

**DISCUSSION PAPERS IN DIPLOMACY**

***Public Diplomacy and EU  
Enlargement: the Case of Poland***

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## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND EU ENLARGEMENT: THE CASE OF POLAND**

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The process of accession to the European Union, which Poland became part of formally in 2004, forced the new member countries, in the previous as well as in the last enlargement processes, to reshape their image abroad while at the same time persuading their own societies of the desirability of the process and the correctness of its aims. The European campaigns (understanding both as cases of public diplomacy aimed at the foreign public as well as public affairs at home, with European integration as the framework) were to support the classic means of international relations and classic forms of diplomacy. As in the process of accession, the parliaments and also the whole societies, in the case of referendum, are involved, and it is public diplomacy which might contribute to a positive decision.

The notion of public diplomacy in our understanding is close to Fortner's 'civilized persuasion',<sup>1</sup> and means directing the flow of diplomatic information via media of mass communication and non-mediated channels to the foreign countries' mass audience in order to create a positive image of the country and its society and in consequence to make the achievement of international policy goals easier.<sup>2</sup> The term itself was not used widely in Central and Eastern Europe before 1989, and in fact it was the accession process that was conducive to the development of public diplomacy as a concept. The years 2000-2004,<sup>3</sup> as the time of negotiations and Poland as one of the most important accession countries of the 2004 enlargement, are the field of observation to suggest that public diplomacy became an important means of persuasion accompanying negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty.

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- 1) R. S. Fortner, *Public Diplomacy and International Politics: The Symbolic Constructs of Summits and International Radio News*, (London: Praeger, 1994) p. 29.
  - 2) This understanding of public diplomacy is based on the writings of H. Mowlana, *Global Information and World Communication*, (London: Sage, 1997) p. 8, and R. S. Fortner, *International Communication: History, Conflict and Control of the Global Metropolis*, (Belmont California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993) p. 6.
  - 3) The negotiations with Poland started in 1998, but entered the decisive phase in 2000-2002. In December 2002 the Accession Treaty was signed in Copenhagen. The last hours before signing were turned into a media event in Poland in order to gain the support of the Polish society for the government. Polish society voted through a referendum on the 7th and 8th of June 2003.

In this paper the main stress will be placed on the activities of government in the domain of public diplomacy. Nevertheless the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the campaigns was enormous. Many events would never have taken place without them. The role of the government must be seen in this context as coordinating and giving impetus to the series of activities undertaken.

In 2000 the first complex Polish public diplomacy campaign was launched in the countries of the EU. It consisted of two programs which covered the years 2000-2003 and were aimed in the first instance at opinion leaders and elites of the then EU member countries. The first step in the campaign was to identify the image of Poland as a country and Poles as a nation abroad with the aim of adjusting the strategy taking into account the needs and beliefs of the target countries. The surveys and content analysis of the press were carried out in selected countries of the EU - those most important for the process of negotiations, ratification of the Accession Treaty and for the future positioning of Poland in the EU. Thus, if the process of accession might be seen as a frame for a multilateral form of public diplomacy, in fact it was a bilateral form in the chosen countries.

According to the results of the surveys Poland was an unknown country with predominantly a negative image, especially in the press. The results of the surveys showed also the need for a campaign of 'branding' for Poland. The main stress was then put on providing information on Poland to build a rational basis for the shaping of the image.

Despite the fact that at the time in question the campaigns accompanying negotiations were running, the Polish mode of negotiations brought to the surface new tensions with old members as well as accession countries. The Polish way of negotiation was deeply rooted in the Realist approach to foreign policy and resulted in enormous disturbances in diplomatic communication. On the one hand there was a public diplomacy campaign running aimed at opinion leaders and all actors of the process of negotiations. On the other hand Poland did a lot to strengthen the image of a difficult partner, not ready for any compromise, especially after the Brussels Summit in 2003. Previous financial demands and poor handling of the historical legacy did not win many supporters for Poland either. The fields of agriculture and regional policy generated the most conflict during negotiations.

As a consequence the programs of public diplomacy that were running in 2000-2003 after the accession gained a new relevance and needed to be prolonged to reshape the image of Poland as a country incapable of reaching any compromise. At the time of the campaign important changes in the Polish attitude towards EU membership took place. In 2001 for the first time since 1989 anti-European parties won seats in the Polish parliament. Poland entered a period of populism in politics with its roots in the EU enlargement.

At the same time anti-European and populist parties took a nationalist stance in political campaigns. The European campaigns abroad were conducted by a weak government which gradually was losing the support of the voters. The dichotomy between foreign and domestic politics placed at risk a positive outcome of the European referendum. The main problem was to cross the threshold of a 50 per cent turnout.

International events, with transatlantic relations in the foreground, were the framework within which Polish efforts to find its new place in international politics and to build a new image took place. The country needed a new profile if the major aims of the transition to democracy after 1989 and NATO and EU membership were to be achieved, and the conduct of relations with neighboring states stabilised. Still, these events and public discussion on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 2005 brought evidence that a negative image of the country persists in relation to its role during the war. Simultaneously, the efforts to create 'brand Poland' have been continued.<sup>4</sup>

In 2000 the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs defined public diplomacy as all international efforts of the state directed at influencing public opinion in other countries. It should be stressed that because of some language specifics, documents published by the Polish Foreign Ministry use the terms 'promoting' and 'promotion' instead of 'public diplomacy'. In Polish, 'promotion' is related to marketing but has a wider meaning and puts the stress on creating a positive image of the country, as public diplomacy does. The main actor (communicator) of public diplomacy, according to the Foreign Ministry documents, was identified as the government of one country while the recipient was intended to be the society of another country. Thus public diplomacy is understood as a means of supplementing traditional government-to-government diplomacy. The main goal of Polish public diplomacy in the period was to create a positive image of the country and of the society, shaping a new, positive brand Poland. The first 'Framework Program for the Foreign Promotion of Poland's EU Accession Process' was accepted by the government in June 2000. The 'Framework Program' was scheduled for the years 2000-2002, as at the time of the decision the Polish government expected Poland to become an EU member state in 2002.<sup>5</sup>

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- 4) The words 'brand' and 'branding' are mainly used in the Polish language for promotion activities in the domain of the economy (products, exports, foreign investments). The major documents on Polish public diplomacy deploy the notion of 'promotion', 'promoting' and 'image' ('shaping the image', 'reshaping the image').
  - 5) The Polish title of the document is: Promocja członkostwa Polski w UE w 2000 r. Sprawozdanie z realizacji Programu Ramowego Promocji Zagranicznej Procesu Akcesji RP do UE. MSZ, Departament Dyplomacji Kulturalnej, Warszawa 2001

In 2002 a 'Program for the Promotion of Poland in the EU during Ratification of the Accession Treaty' was prepared.<sup>6</sup> Its main aim was to achieve the ratification of the Accession Treaty by the parliaments of the EU members, which was by no means a foregone conclusion. Some problems had been anticipated as was the case in the Dutch Parliament in Autumn 2002 and in the German Bundestag, where some MPs wanted to determine Polish membership of the EU by giving in to demands of German expellees, coming from the territories which the victorious allies had awarded to Poland at the end of WWII, which also had had an impact on voting in the case of the Czech Republic. The recipients of the 'Program' were parliaments and societies of the EU. Members of Parliaments became the main recipients in the year 2003 when the representative institutions were taking decisions on the ratification of the Accession Treaty.

In 2003 the parliaments of the EU countries decided on the accession. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs feared that some of these parliaments would choose the referendum as a means of taking the final decision. The promotion program from 2002 mentioned the dangers of the referenda in Ireland and in Austria. It was obvious for the Polish government that any public diplomacy campaign in the case of referendum in any 'old country' would be much more difficult than the campaigns if the decisions were to be taken by the parliaments. Nevertheless the program from 2002 was mainly aimed at parliaments and, as secondary recipient, at the public at large. The main institutions responsible for the implementation of the program in 2003 were Polish embassies abroad. It was their task to adjust the general strategy to local circumstances and demands.

Public diplomacy utilises both information and persuasion. In the Polish case the first aim is to inform the foreign public about Poland since the level of knowledge on the subject is very low. In some countries of the EU such as Germany and Austria the implementation of positive, persuasive, emotional messages would be difficult as the dominant attitude towards Poland is negative and based on anti-Polish stereotypes.

In the end, Polish public diplomacy campaigns since 2000 have been run by state institutions and NGOs, with a very low level of co-ordination between them. According to the documents of the Polish Foreign Ministry, Poles living abroad were important receivers and go-betweens in public

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(Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Cultural Promotion, Warsaw 2001).

6) See <http://www.msz.gov.pl>.

diplomacy.<sup>7</sup> Thus the Polish Diaspora was acknowledged as an important participant in public diplomacy campaigns, and could play a dual role.<sup>8</sup>

During the negotiations and the ratification of the Accession Treaty branding Poland anew became an important task of Polish foreign policy. The need to coordinate the different programs promoting Poland abroad was acknowledged. As a result of this the first coherent programs on shaping the image of Poland were developed and implemented. The interesting thing is that programs on public diplomacy which - according to Peter van Ham<sup>9</sup> - are rooted in constructivist notions of state identity have been developed in Poland by governments which have been traditionally Realist. What is more the Polish Realist approach during negotiations brought new tensions to the surface and resulted in a new image of Poland as a stubborn member of the European Community.

### **The image of Poland as a candidate country**

It must be said that brand Poland is not a coherent entity and should be seen as multi-dimensional. The incoherent image of Poland as a country and Poles as a society reflects the difficulties of the modernization process in Poland. On the one hand Poland is a country proud of its history and is therefore often focused more on the past than on the future. At the same moment it has enormous trouble with information reaching the public about the role it played during the Second World War, which results even today in some tensions in bilateral relations, especially with Germany and Russia. In August 2004 the sixtieth anniversary of the Warsaw uprising was commemorated, and in spite of an information campaign some European media informed their readers about the anniversary of the Ghetto uprising in Warsaw, which was celebrated in 2003. Although both uprisings had an impact on Polish history, only the first became a part of European history, whereas the second is essential for Polish mythology as well as an understanding of the Polish mentality (the uprising of 1944 cost the lives of two hundred thousand inhabitants of Warsaw and the total destruction of the capital city).

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7) See 'Information by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Fundamental Directions of the Polish Foreign Policy' (presented in Parliament in 2002, 2003, 2004), <http://www.msz.gov.pl>.

8) It must be seen as a form of 'Diaspora diplomacy' of the sort noted by Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy*, (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002) p. 59, available at <http://www.fpc.org.uk>.

9) Peter van Ham, 'Branding Territory: Inside the Wonderful Worlds of PR and IR Theory', *Millennium. Journal of International Studies*, 31, 2, 2002, pp. 249-69.

Similar problems relate to Polish anti-Semitism and a notion of 'Polish concentration camps' during the War, which fits the image of Poles as anti-Semites. Making reference to Nazi German concentration camps located in occupied Poland the international press still persists in labeling them as Polish. The problem again became a topic of discussion in Poland at the beginning of 2005 at the time of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp. Shortly before the commemorative events took place the international press reported widely on 'Polish concentration camps' and 'Polish gas chambers'.<sup>10</sup> Informing the foreign media and societies of Europe and the United States about the inaccuracy of defining Nazi concentration camps in Poland as 'Polish' became a part of the public diplomacy campaign for Poland announced in January 2005. Discussion on the problem still rages on. Some of the public relations specialists from outside Poland claim that no historical interpretation will be accepted by the international public, as it sticks to the terms 'Polish Death Camps' no matter how hard Poland may try to draw a distinction between the two. Instead, as part of a wider strategy, they suggest working on disseminating information about Poland's heritage and contemporary contributions to art, music, movies, literature, the theater and so on.<sup>11</sup>

Poland also trailed behind in the competition to be named the 'hero' of the anti-communist velvet revolution after 1989, when events in Prague and in Berlin rather than in Warsaw took centre stage. The Polish campaigns still do not bring the message that in many fields the transformation brought about very positive developments for the country. What is more, the country cannot decide whether to put stress on its historical past or on modernity. The new brand should also bring a solution to the essential question of whether Poland wants to be seen as a big country (and regional power in Central Europe) or a small one (and a permanent victim of history and recipient of subsidies). In comparison to the other accession countries, taking into account the territory and number of citizens, Poland is an important accession country. The 'size' of Poland has caused problems in co-operation with the Visegrad Group. But as regards its political, economic and cultural potential Poland cannot be treated as an influential player, especially if compared with two neighbors - Germany and Russia. Thus Poland is not ready to accept only a marginal role in the EU or in international policy-making more widely.

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10) See details on the web site of one of the biggest Polish opinion leading dailies: <http://www.rzeczpospolita.pl>.

11) See details on the web site <http://www.proto.pl>: 'Polish death camps and the image of the country - the image from abroad'.

What should not be overlooked is that the period which coincided with the Polish negotiations was accompanied by international events which had an enormous impact on the situation in the world and also on the position of Poland as a candidate country. Germany and France are the most important Polish partners in the EU with whom relations have suffered the most in recent years. Germany must be seen as the critical target for Polish public diplomacy. But the pro-American stance of Polish foreign policy and the role Poland has played in Iraq proved to be a bone of contention during the EU enlargement process. Poland's close relationship with the US raised hackles in France at first, and between 2002-2003 it also adversely affected Poland's relationship with Germany. The Polish mission in Iraq is a good example of how Poland attempted to gain a new position in international politics while, at the same time, re-branding itself. In May 2003 almost fifty per cent of Poles believed that Polish participation in the Iraq peacekeeping mission would improve Poland's image abroad.<sup>12</sup> These expectations, from today's perspective, appear to have misfired and this attempt of re-positioning the country has turned into a failure.

The re-branding of Poland entails defining new goals in Polish foreign policy. As noted above, in a relatively short time Poland succeeded in achieving targets defined at the beginning of the 1990s: regaining sovereignty, creating good relations with neighbours, developing regional alliances and becoming a NATO and EU member. This should be seen as a success and should be included in the new image of Poland as a country which achieved it in only fifteen years.

Focusing on the past in Poland goes hand in hand with a strong stress put on national identity and religion. The Polish notion of nationality is deeply rooted in ethnicity and culture which in international politics results in slogans relating to the defense of Polish national identity. It should not be overlooked with regard to creating an image of Poland in the 'old countries' of the EU that Polish society is one of the most traditional and conservative in the EU. In some countries of the EU Polish Catholicism dominates other factors important for the image of the country (as in Germany, where 'Pole' is 'Kathole').

According to the European Social Survey, carried out in Poland by the Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw, 70.3 per cent of Poles responded 'yes' to the question whether cultivating tradition is a good solution for a country. More people answered 'yes' only in Greece (83.4 per cent) while Portugal had the same result as Poland. On the opposite end of the scale was Switzerland

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12) CBOS, 'Will military presence in Iraq bring more benefit or harm for Poland?', May 2003, <http://www.cbos.pl>.



with 35.2 per cent, Sweden with 36.5 per cent and Ireland with 37.3 per cent. As in the process of integration Poles often compare themselves with Irish people, and the difference the two Catholic countries achieved is remarkable. According to the author of the survey conducted in Poland, sociologist Henryk Domański, tradition in Poland is identified with Roman Catholicism. Only 21 per cent of Poles share the opinion that it is better for the country if it is inhabited by people of different religions. Only Greeks are more conservative on this question.<sup>13</sup>

### **Audits on how Poland and Poles are seen abroad**

The formation of the Polish public diplomacy campaign during the negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty was preceded by a series of surveys conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs from Warsaw in selected countries of the EU. The survey consisted of two parts: the first one was based on a representative sample of Western European societies; the second was a content analysis of Western press coverage on Poland. The surveys were conducted in the years 1998-2001 in Austria, Spain, Sweden, France, Great Britain and Germany. The questionnaire consisted of questions relating to the image of Poland, to the image of Poles as a community and as individuals. The second part of the research consisted of the content analysis of the press, and was conducted between 2000-2001. Here we will concentrate only on conclusions arising from the surveys.

At the beginning of the negotiations Poland enjoyed considerable support from the membership of the EU. Compared with other candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe only Hungary gained more support. Nevertheless neither of the countries reached 50 per cent approval, which was seen as a problem in the case of a referendum.

*Table 1: Percentage in favour of potential candidate countries (applies to all 'old member' states' societies) in 1999*

Norway	71	Estonia	37
Switzerland	70	Latvia	37
Malta	49	Lithuania	36
Hungary	47	Bulgaria	36
Poland	44	Rumania	34
Cyprus	43	Slovenia	34
Czech Republic	42	Turkey	30
Slovakia	37		

Source: Eurobarometer, 52, 2000,  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/)

13) Henryk Domański, 'Bariery partykularyzmu', *Krytyka Polityczna*, 3, 2004, pp. 90-92.

Among the countries where the surveys had been conducted France, Spain and Germany had the highest numbers of respondents opposing Polish membership.

*Table 2: Support for Polish membership of the EU (per cent)*

	2000		2001	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Austria	40	28	45	29
France	23	60	33	54
Germany	34	45	36	48
Great Britain	69	16	75	15
Spain	36	46	42	44
Sweden	52	18	53	19

In favour of new EU members. Eurobarometer Public opinion analysis.  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/cf/nationoutput\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/cf/nationoutput_en.cfm)

More detailed surveys show that a negative attitude to Polish membership was correlated with little or no knowledge about Poland and with the fact that the majority of respondents had never been to Poland. For most respondents attitudes towards Poland are based on second hand experience, on media coverage and information gained in school and in informal groups. The recipients were to be reached first of all with basic information. It was expected that members of parliaments would be more familiar with the country and would have more explicit opinions about Poland. In some parliaments, such as the German Bundestag, working groups exist with the aim of supporting direct contacts between parliaments and of discussing controversial issues before they turn into conflicts. But as not all parties have contacts abroad even good working groups might disappear or neglect co-operation. This was the case between Poland and Germany where after the Polish election of 2001 the group of members of the Polish parliament interested in contact with German MPs was rather small and parliament was not able to prevent stagnation in Polish-German relations. What is more, at a time of important international events there were no attempts to consult with German MPs over the most important decisions.

This points to the fact that if public diplomacy is aimed at members of parliaments abroad it is not always possible to use the established contacts between the home parliament and parliaments abroad. In the case of Poland during the negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty good contacts between parliaments were essential but - even if this hypothesis is based only on fragmentary data - were a vulnerable part of the Polish public diplomacy program. The controversial part of the campaign with MPs as a target group

was that any action was to be taken by Polish Embassies abroad, none of which had enough financial resources and staff at their disposal.

According to the results of the surveys the characteristics that make the citizens of featured countries think of Poland are poverty and religiosity. Further associations are connected with the Second World War, concentration camps, the Holocaust and, in the post-war period, Solidarity and the transformation of the year 1989. Very few respondents were conscious of high economic growth in Poland, which can be seen as a surprise especially with regard to Germans who frequently go shopping in the border region. The anti-Polish stereotypes in this case (the negative stereotype of the 'polnische Wirtschaft') did not allow the realisation of the fact that the Polish economy grew faster than its German counterpart in the 1990s (and continues to do so). The doubts about whether Poland is a market economy are striking, as is the lack of confidence in Poland as a parliamentary democracy. It must be stressed in this context that the background for Polish public diplomacy is to a large extent dictated by the needs of the Polish economy, especially of exports. Poland lacks a product that would be immediately and easily identified with the country and needs public diplomacy to change predominating views about the allegedly low quality of Polish products. Poland has been trying to build an image of an 'emerging economy' in Central Europe ('flying Eagle of Europe' and the 'Tiger of Europe', see <http://www.poland.gov.pl>). At the current stage of affairs in many countries of the EU the country-of-origin effect is negative for Polish products.

What the surveys illustrate is that for an average European, even in neighbouring Germany, Poland remains something of a mystery. One of the essential problems for Polish public diplomacy in this context is to arouse interest in the country.

The image of a Pole as a person is more positive than the image of Poland as a country. Nevertheless Germans and Austrians put the stress on the 'different mentality' of Poles. Most Western Europeans share the opinion that Poles are religious and conservative. These features were confirmed by the sociological surveys mentioned above. Also Poles themselves define their nationality in relation to culture and especially to religion. At the same time Poles are seen as modern and well educated, laborious, disciplined and friendly.<sup>14</sup>

The press coverage of Poland is more multi-dimensional but in all countries in question rather fragmentary. Polish agriculture dominated in the

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14) Details from the surveys can be seen in Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (ed.), *Obraz Polski i Polaków w Europie*, (The Image of Poland and Poles Abroad), Instytut Spraw Publicznych (Institute of Public Affairs), Warszawa 2003, p. 84ff.

years 2000-2001 during coverage of Polish preparations to join the EU. The Polish style of negotiation was seen as arrogant and not responding to the real achievements of Poland. The image of Poland in the press of 'old member' countries was of a poor country with an economy far below the EU level. The picture most representative of this rather negative coverage of the Polish economy is that of a horse and cart, and has been published many times, especially in Germany, even though it illustrates a disappearing part of Polish agriculture. The cart-horse picture is one which sticks in the case of Poland. The press coverage also reflects the very difficult problem of informing journalists and editors about Poland. With few exceptions they have little knowledge about Poland and their coverage is stereotypical - presenting images and stories that sell well. It is worth noting that the European press mistakenly forecast Polish membership of the EU in 2005 or even 2006. European press comments also focused on the negative Polish fixation on the past. This partly explains the 'difference in mentality' signaled by Germans and Austrians in the surveys.

### **The institutional background of public diplomacy**

Starting at the beginning of the 1990s the need for a coherent program for shaping the image of Poland internationally had become obvious to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main institutions dealing with the problem are state and non-governmental institutions. As noted above there is still no coordination of their activities. The second problem lies in coordinating the efforts in the fields of politics, culture and economy.

Currently Polish public diplomacy efforts are coordinated by three Ministries:

- *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, responsible for political promotion, cooperation in the field of culture and science and for monitoring of the Polish image abroad, working with PR agencies and embassies, consulates and Polish Institutes abroad. Cooperates with Adam Mickiewicz Institutes.
- *Ministry of Culture*, which coordinates international cultural exchange,<sup>15</sup> projects in the field of culture, conducted within the frame of larger undertakings, coordinating the work of Adam Mickiewicz Institutes.

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15) Cultural diplomacy forms an important part of Polish public diplomacy, especially with regard to 'Polish years' or 'Polish seasons' abroad. One may question whether the target group can be reached through cultural diplomacy, especially by the proliferation of high culture essential for shaping the new positive 'brand Poland'.

- *Ministry of Economy*, which promotes exports, foreign investments and tourism. Works with commercial departments of embassies and consulates. Coordinates work of the Polish Tourism Organisation and the Polish Centers of Tourism Information abroad.

Among other ministries the Ministry for Education is responsible for supporting the Polish language abroad, and the Ministry of Science for the field of science, in cooperation with the Polish Academy of Science institutions abroad.<sup>16</sup> Other important institutions are the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency, the aim of which is to increase the inflow of foreign direct investment into Poland.

In 2004 a new state institution, the Council for Promotion of Poland was established. The Council is an advisory institution to the Polish Prime Minister. It consists of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Secretaries from the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Culture, Education, Science, Defense, Treasury and from the Committee of European Integration. The main aim of the Council is to prepare programs building brand Poland and coordination of the projects with non-governmental organizations. As the Council was established in 2004 it did not have any impact on the negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty but it responded to the beliefs that Poland needs more co-ordination of public diplomacy efforts. All Ministries involved in public diplomacy are now subordinated in this field to the Council, and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It must be stressed that because of the character of ratification of the Accession Treaty the main responsibility was placed on Polish Embassies in the 'old member countries' whose task was to adjust the programs mentioned above to local needs. At the beginning of the program in 2000 the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the establishment of 'promotion groups' in Polish embassies in the old member countries. Special stress was placed on such a group in Brussels. Every embassy was to adjust the program to the level of support for Polish membership of the EU in the country, the political, social and economic consequences of the enlargement for the country in question and the role of the country in the EU. Embassies also cooperated with local authorities and institutions on campaigns promoting enlargement conducted by representatives of foreign countries. In preparing larger events such as 'Polish years' embassies usually hired local PR agencies. Experience shows that only local PR agencies can persuade recipients effectively and translate from the Polish mentality into the one of the target group in the given country.

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16) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Promotion, at <http://www.msz.gov.pl>.

## Strategy

Since 1989 Poland has not introduced any program of public diplomacy larger than the 'Framework Program'. The two main aims of the program also defined the target groups. The first were the societies at large in the old member countries - this group was to be won over so that they would support and accept Polish membership of the EU and, in the case of referendum, vote for enlargement. The second group were the opinion leaders and functionaries of European institutions in the old member countries. This group was decisive for the ratification of the Accession Treaty and was to be reached by lobbying and promotion.<sup>17</sup> Achieving the aims of the program was supposed to bring with it a reduction of anti-Polish stereotypes in the EU.

The recipients of the programs were divided into four target groups:

1. Participants of negotiation procedures and the consequences of the ratification process (if the referendum was expected it might have meant the whole society). The main members of the group were politicians, advisors, consulting institutions and groups, committees supporting politicians, and political organizations. This latter group included members of parliaments.

Some of the members of that group might have not be interested in additional information on Poland as they found it not relevant for their narrow area of specialisation. Thus, the material addressed at this group contained the following basic elements:

- the main message that Poland is a country well prepared to take over the duties arising from EU membership
- lists of practical benefits for a given member-country and the EU as a whole, resulting from Poland's membership (among others, Poland as a major factor of stability and development in Europe)
- suggestions on economic benefits stemming from Poland's EU-membership (Poland as a new, trustworthy trading partner)
- the concept of Poland as a country successfully co-operating with EU structures. The purpose was to demonstrate that co-operation would not disrupt the functioning of the EU institutions, that partner-like co-operation existed at the regional level, joint projects had already been financed and so on.<sup>18</sup>

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17) The Framework Program

18) The Framework Program

2. Opinion leaders. Journalists, commentators, employees of important institutions in the fields of culture, science and the arts, academic staff, universities and schools, future leaders, influential regional, national, international, and supranational officials, interest and pressure groups, and leaders of social organizations important for the given country. In some countries also religious groups were taken into account.

With regard to these groups, the stress was put on the following facts:

- Poland as a state fulfilling the political and economic Copenhagen criteria for EU membership
- Poland as a country eager to share its experience in ‘transformation and integration know-how’ (Baltic States, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and even Russia)
- Poland as a country present and active in European political structures, military structures and world-wide organisations.<sup>19</sup>

3. The Mass public.

On the one hand Poland could not have had any direct and truly effective impact on the mass public in the EU states, but on the other hand the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs saw an opportunity to present Poland to the EU public as an attractive country. This target group was to be reached by reforming the whole system of promoting Poland (not only with European integration in the background) so that efforts to promote products, tourism and culture would respond to the guidelines of the Framework Program.

4. The fourth ‘invisible’ recipient was outside the ‘old member’ group and might be defined as opinion leaders in the United States of America capable of having an impact on the situation in Europe.

The main stress of the campaign was on the first two groups because of their importance for the negotiation and ratification process and because of the relatively low budget of the campaign. The content of the campaign in all domains - political, economic and cultural was aimed at better educated recipients whose knowledge of Poland was more advanced than it might be in the case of an average citizen.

The main means of the campaign were:

- study trips for politicians (especially for members of parliaments),
- journalists, functionaries, and opinion leaders
- conferences, seminars, lectures and other events about European integration,

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19) The Framework Program

- media events and co-operation with editors and journalists
- economic promotion, regional and sectoral presentations, trade missions, and participation in fairs and exhibitions.<sup>20</sup>

In some cases, the foundation of the campaign was provided by a 'Polish Year' - a series of cultural events coordinated by the embassy in the given country. The main institutions responsible for these events were the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute.

According to the press coverage, the 'Polish Year' in Austria was a success although the main message consisted of 'high culture' and was not aimed at the mass public. Such events have been repeated since the beginning of the new century. A very good example is that of Sweden, where the campaign was launched at the time of the Swedish presidency of the EU and became a good start for further programs accompanying negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty.

Although the system of visual identification of Poland is not the main issue of this paper it should be stressed that 'Polish Years' campaigns brought a lot to the shape of Poland's visual identity. Until now all 'Polish Years' used different logos but in 2002 a decision was taken on a Polish symbol which is a flying kite in Polish national colors, resembling the symbol of the Polish Air Force and including the name of Poland - Polska, where 'k' makes a person flying the kite.<sup>21</sup> The logo is intended to symbolize a modern, dynamic and open society whilst simultaneously indicating respect for national values and heritage. Thus, the flying kite might be seen as a result of efforts to combine Polish affinity for its historical past with the positive results of political and economic transformation. A second official Polish logo is used in the field of tourism.

Since February 2004 a group of specialists under the leadership of Wally Olins has worked to create a coherent campaign promoting the image of Poland. The central motto of the campaign is 'Creative Tension'. It reflects a similar ambiguity to the first logo discussed above. According to Olins 'Poland is part of the West and also understands the East; Polish people are passionate and idealistic and also practical and resourceful; the Polish character is ambitious and also down to earth.'<sup>22</sup> Since creating an image for a

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20) The Framework Program

21) The logo was designed by Brand Nature Access - the agency which is a part of the Corporate Profiles DDB Group from London.

22) W. Olins, 'A Brand for Poland: The Program, the Context, the Brand and the Benefits', A paper presented in Warsaw, 6 December 2004.



country takes 10 to 20 years, it is likely that we will witness a process similar to those undertaken by both Ireland and Spain.<sup>23</sup>

The campaigns which have been launched since 2000 concentrated on specific issues important for the given country. As the background was set by the process of European integration, study trips to Poland for French officials and journalists informed them about Polish agriculture while in the case of Germany and Austria the main issue was the labour market, migration and the new Eastern border of the EU. In Sweden the discussion was deliberately shaped so as to highlight Polish efforts to tackle environmental pollution.

*Table 3: 'Polish Years' and other important events in the countries of the EU: 2000-2004*

Year	Country	Event	Main slogan
2000	Germany	Frankfurt International Book Fair (Poland as the honorary guest)	©Poland
	Germany	Expo 2000 Hanover	
2001	Belgium (also Netherlands, France and Luxemburg)	Europalia 2001	Europalia 2001 - Polska
2002	Spain (Spanish Presidency of the EU)	Polish Year	
2003	Sweden (Swedish Presidency of the EU)	Polish Year	Polen.nu
2002-2003	Austria	Polish Year	Polnisches Jahr in Oesterreich
2004	France	Polish Culture Season (Saison culturelle polonaise)	New Poland

Information gathered at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs by M. Ryniejska-Kiełdanowicz and on <http://www.msz.gov.pl>.

23) 'Economic Bulletin', 5 (603), 2004, at <http://www.msz.gov.pl>.

Simultaneously the Polish Ministry of Economics led programs on promoting the Polish economy and attracting foreign investments to Poland. As noted above the lack of a Polish product that would be in a positive way correlated with Poland makes the promotion of the country very difficult. The image of the Polish economy abroad is dominated by negative stereotypes of Polish agriculture, pictures of the most polluted areas in Europe and a lack of infrastructure needed for further development. These factors had a negative impact on opinion leaders during the negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty. To change this situation the Foundation for the Promotion of Poland-Institute of Polish Brand created a National Marketing Program in 2002. Promoting tourism in Poland had a smaller impact on the negotiation and ratification of the Accession Treaty and as such will not be discussed here.

### **Results - first attempts to evaluate**

According to the evaluation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the first program on the promotion of Poland has already had benefits by contributing to growing support for Polish membership of the EU.

In Sweden in 2003 a series of events framed within the 'Polish Year' took place. The Polish Embassy adopted a general program concentrated on two specific aims. The first aim was to jog the memories of Swedes of their involvement in the transformation of Poland in 1989. Efforts were targeted at Swedish elites, who were presented with the changes which had taken place in Poland over the intervening 15 years. The second aim was to present Poland as a country of regions, due to the belief that it would bring Poland closer to the average citizen. In pursuit of this aim the Polish Embassy in Stockholm made use of the experiences of some Polish provinces (voivodships), which were highly skilled in self-promotion. As the result of the efforts undertaken in 2003, in 2004 a parliamentary group for co-operation with Poland was established in the Swedish Riksdag (parliament). The group consists of 57 members of parliament representing almost all regions of Sweden and according to the Polish Embassy is one of the biggest in the Riksdag. The group was established on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and on April 28<sup>th</sup> the Riksdag rejected a government proposal limiting access to the Swedish labor market for accession countries. The Polish ambassador in Stockholm largely credited this vote to the efforts of Polish public diplomacy aimed at the members of Swedish parliament.<sup>24</sup>

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24) Marek Prawda, 'Pochwalmy się zmianami', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 August 2004.

In all the campaigns the number of publications about Poland reached the expected level or was even above it (Spain). Also, findings published by the Institute of Tourism on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003 show that in 2002 the number of Spanish tourists visiting Poland rose compared to the same period of 2001. This can be seen as a tangible effect of the Polish Year in Spain.<sup>25</sup>

The coverage of the events is one of the methods of evaluating the results of PR campaigns but with regard to public diplomacy it does not give a full insight into the changes that were supposed to take place. As noted above reshaping the image of a country takes several decades, and therefore the efforts taken in the years 2000-2004 must be seen as a very important but only initial part of the program. Nevertheless the most important aims that were achieved were as follows:

- decisions on Polish membership of the EU were taken
- public diplomacy was acknowledged as an important means of supporting the traditional form of diplomacy conducted both by government and non-governmental organizations in Poland
- programs of public diplomacy and public affairs campaigns in Poland were given new impetus
- the decision on logos for Poland was taken
- the Council of Promoting Poland abroad was established

The results of a public diplomacy campaign might never be completely known or anticipated since they also depend on intangible factors such as the attitude of communicators and recipients, or unexpected international events. But the systematic implementation of ideas developed in the course of public diplomacy campaigns in Poland has had good results thus far. There are, of course, numerous questions and doubts which have come to the fore during the first stage of the process. The essential issue for Poland (and the problem is familiar also to other European countries) is how to make an effective combination out of contradictory factors such as - internally - a traditional and conservative society, and on the other hand - externally - close links to the US, with the stress put on European integration. Resolving these contradictions might contribute a great deal both to positioning Poland anew in the international community and re-branding the country.

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25) Jarosław Szczepankiewicz, Marek Szczepanowski, 'Promoting Poland: Pre-accession Challenges', *The Yearbook of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2003.

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