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Public Diplomacy as a Transformation Tool of Ukraine's International Identity During the War

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ABSTRACT

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The article examines public diplomacy as one of the key mechanisms for the transformation of Ukraine's international identity in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The focus is on changes in the international perception of Ukraine after the start of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in 2022, as well as the role of diplomatic, cultural and information practices in constructing the modern image of the state in the international arena. The features of the institutional development of Ukrainian public diplomacy and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute, public organizations, cultural institutions and the Ukrainian diaspora in promoting Ukrainian narratives abroad are traced. Particular attention is focused on cultural diplomacy, digital communications, international information campaigns and practices of social solidarity, which have acquired particular importance in the context of war. It is shown that the international image of Ukraine is increasingly associated with democratic values, social stability, the protection of freedom and European identity. The expansion of the international presence of Ukrainian culture, the activation of the diaspora, the growth of the state's international visibility, and the strengthening of international support have become important components of this process. Public diplomacy is emerging not only as a sphere of external communication, but also as a tool for establishing Ukraine's international subjectivity and forming stable perceptions of the state in the global political and cultural space.



KEYWORDS

public diplomacy, international identity, cultural diplomacy, digital diplomacy, national brand, international communications, Ukraine, war.



Публічна дипломатія як інструмент формування міжнародної ідентичності України в умовах війни

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СТАТТЯ	АНОТАЦІЯ
Дослідницька DOI: 10.70651/3041-2498/2026.5.15 Отримана: 05.04.2026 р. Прийнята: 07.05.2026 р. Опублікована: 10.05.2026 р. Авторське право © 2026 автора  Цей твір ліцензовано на умовах Ліцензії Creative Commons «Із Зазначенням Авторства – Некомерційна 4.0 Міжнародна» (CC BY-NC 4.0).	У статті розглянуто публічну дипломатію як один із ключових механізмів формування міжнародної ідентичності України в умовах російсько-української війни. У центрі уваги перебувають зміни міжнародного сприйняття України після початку повномасштабного вторгнення Російської Федерації у 2022 р., а також роль дипломатичних, культурних та інформаційних практик у конструюванні сучасного образу держави на міжнародній арені. Простежено особливості інституційного розвитку української публічної дипломатії та діяльність Міністерства закордонних справ України, Українського інституту, громадських організацій, культурних інституцій і української діаспори у просуванні українських наративів за кордоном. Особливу увагу зосереджено на культурній дипломатії, цифрових комунікаціях, міжнародних інформаційних кампаніях і практиках суспільної солідарності, які набули особливого значення в умовах війни. Показано, що міжнародний образ України дедалі більше пов'язується з демократичними цінностями, суспільною стійкістю, захистом свободи та європейською ідентичністю. Розширення міжнародної присутності української культури, активізація діяльності діаспори, зростання міжнародної впізнаваності держави та посилення міжнародної підтримки стали важливими складовими цього процесу. Публічна дипломатія постає не лише сферою зовнішньої комунікації, а й інструментом утвердження міжнародної суб'єктності України та формування стійких уявлень про державу у світовому політичному й культурному просторі.



КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

публічна дипломатія, міжнародна ідентичність, культурна дипломатія, цифрова дипломатія, національний бренд, міжнародні комунікації, Україна, війна.

1. Introduction

The full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation was not only a military test for Ukraine, but also a moment of radical change in its international presence. If earlier the Ukrainian topic was mainly on the periphery of the world political and media agenda, then after 2022 the events in Ukraine began to determine discussions about security, international law, democratic development and the future of the European space. Along with military support, diplomatic negotiations and economic decisions, the question of how Ukraine appears to the outside world, through what images, meanings and perceptions its struggle is explained and how attitudes towards the Ukrainian state are formed in different countries, has become increasingly important.

Such attention did not arise in a vacuum, since for a long-time knowledge about Ukraine abroad remained fragmentary and was often subordinated to broader ideas about the post-Soviet space. A significant part of international audiences perceived Ukraine through the prism of Russian narratives, individual political crises or reports of regional conflicts, while Ukrainian history, culture and social development rarely became an independent subject of interest. The war changed this situation not only because it attracted attention to Ukraine, but also because it created a need for a new explanation of the Ukrainian experience, its historical origins, cultural features and political goals. It was during this period that the issue of the international perception of Ukraine ceased to be an auxiliary direction of foreign policy and was directly related to the support of the state in the international arena.

Under such circumstances, public diplomacy began to perform much broader functions than the presentation of national culture or the development of humanitarian contacts. Through the activities of state institutions, cultural organizations, public initiatives, Ukrainian media, scientists, artists and representatives of the diaspora, perceptions of Ukraine as a separate political community with its own historical experience, values and vision of the future were formed. Not only did reports about the course of the war spread internationally, but also a broader understanding of Ukrainian history, culture, language, and society, without which Ukraine's struggle itself would often remain devoid of the necessary context.

That is why addressing the problem of Ukraine's international identity is not only related to the analysis of the state's foreign policy activities. It is about the process of forming perceptions through which international audiences determine Ukraine's place in the world, relate it to other states, and assess its right to independent development. In this context, public diplomacy is of particular interest as one of the mechanisms through which the modern image of Ukraine acquires more complete outlines and goes beyond purely military issues, combining issues of politics, culture, historical memory, and international communication.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, the issues of public diplomacy of Ukraine have increasingly been considered through the prism of the international subjectivity of the state, the formation of its external image and interaction with foreign audiences. The normative basis of the modern Ukrainian model of public diplomacy is the strategic documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. The Public Diplomacy Strategy for 2021–2025 defines priority areas of work with foreign audiences, mechanisms for promoting Ukrainian interests abroad and the main tools of external communication of the state [9]. The development of these provisions is reflected in the Communication Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, which links the effectiveness of public diplomacy with a system of strategic communications, coordination of information activities and the use of modern digital platforms [8].

An important place in the formation of the institutional model of Ukrainian public diplomacy is occupied by the activities of the Ukrainian Institute. The institution's strategy for 2026–2030 defines cultural diplomacy as one of the key areas of Ukraine's international presence and envisages expanding the participation of Ukrainian cultural projects in the global humanitarian space [14]. The practical results of implementing these approaches are reflected in the annual report of the Ukrainian Institute, which records the expansion of the geography of international cultural projects, the development of partnership networks, and the increase in the international reach of Ukrainian cultural initiatives [13]. A separate area of research is related to the transformation of Ukraine's international image after the start of a full-scale war. Brand Ukraine materials demonstrate significant changes in the international

perception of the state and the emergence of new associations related to democracy, social stability, the struggle for freedom, and European identity [2]. Similar conclusions are held by M. Omelchenko, who considers the war as a factor in rethinking Ukraine's international brand and draws attention to the strengthening of the role of strategic communications in the formation of new international narratives [10]. The importance of public diplomacy for strengthening the international image of the state in wartime is also emphasized by V. Yemets, linking the effectiveness of external positioning with the combination of traditional diplomatic mechanisms and digital communication technologies [15].

A prominent place in modern scientific literature is occupied by studies of cultural diplomacy. M. Kushnaryova considers it as a component of international support for Ukraine and draws attention to the role of cultural projects in the formation of international solidarity with Ukrainian society [6]. A similar position is held by M. Shkurko, who links the development of cultural diplomacy with the promotion of Ukrainian narratives in the international space and the activities of state and public institutions in the field of international cultural cooperation [11]. In the work of I. Kostyri, cultural diplomacy appears as a tool for supporting the international subjectivity of the state and the development of humanitarian cooperation in wartime [5].

The issues of institutional support for public diplomacy are revealed in the study of I. V. Khomenska, which traces the formation of a system of state bodies and organizations responsible for the implementation of diplomatic, informational and cultural initiatives at the international level [4]. The transformation of the functions of Ukrainian public diplomacy in wartime is analyzed by P. Sukhorolsky and I. Sukhorolska, who link the modern development of this sphere with the growth of its role in ensuring international support for Ukraine and protecting national interests in the international arena [12].

A significant contribution to the study of the non-state dimension of public diplomacy is made by L. Mazuka. The author focuses on the activities of the Ukrainian diaspora, which after 2022 became an important participant in the international advocacy of Ukrainian interests, the dissemination of information about the war and the maintenance of a positive attitude towards Ukraine in host countries [7]. The regional aspect of the use of soft power tools and the possibilities of public diplomacy to strengthen Ukraine's international positions is considered by A. Bila [1].

Theoretical understanding of the relationship between public diplomacy and national branding is presented in the work of N. Kaneva, A. Dolea and I. Manor. Researchers show that the Russian-Ukrainian war significantly influenced international communication practices and contributed to the formation of new models of interaction between diplomacy, the international image of the state and political narratives [3].

Existing research allows us to form a holistic view of individual components of Ukrainian public diplomacy - strategic communications, cultural diplomacy, diaspora activities, digital tools and national branding. At the same time, most authors focus on the analysis of individual mechanisms of Ukraine's international positioning. The issue of the influence of these tools on the formation of the state's international identity as a complex socio-political phenomenon remains insufficiently developed, which determines the direction of further research.

3. Problem Statement

The purpose of the study is to analyze the role of public diplomacy in the formation of the international identity of Ukraine in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, taking into account the identification of key mechanisms of the state's international positioning, factors strengthening its international subjectivity and challenges that affect the effectiveness of the implementation of diplomatic and communication strategies.

Research objectives: (1) to investigate the current state of development of public diplomacy of Ukraine in the conditions of war; (2) to identify the main tools of public diplomacy used to form the international identity of the state; (3) to analyze the role of cultural diplomacy, digital diplomacy, strategic communications and the activities of the Ukrainian diaspora in the processes of international positioning of Ukraine; (4) to assess the impact of public diplomacy on the transformation of the international perception of Ukraine after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion; (5) to identify the main challenges and limitations that affect the effectiveness of the implementation of public diplomacy policy; (6) develop recommendations for the further development of Ukraine's public diplomacy as a tool for shaping its international identity in the face of ongoing security challenges.

4. Methods and Materials

The methodological basis of the work is determined by the nature of the problem itself, which is at the intersection of international relations, public diplomacy, strategic communications and international identity research. The theoretical basis is the works of Ukrainian and foreign researchers devoted to public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, soft power, national branding and international positioning of states. Along with scientific literature, the study involved strategies, program documents, analytical reports and materials of Ukrainian institutions that, after 2022, will directly work in the field of external communication.

The main attention is focused on documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute, the Brand Ukraine project and other materials through which changes in approaches to the international representation of Ukraine can be traced. Referring to these sources makes it possible to consider public diplomacy not only as a direction of foreign policy activity, but also as one of the mechanisms for forming perceptions of Ukraine in the international environment.

A special place is occupied by examples of cultural projects, communication campaigns, public initiatives and activities of the Ukrainian diaspora, since it is in them that the practices of modern Ukrainian public diplomacy are most clearly manifested. The combination of scientific works, strategic documents and practical cases creates an opportunity to consider the formation of Ukraine's international identity as a process in which state, public and cultural actors participate simultaneously.

5. Results and Discussion

The full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine was a turning point not only for Ukrainian statehood, but also for the system of international communications, within which Ukraine's image in the world was formed. If in previous decades, issues of public diplomacy were considered mainly as a component of the state's image policy, then after 2022 they acquired direct importance for ensuring national security, international support and preserving the political subjectivity of Ukraine. Under such conditions, the international identity of the state ceases to be exclusively a category of symbolic representation and turns into a resource on which the country's ability to mobilize foreign aid, form international coalitions and counteract the information influence of the enemy depends.

Research into the institutional foundations of Ukrainian public diplomacy shows that the prerequisites for such changes began to form after 2014. As I. V. Khomenska notes, it was during this period that public diplomacy was gradually institutionalized through the creation of specialized structures, the development of strategic documents, and the formation of a regulatory framework that determined the place of public diplomacy in the foreign policy activities of the state [4]. The most important elements of this system include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Public Diplomacy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ukrainian Institute, the Ukraine NOW brand, the Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for 2021–2025 [9], and the Communication Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine [8].

To understand the transformation of Ukrainian public diplomacy, it is important to trace the change in its functional purpose. The data in Table 1 demonstrate the main differences between the approaches to the implementation of public diplomacy before the start of a full-scale war and after 2022.

Table 1. Transformation of the functions of Ukraine's public diplomacy after the outbreak of full-scale war

Before 2022	After 2022
Formation of a positive international image	Political advocacy of Ukraine's interests
Tourism and investment promotion	Mobilization of international support
Cultural representation of the state	Protection of national subjectivity
Territory branding	Formation of an international coalition of support
Popularization of Ukrainian culture	Countering Russian disinformation
Development of international contacts	Supporting the reputational security of the state

Source: Compiled by the author based on [4; 7; 9].

As can be seen from Table 1, after the start of the full-scale invasion, the functions of public diplomacy significantly expanded. If earlier it was focused mainly on forming a positive perception of Ukraine abroad, then in the conditions of war its tasks became much more pragmatic. L. Mazuka

emphasizes that modern Ukrainian public diplomacy is increasingly approaching political advocacy, since international support is becoming one of the determining factors in ensuring the state's defense capability, the functioning of the economy and the implementation of post-war recovery [7]. That is why the activities of diplomatic institutions today are aimed not only at forming a positive image of Ukraine, but also at creating conditions for the adoption of specific political decisions by international partners.

The change in the functions of public diplomacy was accompanied by the transformation of Ukraine's international image. M. Omelchenko notes that before the start of the full-scale war, the international perception of Ukraine was largely determined by post-Soviet stereotypes and insufficient recognition of the state in the world. For a significant part of the international audience, Ukraine remained a country that few knew about, and its international presence was inferior to Russia's influence in both the political and information space [10]. The full-scale invasion changed the situation radically, creating the conditions for the formation of a new international narrative about Ukraine.

A feature of this process was that the Ukrainian state for the first time received the opportunity to systematically present itself to the international audience through its own communication channels, and not through external interpretations. That is why the issue of international identity began to be directly linked to the issue of information sovereignty. In this context, the activities of state institutions aimed at promoting the Ukrainian vision of the war, history and modern development of the country became particularly important.

The significant results of this work are reflected in the Brand Ukraine Report 2024 study. An analysis of the international information space showed that throughout 2024, despite the gradual decrease in global interest in the war, Ukraine continued to remain one of the most recognizable international political brands. At the same time, the main topic of international coverage remained support for Ukraine, although its share in the international media space decreased from 32% in 2023 to 21% in 2024 [2].

No less significant are the changes in the characteristics that the international audience associates with Ukraine. According to the results of the Brand Ukraine study, the most frequently used definitions in international media were "democratic country", "nation of heroes", "member of the European family" and "inventive people" [2]. The data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Leading international associations with Ukraine in 2024

Characteristics	Share of mentions, %
Democratic country	23
Nation of heroes	20
Member of the European family	16
Inventive people	13

Source: Compiled by the author based on [2].

The data in Table 2 demonstrate a fundamentally new content of Ukraine's international identity. For a long time, international perceptions of the state have focused on its post-Soviet past, economic problems, or geopolitical location. After 2022, value characteristics began to take center stage. Ukraine is increasingly perceived not as a territory or a political object, but as a community that upholds democratic principles and the right to independent development.

Similar trends are also recorded in the study by A. Bila. The author notes that among the most common international characteristics of Ukraine after the start of the full-scale war, the images of a "nation of heroes", "free nation", "democratic state" and "part of the European family" dominate [1]. It is important that these characteristics were not formed as a result of traditional marketing campaigns. Their emergence was the result of a combination of the real experience of Ukrainian society, strategic communications of the state, and broad international attention to the war.

The effectiveness of these processes is confirmed by the results of international soft power ratings. According to the Global Soft Power Index 2023, cited by A. Bila, Ukraine rose from 47th to 14th place in the world in terms of recognition and took 37th place among 121 countries in the overall soft power ranking [1]. For a country that was not among the leading global brands a few years ago, such results indicate an unprecedented transformation of international perception. However, the change in Ukraine's international identity occurred not only through political communications. An important role in this process was played by cultural diplomacy, which provided a deeper acquaintance of the international audience with Ukrainian culture, history and art. As M. Kushnaryova notes, the Russian-Ukrainian war threatened not only the state sovereignty of Ukraine, but also the very right of Ukrainian

culture to exist separately [6]. In such conditions, cultural diplomacy has become a tool for the international affirmation of Ukrainian subjectivity.

The continuation of this process was the activities of the Ukrainian Institute and numerous cultural projects implemented after 2022. It was cultural diplomacy that allowed us to expand the international image of Ukraine beyond military topics and form a more comprehensive understanding of Ukrainian society as a carrier of an original culture, history, and European values.

Among all areas of public diplomacy, it was cultural diplomacy that turned out to be one of the most effective tools for forming a new international identity of Ukraine in times of war. Unlike political statements or information campaigns, cultural practices provide a long-term impact on the international audience, as they form not only knowledge about the state, but also an emotional attitude towards it. That is why, after the start of the full-scale invasion, cultural diplomacy became one of the central areas of Ukraine's international positioning [5; 11].

An analysis of modern research shows that the war significantly changed the functional purpose of cultural diplomacy. If earlier its main task was considered to be the popularization of Ukrainian culture abroad, then after 2022 it increasingly performs the function of international advocacy of Ukrainian interests. M. Shkurko notes that cultural diplomacy began to act not only as a tool for presenting culture, but also as a mechanism for informing the international community about the war, crimes against cultural heritage, and the consequences of Russian aggression for Ukrainian society [11].

Such a transformation acquired special significance due to the specifics of the war itself. As M. Kushnaryova notes, Russian aggression is accompanied by systematic attempts to deny the separateness of Ukrainian culture, language, and history. In such conditions, cultural diplomacy actually turns into one of the mechanisms for the international affirmation of Ukraine's right to its own cultural and political subjectivity [6]. It is not only about the presentation of cultural achievements, but also about protecting the very right of Ukrainian culture to be represented in the world space as an independent phenomenon.

Significantly, the Ukrainian Institute became the institutional basis of this process. According to the Strategy of the Ukrainian Institute for 2026–2030, the main task of the institution is not only to increase international awareness of Ukraine, but also to deepen knowledge about Ukrainian society, culture, history, and the modern development of the state [14]. Such an approach demonstrates the transition from quantitatively increasing information presence to forming a qualitatively new understanding of Ukraine among the international audience.

The practical results of the Ukrainian Institute's activities demonstrate the scale of this process. According to the institution, over 750 international events and projects were implemented or supported in 42 countries around the world during 2019–2025. In addition, through digital platforms and international communication campaigns, the Institute's projects reached an audience in more than 102 countries around the world [13].

Table 3. Main results of the Ukrainian Institute's activities in the field of cultural diplomacy

Indicator	Result
Countries of project implementation	42
Implemented and supported projects	over 750
Countries of digital campaigns	102
New representative offices in 2023–2025	Germany, France, Netherlands
Expansion of activities	Asia, Africa, Latin America

Source: Compiled by the author based on [3; 4].

The data in Table 3 demonstrate that Ukrainian cultural diplomacy has long gone beyond the European region. The expansion of the Ukrainian Institute's activities to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is particularly significant. If earlier Ukraine's international positioning was concentrated mainly on the countries of the European Union and North America, then after 2022, attention is increasing to regions where the level of awareness of Ukraine has traditionally been much lower [13].

The change in the geography of cultural diplomacy is directly related to the need to expand international support for Ukraine. The formation of the state's international identity in the conditions of a globalized world requires a presence not only in traditional partner countries, but also in those regions where competition between different political narratives continues. That is why Ukraine is gradually moving from a Eurocentric model of cultural diplomacy to a global one.

The results of international cultural projects implemented after the start of a full-scale war attract special attention. M. Shkurko cites data that only exhibition projects dedicated to the destruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage as a result of Russian aggression were presented in twenty countries of the world and reached about twenty million foreign citizens [11]. For comparison, Ukrainian cultural projects have practically never reached such a scale of international coverage before.

An important result of cultural diplomacy was also the growth of the international presence of Ukrainian art institutions. After 2022, the activities of Ukrainian theaters, orchestras, museum institutions and cultural centers abroad significantly intensified. As M. Shkurko notes, the tours of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, the performances of the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, the concert project “Notes from Ukraine” at Carnegie Hall and the large-scale program “Season of Culture Great Britain / Ukraine” [11].

Table 4. The influence of cultural diplomacy on the formation of Ukraine’s international identity

Cultural Diplomacy Tool	Result for International Identity
International exhibitions	Formation of knowledge about Ukrainian culture
Music projects	Emotional solidarity with Ukraine
Literary programs	Popularization of Ukrainian history and culture
Museum projects	Reinterpretation of Ukraine’s cultural heritage
Cultural forums and festivals	Integration of Ukraine into the world cultural space
Projects about war and the destruction of heritage	International support and advocacy of Ukrainian interests

Source: Compiled by the author based on [5; 11; 13; 14].

As can be seen from Table 4, cultural diplomacy influences Ukraine’s international identity through several interrelated mechanisms. The first of them is related to the dissemination of knowledge about Ukraine and overcoming information gaps. The second is to form emotional support through art, literature and cultural practices. The third provides international legitimization of Ukrainian narratives about the war, history and cultural heritage.

It is the latter aspect that acquires particular importance in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. I. Kostyrya emphasizes that cultural diplomacy today performs the function of protecting Ukrainian cultural heritage at the international level and contributes to the formation of a stable understanding of Ukraine as a separate civilizational and cultural community [5]. This approach allows us to counteract Russian narratives about a “common historical heritage” and strengthens international recognition of Ukrainian cultural identity.

At the same time, cultural diplomacy in modern conditions is increasingly going beyond the boundaries of state policy. Public organizations, creative associations, universities, museums, volunteer initiatives and representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora actively participate in the implementation of international cultural projects. It is this interaction of state and non-state actors that ensures the sustainability of Ukraine’s international presence and creates conditions for the formation of a multidimensional international identity.

Thus, cultural diplomacy has become one of the key mechanisms for the formation of a new international identity of Ukraine after 2022. Its influence goes far beyond cultural representation and covers issues of international support, protection of cultural heritage, affirmation of Ukrainian subjectivity and counteraction to disinformation narratives. It is through culture that the international audience gets the opportunity to perceive Ukraine not only as a state waging a war for its own existence, but as a distinctive European nation with its own history, culture and system of values.

One of the most characteristic features of Ukrainian public diplomacy in times of war was a significant expansion of the circle of its participants. If the traditional diplomatic model was based mainly on the activities of state institutions, after 2022 the formation of the international image of Ukraine is increasingly carried out through the interaction of state and non-state actors. In this context, civil society, volunteer organizations, journalists, cultural figures, expert communities, digital influencers and the Ukrainian diaspora are beginning to play an important role [12].

Such changes reflect the general transformation of modern public diplomacy. Participants in the international forum “Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Wake of the Russia-Ukraine War” emphasize that the Russian-Ukrainian war has become a catalyst for rethinking classical approaches to diplomatic communication. In modern conditions, influence on the international audience is

increasingly carried out through network forms of interaction, digital platforms and non-governmental actors capable of quickly responding to changes in the information environment [3].

For Ukraine, this trend turned out to be especially important due to the scale of international mobilization that unfolded after the start of a full-scale war. For the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, the formation of the state's international identity was the result of the activities not only of official diplomatic structures, but also of millions of citizens who, through their own communications, volunteer activities, and participation in international projects, began to represent Ukraine to the world.

The Ukrainian diaspora occupies a special place in this process. As L. Mazuka notes, after 2022, there was a significant expansion of the Ukrainian presence abroad as a result of the forced migration of millions of citizens. At the same time, new waves of migration not only increased the number of Ukrainian communities in different countries of the world, but also significantly strengthened their political and social activity [7].

Unlike previous periods, when the activities of the diaspora were mostly concentrated around cultural and educational initiatives, modern Ukrainian communities are increasingly actively involved in the political advocacy of Ukrainian interests. This involves organizing public campaigns, participating in political discussions, interacting with local authorities, holding public events in support of Ukraine, and forming a positive attitude towards the Ukrainian state among citizens of host countries [7].

Table 5. Main directions of participation of the Ukrainian diaspora in the public diplomacy of Ukraine

Activity area	Main result
Political Advocacy	Supporting Ukrainian initiatives at the international level
Information Campaigns	Distributing reliable information about the war
Cultural Events	Popularizing Ukrainian culture
Charity Projects	Supporting humanitarian programs
Educational Initiatives	Distributing knowledge about Ukraine
Working with Local Media	Forming a positive international image of Ukraine

Source: Compiled by the author based on [7].

The data in Table 5 indicate that the modern Ukrainian diaspora performs a much wider range of functions than traditional ethnocultural associations. In fact, it is turning into a separate element of the public diplomacy system, which complements the activities of state institutions and ensures the presence of Ukrainian issues in the public life of host countries. Of particular importance is the fact that representatives of Ukrainian communities often have access to local information and political networks, which increases the effectiveness of their activities in the field of international advocacy.

An equally important factor in the transformation of Ukraine's international identity has been the growth of the role of digital communications. The war demonstrated that the information space has turned into a separate sphere of international confrontation, where the struggle is waged not only for facts, but also for the interpretation of events, the formation of emotional attitudes and the construction of international narratives. That is why digital diplomacy has become one of the central areas of activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine [8; 9].

Unlike traditional diplomatic channels, digital platforms allow direct interaction with audiences of millions. Through social networks, video platforms and international information resources, Ukraine has been able to independently present its own position on the events of the war, respond promptly to disinformation campaigns and disseminate its own narratives without the mediation of traditional media.

The importance of digital communications is also confirmed by the Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, where digital diplomacy is identified as one of the priority areas of the state's external communication [9]. Similar approaches are enshrined in the Communication Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which provides for the active use of digital platforms for interaction with foreign audiences and the formation of a positive international image of Ukraine [8].

A feature of Ukrainian digital diplomacy has been the combination of official state communication with civil society activities. Unlike many countries where international positioning remains primarily the responsibility of government agencies, in Ukraine a significant part of international information content is created by journalists, volunteers, public activists and ordinary citizens. It is this feature that

has ensured the high dynamism of Ukrainian communications and allowed for rapid adaptation to changes in the information environment.

Researchers of the forum “Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Wake of the Russia-Ukraine War” emphasize that the Russian-Ukrainian war has become one of the most illustrative examples of the use of digital tools to shape international narratives in the 21st century [3]. Ukrainian experience has demonstrated that effective digital communication can not only increase international awareness of the events of the war, but also influence public sentiment, political decisions and international support for the state.

As a result of the interaction of state institutions, civil society, diaspora and digital communications, a fundamentally new model of Ukraine’s international representation has been formed. Its characteristic feature is its decentralized nature, in which the function of international representation is performed not only by diplomats or officials, but by a wide range of public actors. Such a model allows you to reach different audiences and create a multidimensional image of the state.

It is thanks to this interaction that the international identity of Ukraine began to be associated not only with the activities of state institutions, but also with the characteristics of Ukrainian society. In the international information space, attention is increasingly focused on the self-organization of citizens, the development of the volunteer movement, a high level of public mobilization and the ability to collective resistance. Such characteristics are gradually becoming an integral part of the international image of Ukraine and are forming a new perception of the Ukrainian state as a democratic political community capable of effectively responding to large-scale challenges.

Thus, along with state institutions, the Ukrainian diaspora, civil society and digital communication networks have become important subjects in the formation of Ukraine’s international identity. It was their activities that ensured the expansion of Ukraine’s international presence, strengthened the effectiveness of public diplomacy, and contributed to the consolidation of new international perceptions of the Ukrainian state and society.

6. Conclusions

The full-scale war was a period when Ukraine’s public diplomacy went far beyond the cultural representation and international image-making with which it was most often associated in previous years. The constant need to explain to international audiences the reasons for Russian aggression, maintain attention to events in Ukraine, counter Russian information influences, and maintain international support gave external communication a significance that previously belonged mainly to diplomatic and political instruments.

Such changes were based on an institutional framework that was being formed even before 2022. The activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute, and other specialized structures created mechanisms for working with foreign audiences precisely at a time when interest in Ukraine was reaching unprecedented proportions. Along with state institutions, public organizations, the diaspora, volunteer circles, journalists, artists, and scholars joined this process, so the representation of Ukraine in the world gradually ceased to be exclusively a function of official diplomacy.

The international perception of Ukraine has also changed. A country that for a long time remained little known to a significant part of the world audience or was considered in a broader post-Soviet context began to be associated with the struggle for independence, social stability, democratic values, and the European choice. Cultural diplomacy played an important role in this process, since through culture, history, and art, a broader idea of Ukraine as a separate nation with its own historical experience and cultural tradition was formed.

Public diplomacy in times of war appears not so much as a separate direction of foreign policy activity, but as one of the environments in which the international identity of Ukraine is formed. It is through diplomatic, cultural, and information practices that ideas about the state are consolidated, its place in the international space is determined, and meanings are produced through which modern Ukraine is perceived beyond its own borders.

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