Humanitarian Cooperation plays an

important role, responsible for cultural and educational projects for Ukrainians living abroad [8].

The implementation of public and cultural diplomacy policy is carried out not only at the central apparatus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also through Ukraine's diplomatic missions abroad, which serve as direct platforms for cultural, educational, and image-building initiatives in the international arena. Presidential Decree No. 142 of Ukraine (2006) approved the regulations on cultural and information centers at Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad. Their tasks include developing international cultural and educational cooperation, disseminating information about Ukraine and its culture, familiarizing foreign citizens with the country's history and cultural heritage, promoting the study of the Ukrainian language, supporting Ukrainians abroad, and promoting the state's tourism potential [10]. In accordance with the decree, a network of cultural and information centers was established at 31 Ukrainian diplomatic missions; however, many of them exist *de jure* but do not function *de facto*, or operate only to a limited extent due to a lack of resources.

At the same time, state institutions play a significant role in implementing cultural initiatives abroad, primarily the Ukrainian Institute and state foundations, which coordinate and implement international cultural, educational, and image-building projects. Thus, during 2018–2021 the activities of the Ukrainian Institute covered 28 countries, including Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Sweden, the Baltic states, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Serbia, the United States, Canada, Turkey, Israel, Iran, Iraq, India, China, and Japan [9; 54]. The Institute's statute provides for the establishment of foreign branches or representative offices, enabling it to strengthen its presence and implement cultural projects in different countries. The Strategy for 2020–2024 defined several models for the functioning of such representations: branches operating under the host country's legislation, non-profit organizations registered abroad, employees of Ukrainian diplomatic missions performing the functions of Institute managers, and residents of the host country involved in program activities. In priority countries, it is proposed to apply the models of branches or registered organizations, whereas in important countries, the models involving diplomatic staff or residents are considered more appropriate [21; 31–32]. This approach allows the Institute to plan its activities effectively, ensure stable funding, and adapt its organizational structure to the needs of different countries. The Ukrainian Institute organizes cultural events, exhibitions, lectures, film screenings, and artistic residencies in various countries worldwide. Its activities aim to shape a positive image of Ukraine, promote contemporary Ukrainian art, and expand international cultural ties [7; 36]. Quite often, the Ukrainian Institute operates in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. A notable example of such cooperation was the cultural season «Ukrainian Spring» in France in 2022–2023. The project included a range of events aimed at presenting the contemporary Ukrainian cultural environment to a French audience: public lectures and discussions, film screenings, concerts, artistic performances, literary readings, and other formats of offline and online communication. The implementation of this cultural season became an important instrument for disseminating knowledge of Ukrainian history and culture among French intellectual and artistic circles. Through the involvement of international partners and the broad presentation of Ukrainian cultural production, the initiative contributed to the formation of a more objective perception of Ukraine and strengthened its cultural presence in the European public sphere [13; 64–65]. In the context of Russian aggression and the large-scale information war, such cultural projects acquire particular significance, as they serve as instruments for countering propagandistic narratives and for affirming Ukrainian cultural subjectivity in the international arena.

Alongside state institutions, civic initiatives, professional communities, and volunteer organizations play an important role in the development of Ukraine's cultural diplomacy. Their activities are often characterized by greater flexibility, responsiveness, and the ability to react to current cultural and social challenges. Through informal networks of cooperation, international partnerships, and the active participation of the Ukrainian diaspora, these initiatives promote Ukrainian culture, art, literature, and historical memory worldwide. Among the non-governmental organizations actively working in the field of cultural diplomacy, particular attention should be paid to the Ukraine Crisis Media Center, which implements international informational and cultural projects and communication campaigns aimed at shaping a positive image of Ukraine abroad. In particular, the center launched the international cultural and informational project «Ukraine World», which, through public discussions, analytical materials, and English-language podcasts, promotes Ukrainian history, culture, and contemporary social processes to foreign audiences [20]. An important role is also played by PEN Ukraine, which brings together Ukrainian writers and intellectuals and actively represents Ukrainian literature at international festivals and forums. One example of such activities was the campaign «Voices of Ukraine», within which Ukrainian authors participated in public readings, discussions, and literary events in European cities, drawing the international community's attention to Ukrainian culture and the experience of war [19]. An important platform for

international cultural cooperation is the IZOLYATSIA Platform for Cultural Initiatives, which organizes artistic residencies, exhibitions, and educational programs involving Ukrainian and international artists. The network of non-governmental institutions engaged in cultural diplomacy also includes the House of Europe, which supports cultural exchanges between Ukraine and the countries of the European Union, as well as the Goethe-Institut Ukraine and other partner platforms that facilitate the implementation of joint cultural projects and professional exchanges. After the beginning of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022, the role of volunteer cultural initiatives increased significantly. Ukrainian artists, curators, musicians, and civic activists organize charity concerts, exhibitions, lectures, and cultural events abroad, combining the cultural presentation of Ukraine with informational support and fundraising for humanitarian and defense needs. In this way, civil society becomes an important actor in cultural diplomacy, complementing state institutions and expanding Ukraine's international cultural presence.

One of the key aspects of cultural diplomacy is communicating the Ukrainian narrative about the war to international audiences and countering Russian disinformation and propaganda. Through cultural projects, art exhibitions, film screenings, theatrical performances, literary presentations, and public discussions, Ukraine can tell the world about its experience of war, the destruction of cultural heritage, and the struggle for independence. A notable example is the numerous exhibition projects of Ukrainian art in European museums and galleries since 2022, which reflect on the war and Ukrainian cultural identity. In particular, Ukrainian artists participated in the Venice Biennale, one of the most prestigious global forums of contemporary art. During the wartime period, the Ukrainian pavilion attracted significant attention from international audiences, as the presented artistic projects were directly related to themes of war, loss, resistance, and rethinking identity [11]. Such exhibition initiatives enable the integration of the Ukrainian cultural experience into global artistic discourse while simultaneously drawing the international community's attention to the events of the war.

An important element of this communication is also the presentation of Ukrainian cinema at international festivals. One of the most prominent examples of presenting Ukrainian film on the international stage during the war is the documentary «20 Days in Mariupol» directed by Mstyslav Chernov [18]. Journalists from the Associated Press produced the film, which depicts the first weeks of the siege of Mariupol by Russian forces in 2022. It is based on real video footage recorded during the presence of an international journalist team in the city, which became a symbol of both the tragedy and the heroism of Ukrainian resistance. The film serves an important role in cultural diplomacy, conveying to international audiences the direct experience of the war, the destruction of the city, and the humanitarian catastrophe through documentary cinema. Thanks to its wide festival and media coverage, the film has become one of the key cultural testimonies of the Russian-Ukrainian war, contributing to international solidarity with Ukraine and countering Russian propaganda. A similarly significant symbolic effect in terms of cultural diplomacy was achieved through the Eurovision Song Contest. The Ukrainian band Kalush Orchestra's victory in 2022 with the song *Stefania* was not only a cultural event but also an important symbol of international support for Ukraine [16]. The performances of Ukrainian musicians and the extensive media coverage of the contest promoted Ukrainian culture while simultaneously drawing global attention to the war and the struggle of the Ukrainian people.

Equally important as a tool of cultural diplomacy has been Ukraine's presence at international book fairs. In particular, Ukrainian programs at the Frankfurt Book Fair attracted significant attention, with Ukrainian publishers, writers, and intellectuals presenting contemporary Ukrainian literature and sharing experiences of the war. Book presentations, public discussions, and meetings with authors contributed to the dissemination of knowledge about Ukrainian history, culture, and contemporary socio-political processes [5]. At the same time, the increase in translations of Ukrainian literature into foreign languages after 2022 has become an important element of Ukraine's cultural presence in the global intellectual space. Such initiatives help international audiences better understand the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war and provide an alternative to Russian propaganda narratives [1; 92–93].

Cultural initiatives bring together artists, scholars, civil society organizations, and cultural institutions from across the world, creating networks of support for Ukraine. For example, following the onset of the full-scale invasion, charity concerts, exhibitions, and festivals of Ukrainian culture were organized in many European cities to support Ukrainian artists and raise funds for humanitarian needs. International cultural platforms play a significant role in this process, providing Ukrainian artists with opportunities to present their work while also sharing the realities of the war. Such initiatives help form global cultural networks of solidarity and support for Ukraine, which is important for consolidating the international community around the Ukrainian cause [17; 172]. Through international information campaigns, Ukraine communicates to the global community the scale of destruction and losses of cultural heritage caused by Russian aggression.

These efforts contribute to the formation of international solidarity with Ukraine, the mobilization of expert assistance, financial resources, and partnership programs aimed at conserving, restoring, and rebuilding damaged monuments [12; 12]. In this way, cultural diplomacy becomes an important tool not only for informing the international public but also for mobilizing international support in the preservation and restoration of Ukraine's cultural heritage.

An important function of cultural diplomacy is the promotion of historical memory and the rethinking of Ukraine's place in the global cultural and political context. International scholarly conferences play a significant role in this regard by disseminating knowledge about Ukraine's history, culture, and contemporary political processes. Such events ensure that Ukrainian issues remain continuously present in the international intellectual and cultural space. Through cultural projects, museum exhibitions, artistic initiatives, and public discussions, the historical experience of Ukraine, particularly its colonial past and long-standing struggle for statehood, is reflected upon and interpreted. In this context, cultural diplomacy helps to reconsider traditional perceptions of Eastern Europe, where the Russian cultural narrative has long been dominant [3; 1060]. Presenting Ukrainian culture as an independent phenomenon in the global cultural arena helps to shape a new understanding of Ukraine as a significant actor in European history and culture.

Conclusions. Ukraine's cultural diplomacy in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war has become an important instrument of international communication, combining the functions of public diplomacy, strategic communications, and «soft power». Its significance has grown substantially amid the need to convey reliable information about the war to the international community, counter Russian disinformation, and shape a positive image of Ukraine in the global public sphere. Cultural practices such as art exhibitions, film screenings, literary presentations, and participation in international festivals and cultural forums have become effective channels for representing the Ukrainian experience of war, fostering an emotional and value-based understanding of Ukraine's struggle for freedom and independence. Research shows that Ukraine's cultural diplomacy is grounded in the interaction between state institutions and civil society. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, diplomatic missions, and state cultural institutions, particularly the Ukrainian Institute, play a key role in coordinating international cultural initiatives. At the same time, civil society organizations, professional communities, and volunteer initiatives complement state policy in this area, providing flexibility, rapid responses to current events, and expanding networks of international cultural cooperation. In wartime conditions, cultural diplomacy performs not only a representative function but also communicative, mobilizing, and value-integrating roles. It contributes to international solidarity with Ukraine, strengthens its cultural presence globally, and reinforces Ukraine's status as an independent actor in the European and global cultural spaces. The further development of cultural diplomacy requires strengthened institutional support, expanded international partnerships, and active engagement of civil society, which will enable Ukraine to continue to use its cultural resources effectively in international communication and in countering the informational challenges posed by the war.

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UDC 327:008:316.7(477)

КУЛЬТУРНА ДИПЛОМАТІЯ УКРАЇНИ В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ МОБІЛІЗАЦІЇ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ ПІДТРИМКИ

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Метою дослідження є аналіз основних інституційних механізмів, форм і практик культурної репрезентації українського досвіду війни у світовому публічному просторі, а також визначення ролі державних і недержавних акторів у реалізації культурно-дипломатичних ініціатив. Методологічну основу дослідження становлять загальнонаукові та спеціальні методи. Зокрема, застосовано метод аналізу та синтезу для узагальнення нормативно-правових документів і наукових підходів до розуміння культурної дипломатії; історико-порівняльний метод для зіставлення практик культурної дипломатії України до та під час повномасштабної війни; інституційний аналіз для дослідження діяльності державних органів і культурних інституцій; а також контент-аналіз культурних і медійних проєктів, спрямованих на міжнародну аудиторію. У результаті дослідження встановлено, що в умовах війни культурна дипломатія України виконує комплекс взаємопов'язаних функцій: комунікативну, репрезентативну, мобілізаційну та ціннісно-інтеграційну. Визначено, що ключову роль у реалізації культурно-дипломатичної політики відіграють Міністерство закордонних справ України, дипломатичні представництва та державні культурні інституції, які координують міжнародні культурні проєкти та забезпечують представлення української культури за кордоном. Показано, що важливим доповненням державної політики є діяльність громадських організацій, професійних спільнот і волонтерських ініціатив, які активно долучаються до реалізації культурних та інформаційних проєктів на міжнародному рівні. Обґрунтовано, що культурна дипломатія сприяє інтеграції українського досвіду війни у глобальний культурний дискурс, формуванню міжнародної солідарності з Україною та утвердженню її як самостійного суб'єкта європейського культурного простору.

Ключові слова: культурна дипломатія; публічна дипломатія; міжнародна комунікація; російсько-українська війна; культурна репрезентація; міжнародні культурні проєкти; інформаційна протидія пропаганді.

Стаття отримана 19.02.2026

Стаття прийнята 27.03.2026

Стаття опублікована 28.05.2026