

TÜRKIYE'S PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS LITHUANIA AND LITHUANIAN TATARS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

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Abstract. In this study, the perspective of the Republic of Türkiye towards Lithuania and the Lithuanian Tatars has been examined within the framework of cultural diplomacy. The relations established within the cultural framework between the citizens of both countries contribute positively to the 92-year diplomatic relations of the two countries. Turkish Embassy in Vilnius in particular, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Yunus Emre Institute, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), universities, municipalities and other public institutions, companies, artists, academics, and students continue to contribute to the diplomatic relations between the two countries in the field of cultural diplomacy.

In the study, it has been concluded that the historical and cultural bond between Türkiye and Lithuania continues to increase within the framework of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Cultural diplomacy, Türkiye, Lithuania, Lithuanian Tatars.

TURKIJOS POŽIŪRIS Į LIETUVĄ IR LIETUVOS TOTORIUS KULTŪRINĖS DIPLOMATIJOS SRITYJE

Santrauka. Šiame tyrime nagrinėjama Turkijos Respublikos laikysena Lietuvos ir Lietuvos totorių atžvilgiu kultūrinės diplomatijos srityje. Abipusiai diplomatiniai abiejų šalių santykiai kultūros srityje užmezgti prieš 92 metus. Turkijos Respublikos ambasada Lietuvos Respublikoje, Nacionalinė švietimo ministerija, Kultūros ir turizmo ministerija, Turkijos bendradarbiavimo ir koordinavimo agentūra (turk. k. trumpinys – TIKA), Yunus Emre institutas, Užsienyje gyvenančių turkų ir giminingų bendruomenių valdyba (turk. k. santrumpa – YTB), universitetai, savivaldybės ir kitos viešosios institucijos, įmonės, menininkai, akademikai ir studentai ir toliau prisideda prie diplomatinių dviejų šalių santykių kultūros srityje plėtojimo ir puoselėjimo.

Tyrime daroma išvada, kad istorinis ir kultūrinis Turkijos ir Lietuvos ryšys viešosios diplomatijos ir kultūrinės diplomatijos srityje toliau stiprėja.

Raktiniai žodžiai: kultūrinė diplomatija, Turkija, Lietuva, Lietuvos totoriai.

Introduction

The concept of diplomacy can be defined as the process of conducting regular or complex relations between states through representatives at home or abroad. A number of methods, techniques and strategies are used in this reconciliation process¹. This process can be divided into two periods, the old period diplomacy and the new period diplomacy. The diplomacy way carried out in the period from Ancient Greece to the French Revolution can be described as the diplomacy of the old period. The negotiations and reconciliation carried out at the Congress of Vienna, which was convened in 1815 to redefine the borders and balance of power in Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, are among the first examples of the new era diplomacy.

Diplomacy technique has undergone a new transformation after World War II. The fact that international organizations, especially the United Nations (UN), began to influence and direct international relations has been effective in this change². The diplomacy style has undergone a new transformation as a result of the changing perspectives of Europe, Central Asia and world politics with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall. This transformation continued with the transfer of interstate relations to digital channels, and the concepts of Digital Diplomacy, e-Diplomacy or Diplomacy 2.0 have emerged.

The process has also been called Diplomacy 3.0, with the active use of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other social media tools in diplomacy³. The role of technology companies in diplomacy has increased recently. In fact, Denmark opened an embassy in Silicon Valley in 2017⁴.

Studies on diplomacy in the last century have revealed new concepts with the transformation and expansion of the field of diplomacy, and the use of new methods, techniques and tools in diplomacy: modern diplomacy, smart diplomacy, secret diplomacy, naked diplomacy, open diplomacy, closed-door diplomacy, coercive diplomacy, public diplomacy, media diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, gastro diplomacy, health diplomacy, vaccine diplomacy, mask diplomacy can be listed as some of them. However, there is no consensus among researchers on these naming and definitions. Some researchers do not accept the concepts of vaccine diplomacy and mask diplomacy, which entered the literature especially after Covid-19. Some

1 J. Pamment, K. G. Wilkins, 2018, p. 6.

2 E. Gürdal, 2021, s. 115.

3 A. C. Rigalt, 2017, p. 32.

4 S. Riordan, M. T. Jarrín, 2020, p. 4.

researchers, on the other hand, evaluate activities at the interstate level such as health diplomacy, gastro diplomacy and cultural diplomacy within the concept of public diplomacy.

The concept of public diplomacy, first expressed by Edmund Gullion in 1965, was discussed by Joseph Nye in his book “Bound to Lead” published in 1990. Nye analysed the concept within the framework of the phrase “soft power”, which he brought to the literature. Nye uses public diplomacy to communicate with the citizens of other countries, to inform, persuade and influence them about their own culture and policies; defined it as a tool to change negative perspectives, if any⁵.

In public diplomacy, the target audience is not governments or state officials, but ordinary citizens of other countries. In this diplomacy activity, the communication process can be carried out both from the state to the public by an official institution belonging to the state, and from the public to the public, by nongovernmental organizations, private institutions, artists, businessmen, academics, students, members of the press, athletes and other professional groups. Olympics, international exhibitions, artistic activities, festivals, concerts, symposiums, congresses, forums, fairs and exchange programs are some of the areas where public diplomacy activities are carried out.

In public diplomacy, also called soft power, it is aimed to create an international sphere of influence⁶, to introduce its own language, culture, history, traditions and life habits to the citizens of other states⁷. Thus, an awareness will be created, interest will be aroused, and a wider audience will be reached⁸.

Public diplomacy can be summarized as diplomacy for everyone by everyone.

Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

According to Nye, the culture of a country contributes to its own soft power to the extent that it is attractive to other countries⁹. As a matter of fact, soft power was used in addition to hard power between the USA and the Soviet Union during the Cold War¹⁰; it is thought that the Cold War had an effect on the completion of the USA's superiority¹¹.

5 J. S. Nye, 2004, p. 151-167.

6 M. İris, T. Akdemir, 2020, s. 1-2.

7 E. Abdurrahmanlı, E. Bağış, 2021, s. 146.

8 P. Aslan, O. Göksu, 2016, p. 576.

9 J. S. Nye, 2004, p. 5-13.

10 F. Purtaş, 2013, s. 3.

11 K. Sancak, 2016, s. 65.

Although the concept of cultural diplomacy is a new one, traders, explorers, travellers and artists can be thought of as the first cultural diplomats. The exchange of knowledge and culture between merchants and government representatives through the establishment of regular trade routes is the first example of cultural diplomacy¹².

The fact that cultural values play an active role outside the country has led the states that care about cultural diplomacy to establish various institutes in order to become stronger in this field.

In 1883, when the concepts of soft power or cultural diplomacy were not mentioned academically, France established the Alliance Française in order to teach French to the French colonies and other countries and to export their culture to the world. This was followed by the British Council founded in 1934 by England, the Goethe Institute founded by Germany in 1951, the Cervantes Institute established by Spain in 1991 and the Confucius Institute opened by the People's Republic of China in 2004. It should be noted that the activities carried out in the field of education, science and culture by UNESCO, which was established in London in 1945 with the approval of 44 countries, are in the field of cultural diplomacy.

In the new world order that emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Türkiye established the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency in 1992 and started to carry out cultural diplomacy activities for Turkic and related communities in Central-Asian, Balkan and Baltic countries. It is aimed to start a strong communication with the citizens of these countries, which have a common language, history and cultural heritage, and to remember the common heritage. In this context, the Turcology Project was implemented in 2000 and protocols were signed with various universities. Within the framework of these protocols, lecturers have been appointed to convey the Turkish language, history and culture.

The Turcology Project was transferred to the Yunus Emre Institute, which was established in 2009 in order to promote the history, art, language and culture of Türkiye to the world public, to increase the cultural exchange between countries and to strengthen the cooperation and friendship of the countries with each other. Today, Yunus Emre Institute has 62 Cultural Centres in 52 countries. It also supports Turcology departments, Turkish centres and libraries in cooperation with universities in many countries where there are no cultural centres.

In addition to the above two institutions, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) was established in Türkiye in 2010. The purpose

12 B. Önal, 2020, s. 221.

of the establishment of this presidency is to strengthen social, cultural, and economic relations with the citizens of the Republic of Türkiye living abroad as well as with Turkic and related communities. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities and Yunus Emre Institute, within the framework of cultural diplomacy, provide scholarships to students coming from abroad, enable them to learn Turkish free of charge, provide internship opportunities, and organize cultural trips to different points in Türkiye.

Apart from these three institutions, it should be noted that institutions such as TRT, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Turkish Airlines, Anadolu Agency, universities, some municipalities and public institutions also carry out activities in the context of cultural diplomacy.

Cultural diplomacy supports the development of relations that serve mutual interests between the state and the citizens of other countries on issues such as image management, strategic communication, and promotion. The cultural, political, geographical, historical, and economic attractiveness of the country supports the national reputation of that country on the international platform¹³. In this context, it is necessary to talk about TV channels, movies and serials. Especially the Turkish TV series industry is in demand by a wide audience from the Americas to Africa, from Europe to Asia, from the Middle East to the Far East. These productions, which present sections from Turkish history, different geographies of Türkiye, people, nature, culture, architecture, lifestyles, traditional clothing styles, eating and drinking habits, build a bridge between Turkish people and citizens of other countries and contribute to Türkiye's national reputation.

It is necessary to evaluate literary products, workshops, artistic exhibitions, fairs, congresses and symposiums, academic staff / student exchange programs, sister city agreements, sports events, and concerts within this framework.

Activities of Türkiye's in Lithuania in the Context of Cultural Diplomacy

Lithuania and Türkiye are historically linked by friendly and goodwill relations, the origins of which date back to the old 15th and 16th centuries. The legal basis of the relations between Türkiye and Lithuania is the Friendship Treaty, signed in Moscow on the 17th of September 1930. This Treaty, establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries, was signed on the 17th of September 1930 by the Turkish

13 G. Yıldırım, 2016, p. 228.

Ambassador to Moscow Hüseyin Ragıp (Baydur) and Lithuania's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Moscow Jurgis Baltrušaitis. The next year the Treaty was ratified by the President of Türkiye Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the President of Lithuania Antanas Smetona.

Cooperation between Türkiye and Lithuania continues increasingly within the framework of public diplomacy, apart from the official contacts and meetings of the foreign affairs authorities. As mentioned above, cultural diplomacy activities are carried out in two ways: from the state to the people or from the people to the people. In this study, since the cultural diplomacy activities of the public institutions of the Republic of Türkiye will be discussed, it would be appropriate firstly to mention the cultural diplomacy activities carried out by the Turkish Embassy in Vilnius.

The Embassy has been contributing to the friendly relationship between the two countries for many years in coordination with other public institutions and organizations. But 2021 has another meaning for both countries – 2021 has been declared as the Year of Lithuanian Tatar History and Culture, and 2022 as the Year of Lithuanian Karaime History and Culture. Related communities, Lithuanian Tatars and Karaims have been living in Lithuania for about seven centuries. The activities carried out by Turkish Embassy in Vilnius within the framework of cultural diplomacy in 2021.

Since 1992, when diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Lithuania were established, 9 ambassadors have served on behalf of Türkiye in Vilnius. All of the ambassadors carrying out diplomatic activities on behalf of Türkiye have organized and supported cultural diplomacy activities and have contributed significantly to the survival of Vilnius University Turkish Language Centre, which has historical and architectural value. The students, who were introduced to the Turkish language and culture in this centre, became like cultural ambassadors of Türkiye and Lithuania in their countries after their graduation. In the 30 year period, many social, artistic, cultural and academic projects have been carried out, and many concerts, fairs, exhibitions, symposiums, congresses and conferences have been organized. Thus, it continues to contribute to bilateral relations.

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency carries out cultural diplomacy activities aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of Lithuanian Tatars and Karaims. In addition, within the framework of the protocol, academic staff has been assigned to Vilnius University Turkish Language Centre since 2007–2008. A library was also established by TİKA, belonging to the Turkish Language Centre, and important works of Turkish language, history and art were donated to this

library. TİKA continues to contribute to the restoration and renovation of the centre, and to the symposiums and congresses organized by the centre. All Lithuanian citizens who want to learn Turkish language, history and culture, as well as Vilnius University students, can benefit from the Turkish teaching activities carried out in the centre. Therefore, TİKA and other Turkish state institutions operating in the field of public and cultural diplomacy carry out studies not only for the related Lithuanian Tatars or Karaims, but also for all Lithuanian citizens.

After the Turcology Project was handed over to Yunus Emre Institute with a protocol signed in 2011, Yunus Emre Institute appointed a lecturer to work at Turkish Language Centre of Vilnius University until the 2016–2017 academic year. Yunus Emre Institute also continued the summer school programs, and in this context, it enabled a certain number of students studying at the Turkish Language Centre of Vilnius University to study Turkish in different geographical regions of Türkiye every year. In the last week of every summer school program, it brought together all the students participating in the program from different countries in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Bursa and Konya. Thus, it provided an intercultural communication environment.

Yunus Emre Institute also continues to support the Turkish Language Centre library with books. In this library, there are books on Turkish language, history, art, geography, ethnography, culture and civilization that will serve as a resource for both students and researchers who want to do academic and intellectual studies.

The Institute also supported other activities within the scope of cultural diplomacy. In this context, it is necessary to mention the Nowruz Festival Events held in Vilnius in 2014. Nowruz Festival celebrations and events, organized in cooperation with Turkish Embassy in Vilnius, Yunus Emre Institute and Tatar Cultural Centre, have been held every year since 2014.

Every year, Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye assigns teachers (instructors) from Türkiye to work in the Turkish Language Centre in accordance with the protocol signed with Vilnius University under the coordination of Turkish Embassy in Vilnius. Apart from this, the ministry organizes various projects and competitions for young people and students living in EU members and EU candidate countries.

Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, one of the supporters of the congress called “Tatars in the History and Culture of Lithuania from the 14th to the 21st Centuries: the Latest Researches”, gives scholarships to students from all over the world, who are interested in Turkish language and Turkish culture every year within the scope of the project called “Türkiye Scholarships”.

Within the framework of these scholarships, students receive Turkish education at A1-A2, B1-B2 and C1 levels at universities in different cities of Türkiye; then they continue their undergraduate education with scholarship. During their education, they get to know the city, Türkiye and Turkish culture closely. Lithuanian citizens can also benefit from the project.

Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities brings students from different countries of the world together with their peers in the fields of science, art, astronomy, creative writing and philosophy with the project called Children's Academy.

Presidency of Religious Affairs of Türkiye, Gaziantep University, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality and Alanya Municipality should be counted among the institutions that carry out cultural diplomacy activities towards Lithuania and Lithuanian Tatars.

Result and Conclusion

The methods, strategies and techniques used in diplomacy, which is the process of conducting interstate relations through representatives at home or abroad, have been constantly transformed after the French Revolution, Congress of Vienna, 1899–1907 Hague Conventions, World Wars, Cold War Era and after. With the introduction of the internet and digital technology and the more effective use of social media channels, this process has become more transparent. In the last century, a concept called public diplomacy has emerged, and a transparent diplomacy understanding, whose subject is official or civil, has developed alongside traditional diplomacy methods. The concept of public diplomacy, unlike traditional diplomacy, can be summarized as diplomacy from the state to the people and from the people to the people.

In this study, the perspective of the public institutions and organizations of the Republic of Türkiye towards Lithuania and the Lithuanian Tatars has been examined in the context of cultural diplomacy from the state to the public, based on the above definition. The purpose of cultural diplomacy, which is one of the elements that make up the soft power of a country, is to communicate with the citizens of other countries in a cultural context, to explain their own culture and policies, to influence and persuade them. At this point, as well as public institutions, nongovernmental organizations, companies, artists, academicians, students and different professional groups can play a role.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Türkiye and Lithuania have a long history of 91 years. In addition to this friendship, related communities of

Lithuanian Tatars and Karaims have been living in Lithuania for about seven centuries. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Türkiye established Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency to carry out cultural diplomacy activities for the cognate and related communities living in Central-Asia, the Balkans and the Baltic States. In the process, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency did not only engage in activities for Turkic and related communities, but also expanded its scope and framework. It was followed by Yunus Emre Institute, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities.

On the other hand, Turkish Embassy in Vilnius in particular, Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, Presidency of Religious Affairs, universities, municipalities and other public institutions, nongovernmental organizations, artists, academics, businessmen continue to contribute to the diplomatic relations between the two countries in the field of cultural diplomacy. It is foreseen that the cooperation and activities between the two countries will increasingly continue in the future in such fields as education, culture, art, and tourism.

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