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The Polska Brand as a Challenge for Polish Cultural Diplomacy. Old Determinants, New Strategies¹

Abstract: *This paper analyses the evolution of the strategy employed by Polish cultural diplomacy for the promotion of a positive image of Poland in the context of a long-term strategy for developing the Polska brand in the world. The analysis takes the form of a case study and concerns selected aspects of the activity of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute – currently the most influential governmental institution responsible for promoting Poland in the world through culture. The paper presents the main determinants and challenges in shaping a coherent message about Poland and their influence on the current strategy for promoting the Polska brand through cultural diplomacy. The critical analysis places the Institute's activities in the context of the priorities of Polish foreign policy and puts forward a thesis on the growing influence of the Institute on the development of Polish culture, Polish cultural diplomacy, and nation branding in Poland.*

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, Polska brand, Polish foreign policy, nation branding, EU enlargement

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Introduction

The first twenty years of transition in Poland after 1989 were a period of constructing a democratic country in all areas of public life. New priorities and challenges naturally appeared. Polish cultural diplomacy in the service of a democratic state is aimed at supporting realisation of Polish foreign policy strategic objectives by promoting its culture in the world.² The development and global strengthening of the *Polska brand* through culture is currently the most significant strategic objective of Polish cultural diplomacy. It is a far-reaching and long-term objective which requires many years of coordinated promotional programmes abroad and consistent internal activities to support the development of culture and cultural institutions, with special focus on creative industries, currently experiencing a dynamic growth in Poland.

When discussing the context of creating the *Polska brand* through culture, Paweł Potoroczyn, Director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute – the state institution responsible for the promotion of Polish culture abroad, stated: *'A global race for capital, resources and technology is underway. Today we know for sure that this race cannot be won by infrastructure, labour costs, or products as such because these will soon be homogenous, the same, and will have the same cost. The winners in this race will be those who start taking care of their brand – national brand – as soon as possible. For the Polska brand, culture is an absolutely fundamental dimension. There is nothing better, more attractive, and at the same time cheaper in terms of promotion. It only has advantages: it creates jobs, raises the national IQ, and is not harmful to the environment'*.³

² For an outline of the problems concerning Poland's global promotion through culture, see: G. Michałowska, *The promotion of Poland's culture and image in the world in: Poland's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*, S. Bieleń (ed.), Warszawa 2011, pp. 317–338. With respect to culture as an asset of Polish soft power and the ways in which it can be used by Polish cultural diplomacy, see: B. Ocieпка, *Miękka siła i dyplomacja publiczna Polski (Soft Power and Polish Public Diplomacy)*, Warszawa 2013; A. Ziętek, *Dyplomacja publiczna Polski (Public Diplomacy of Poland)*, "Annales Universitatis Marie Curie-Skłodowska", No. 1/2010, pp. 65–83. For the history, contexts and institutionalisation of Polish cultural diplomacy after 1989, see: B. Ocieпка and M. Ryniejska-Kiełdanowicz, *Public Diplomacy and EU Enlargement: the Case of Poland*, "Discussion Papers in Diplomacy", The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', No. 99/2005; M. Mickiewicz, *Polska dyplomacja kulturalna (Polish Cultural Diplomacy)* in: *Dyplomacja publiczna (Public Diplomacy)*, B. Ocieпка (ed.), Wrocław 2008, pp. 115–145; and O. Wysocka, A. Laskowski and N. Dubińska, *Od wymiany kulturalnej do nowej inteligentnej siły (From Cultural Exchange to New Intelligent Power)*, an updated version in: *Promocja Polski w świecie: kultura – dyplomacja – marka narodowa (Promotion of Poland in the World: Culture – Diplomacy – Nation Brand)*, P. Potoroczyn (ed.), Warszawa 2010.

³ *Polska kultura wzmacnia swoją pozycję za granicą (Polish Culture Strengthens its Posi-*

Taking into consideration that most rankings on the recognisability of Poland as a brand abroad still place it far behind many other countries (and worse than expected in the context of Poland's ambitions to join the G-20), it is clear that the creation of the *Polska brand* is a difficult and complex mission. In many parts of the world Poland is still not associated with anything specific, and its reputation and image abroad is much worse than it deserves after 25 years of transformation.⁴ The only ranking that confirms Poland's aspirations in this regard is Brand Finance Nation Brands of 2014, which assesses the power and value of nation brands of 100 countries. Poland ranked 20th, and the value of its national brand in 2014 was estimated at USD 602 billion, which means that it grew by 21 per cent in comparison with the previous year, when it was priced at USD 497 billion⁵. This is an improvement also in relation to the 2010 and 2011 editions of the Brand Finance Nation Brands 100, in which Poland ranked 25th and 24th and where the value of its national brand was estimated at USD 229 billion and 268 billion, respectively⁶.

Among many rankings evaluating countries of the world, some treat culture and national heritage as a separate category influencing the classification of the potential of states as brands and the measurement of their international positions.

According to the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, which evaluates countries' reputation on the basis of the so-called Anholt's competitive identity hexagon – comprising six equal elements making up the image of a country: tourism, export, foreign policy and safety policy, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, people – Poland ranked 30th in 2008 and 27th in 2009 out of 50 analysed countries.⁷

tion Abroad), radio interview by K. Zielińska, tok.fm, 02.07.2014; available at: <http://audycje.tokfm.pl/> (last visited 30.10.2014). For more on the IAM's vision of creating *Polska brand* through culture, see: *Strategia Instytutu Adama Mickiewicza 2010–2016 (The Adam Mickiewicz Institute Strategy 2010–2016)*, January 2010.

⁴ For more on the lack of coherence and attractiveness of Poland's image in the world, see: The Council for the Promotion of Poland, *Kierunki promocji kultury polskiej do 2015 roku (Directions of Polish culture's promotion until 2015)*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warszawa 2010, pp. 21–25.

⁵ *Brand Finance Nation Brands 2014*, Brand Finance 2014, p. 22, http://www.brand-finance.com/images/upload/brand_finance_nation_brands_report_2014_final_edition.pdf (last visited 09.02.2015)

⁶ *Brand Finance Nation Brands 100*, Brand Finance 2011, p. 65, http://www.brand-finance.com/images/upload/bfnb_100_2011_web_sp.pdf (last visited 09.02.2015).

⁷ Data cited after: Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, *Informacja o wynikach kontroli promocji polskiej kultury na świecie (Information about the results of the assessment of the promotion of Poland in the world)*, Warszawa 2011, p. 3, available at: <http://www.nik.gov.pl/kontrole/>

In the Country Brand Index, which evaluates countries in five key dimensions: tourism, heritage and culture, good for business, quality of life, and value system, in 2010 Poland ranked 82nd out of 110 countries.⁸ Over the two subsequent years Poland ranked 79th in 2011 and then the 75th in 2012, out of 118 countries covered by the research.⁹ The latest edition of the Country Brand Index 2014–2015, in which Poland was on 45th place, was based on a new methodology and covered only 75 countries. It included a new, sixth dimension of country brand, i.e. the effect of a product's country of origin on the perceived attractiveness of the country, in short – the 'made in' effect. Another new element is an additional classification introduced to the Country Brand Index 2014, dividing countries into 4 groups (country brands, status countries, experience countries, and countries). Eventually, only 22 of the 75 examined countries were classified as country brands. Poland was not among them. Instead, it was classified simply as a country.

The Elcano Global Presence Index (IEPG), published since 2011 by the Elcano Royal Institute in Madrid, measures the international presence of countries based on an analysis of three main dimensions: economy presence (38.50 per cent IEPG), military presence (15.52 per cent IEPG) and soft presence (45.98 per cent IEPG). The external projection of countries is measured according to 16 indexes. The area of soft presence is analysed using nine independent variables, including culture¹⁰. Poland ranked 27th in the Elcano Global Presence Index among the 54 countries examined in 2010¹¹. In the following editions of the ranking, under a modified methodology and with a larger number of states taken into account, it ranked 30th among 70 countries in 2012 and 29th in 2013¹².

The IfG-Monocle Soft Power Index, published since 2010 compares the strength of countries' soft power resources based on analysis of sta-

wyniki-kontroli-nik/kontrola,7876.html (last visited 30.10.2014). Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index is a commercial undertaking; there are no publicly available data on the position of Poland in the subsequent editions of the survey.

⁸ *2010 Country Brand Index*, FutureBrand 2010, http://futurebrand.com/images/uploads/studies/cbi/FutureBrand_2010_CountryBrandIndex.pdf (last visited 02.09.2013).

⁹ *Country Brand Index 2011-2012*, Future Brand 2012, http://futurebrand.com/images/uploads/studies/cbi/CBI_2012-Final.pdf (last visited 02.09.2013).

¹⁰ The index of international presence in terms of culture is based on data on exports of audio-visual services: cinematographic productions, radio and television programmes and musical recordings published by the WTO International Trade Statistics and stemming from Elcano's own estimation. The culture index constitutes 6.8 per cent of the IEPG. More on the methodology of the IEPG see: Elcano Global Presence Report 2014, Madrid 2014, p. 55–63.

¹¹ Elcano Global Presence Report 2010, Madrid 2011.

¹² Elcano Global Presence Report 2014, op.cit., p. 24.

tistical metrics in five major categories: diplomacy, government, culture, education, business/innovation and eight subjective expert panel categories. The culture sub-index is based on twelve metrics and the expert panels include two culture related metrics.¹³ In 2012, Poland ranked 25th in the IfG Monocle Soft Power Index among 40 analysed countries.¹⁴

In light of the above, changing the image of Poland in the world must be viewed as a long-term and multi-dimensional process, which must be based on a consistent message. One of the important sources of the message is and will be 'culture'. As shown in the results of a survey commissioned by the Polish Tourist Organisation (POT) and conducted in 2008, 'culture' was the most frequent spontaneous association with Poland among the respondents in the 'Top of Mind' study, with 104 out of 885 indications.¹⁵ This result is very promising for the promotion of Poland abroad, and whilst not confirmed in Anholt's study¹⁶ it has become one of the most important arguments in the debate on the priorities of Polish cultural diplomacy in recent years.¹⁷

The task of the institutions creating the *Polska brand* through culture must be, therefore, to identify and then globally popularise those cultural phenomena which hold a large positive potential for Poland. This is related to a strategic selection of means and partners, which must be preceded by an appropriate identification of the needs and objectives.

Currently there are a number of governmental institutions and agendas tasked with creating a positive image of Poland through culture in the world. In the Polish legal system, there are two ministries responsible for the policy of promoting Poland through culture, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its subordinate diplomatic infrastructure and 24 Polish Cultural Institutes, and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which is directly superior to the Adam Mickiewicz Institute.

¹³ J. McClory, *The New Persuaders III, A 2012 Global Ranking of Soft Power*, available at: <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/new-persuaders-iii> (last visited 01.02.2015).

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Badania rozpoznawalności Polski na rynkach zagranicznych (Studies on Poland's recognition in foreign markets)* in: *Marketingowa strategia Polski w sektorze turystyki na lata 2008–2015 (Marketing strategy of Poland in the tourism sector 2008–2015)*, B. Walas (ed.), Warsaw 2008, p. 6. The study was carried out in 17 European countries and targeted two specific groups of respondents, namely representatives of tourist offices who have offers concerning Poland in their catalogues, and journalists who have been to Poland, comprising 891 persons in total.

¹⁶ In the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brand Index, in the years 2008–2009, Poland ranked 32nd in terms of culture, with six elements taken into account.

¹⁷ See: *Strategia Instytutu Adama Mickiewicza 2010–2016*, op.cit.

There are also national institutions such as the Book Institute, the Theatre Institute, the Polish Film Institute, the National Audiovisual Institute, the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, the International Cultural Centre (an institution acting on behalf of cultural heritage of Central and Eastern Europe, based in Cracow) and the Polish Tourist Organisation, which includes competences in the field of promotion.

Since 2004, the development of a promotion strategy for Poland and provision of opinions on government documents in this regard has been the formal responsibility of the Council for the Promotion of Poland. The Council is an intergovernmental advisory body of the Council of Ministers, composed of representatives of the ministries competent in fourteen areas related to the promotion of Poland in the world, and is headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁸

The following parts of this article revolve around a case-study analysis of the role of the Polish cultural diplomacy in creating the *Polska brand* in the world. Selected activities of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM)¹⁹ are investigated and analyzed. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is a governmental institution established in 2000 and responsible for the promotion of Polish culture abroad in accordance with the basic principles of foreign policy and the foreign cultural policy of the Republic of Poland.²⁰ The specific nature of the IAM follows from the fact that, as a body established for the purpose of conducting international promotional activity and creating a positive image of Poland through culture, the Institute has a multi-sector structure and can therefore conduct interdisciplinary projects and coordinate promotional actions in various fields of culture. The IAM is a state cultural institution established for promoting Polish culture in the world, building on the example of European powers in this field such as the British Council, Institut Français, Cervantes Instituto or the Swedish Institute, with which IAM prefers to be compared with regard to scale, strategy and financial capacity.

¹⁸ The present composition of the Council for the Promotion of Poland is regulated by Ordinance No. 81 of the President of the Council of Ministers of 29 October 2013. See: Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej, available at: <http://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/bip-rady-ministrow/organy-pomocnicze/organy-pomocnicze-rady/113,Zespol-do-Spraw-Promocji-Rzeczypospolitej-Polskiej.html> (last visited 30.10.2014).

¹⁹ IAM is the Polish abbreviation of the full name of the Institute (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza) and is used officially by the Institute. In this text the terms 'Institute', 'Adam Mickiewicz Institute' and 'IAM' are used interchangeably for purposes of readability.

²⁰ See: Chapter 4 of the Statute of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, available at: <http://iam.pl/en/bip/charter-of-adam-mickiewicz-institute> (last visited 30.10.2014).

'For 14 years, we have been telling Poland to the world' – this captivating literary phrase,²¹ which has been uttered consistently by Paweł Potoroczyn, the current Director of the IAM, captures the essence of the Institute's activity. This gives rise to the following questions: What kind of Poland is the Adam Mickiewicz Institute 'telling to the world' today and how does it go about it?; What changes have taken place in the strategy of the Institute and how are they related to the development of Polish culture and Polish cultural diplomacy between 2000 and 2014?; In what way are the Institute's experiences and strategic choices reflected in the official recommendations concerning the promotion of Poland in the world? The present paper analyses the role of the IAM in the system of promoting Poland in the world and its influence on the development of the *Polska brand* by the Polish cultural and public diplomacy. The text is divided into five parts. The first part presents the context and goals of the establishment of the IAM as well as its tasks in the area of promotion of Polish culture abroad and supporting the activity of cultural diplomacy. The second part contains an analysis of the evolution of the ideas and methods of implementation of the IAM's flagship product – Polish Cultural Seasons. The third and fourth parts describe the process of rebranding of Poland, its most important components and challenges related to the place of the Polish historical narrative in present-day promotion strategies for Poland in the world, as well as the role of the IAM and the Polish cultural diplomacy in this process. The last part is a critical analysis of the influence of the IAM on the internal relations and the cultural scene in Poland. It also shows the long-term effects of the IAM's narrative on modern Poland and on Polish history. The article poses questions about the impact of this narrative on the development strategies of Polish cultural diplomacy in the context of its involvement in nation branding and the process of creating the *Polska brand* in the world.²²

²¹ This sentence should be read in the context of the definition of cultural diplomacy formulated in 2003 by Milton C. Cummings. According to this definition, cultural diplomacy is *'the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding'* which *'can also be more of a one-way street than a two-way exchange, as when one nation concentrates its efforts on promoting the national language, explaining its policies and point of view, or "telling its story" to the rest of the world'*. See: M. Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*, Washington 2003, p. 1. This is one of the most frequently quoted definitions (especially its first part) in academic works analysing the links and relations between cultural and public diplomacy and nation branding as well as in publications analysing the importance of culture as a soft power asset in international relations.

²² One of the challenges for studies on the promotion of Poland through culture, in the context of nation branding and Poland's participation in international cultural

1. The historical context behind the establishment of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and its present goals

The history-making events of 1989 – the departure from communism, establishment of democratic institutions and radical economic changes in Poland – led to a situation whereby in the first half of the 1990s issues related to the country's cultural policy were largely ghettoised. The debates that took place at the beginning of the 1990s on the model of state patronage and level of self-financing of the culture sector in the new socio-economic order rarely touched upon the problem of cultural promotion of Poland, which at that time was regarded from the outside mainly through the prism of the victory of the Solidarity and the figure of Lech Walesa.

Only in the mid-1990s, along with Poland's clearly-formulated political priority to become a Member State of the European Union within the upcoming several years, were debates started on state strategies for promoting Poland in the then 15 EU Member States.²³ Culture also had a significant role to play with respect to getting rid of the negative stereotypes and fears among the members of the Community related to Poland's accession. The first action plans were aimed at building a positive image of Poland abroad as a country that historically and civilisationally belongs to Europe, and whose culture is part of the European cultural heritage. The measures taken under these plans were to reflect the dynamic changes and contradict the stereotypical, conservative image of post-communist Poland and the Poles.²⁴

relations, is the still not well-developed literature on this subject which would present the history of the Polish cultural diplomacy after 1989 and the IAM's activities after 2000 in an analytic rather than purely descriptive manner. Apart from the most important Polish academic publications in this area, this text refers to government reports and studies commissioned by institutions involved in the promotion of Poland abroad, as well as to websites of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM), and radio and press interviews with Paweł Potoroczyn, the Director of the IAM, which are the point of reference for the theses formulated in this article.

²³ For more on the need to build a cohesive foreign cultural policy which would provide effective support in Poland's efforts to become a member of the European Union and improve Poland's image in the world, see: E. Łabno-Fałęcka, *Kreowanie obrazu Polski w świecie – zagraniczna polityka kulturalna państwa (Creating Poland's Image in the World – Foreign Cultural Policy of the State)* in: *Kreowanie obrazu Polski w świecie (Creating Poland's Image in the World)*, A. Kukliński and K. Pawłowska (eds.), Nowy Sącz 1999, pp. 181–188.

²⁴ For more on the process of creating a new image by the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, and on the common determinants and differences in their nation branding strategies, see: G. Szondi, *The role and challenges of country branding in transition countries: The Central and East European experience*, "Place Branding and Public Diplomacy", Vol. 3(1)/2007, pp. 8–20.

The first European and institutional dimension of Poland's cultural aspirations in the pre-accession period was its participation in the culture programmes of the Community - in the so-called first generation programmes in the years 1996–1999, namely Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphael; and in Culture 2000 in the years 2000–2006. The themes of returning to Europe and the European nature of Polish culture were then dominant in the official diplomatic discourse and promotional activity. The atmosphere of that time is symbolically reflected by the irritation of Tadeusz Kantor, who once replied, when asked about Poland's integration with Europe: *'Everyone keeps asking me about our return to Europe. If you ask me, I never left Europe! And although I am tired of repeating the same thing, I shall repeat it as many times as it takes to make sure that we all believe it'*.²⁵

The state slowly began to recognise the increasing need, the necessity in fact, to conduct a coordinated foreign promotional policy in the field of culture and to create the institutional tools to implement it.²⁶ In the history of Polish foreign cultural policy and the promotion of Poland through culture, the years 2000 and 2001 were a landmark moment in developing the strategy, establishing the executing institutions, and elaborating the first projects for implementing this strategy.

Two strategic documents adopted at that time constitute the point of reference for analysis and assessment of the actions aimed at using the potential of Polish culture in the execution of Polish foreign policy priorities. The first one was the *Framework Programme of International Promotion for Poland's Accession to the EU (2000, 2001, 2002)*, which stressed the need to use culture in building a positive image of Poland as a stable country, ready to join the EU, culturally belonging to Europe, and in creating a positive public opinion in favour of Poland's accession in the societies and opinion-forming circles in the then EU countries. One of the most important projects carried out at this time was Poland's participation in the 'Europalia' in Belgium, in 2001. It was the first interdisciplinary project after 1989 aimed at promoting Polish culture abroad in a format heralding the Polish Seasons. This project has been deemed to be one of the most important events promoting Poland in the pre-accession period. The other elements of the strategy were Poland's honorary presence in 2000 to the International Book Fair in Frankfurt and Polish Pavilion at

²⁵ Not dated, Kantor's words are quoted from memory from the author's own archives.

²⁶ A detailed analysis of the historical context, strategy and challenges of Polish public diplomacy in the pre-accession period can be found in: B. Ociełka and M. Ryniejska-Kiełdanowicz, op.cit.

the Expo Hannover 2000 in Germany, as well as the Polish Cultural Seasons organised in 2002-2004 in Spain, Sweden, Austria and France.

In 2001, the Polish government adopted the strategic document *Zagraniczna polityka kulturalna Polski i jej priorytety na lata 2001–2003* (*Poland's Foreign Policy and its Priorities for 2001–2003*), prepared jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.²⁷ The document designated culture as the third pillar of Poland's foreign policy, and for the first time defined direct and indirect goals of Polish foreign cultural policy. *'The direct aim of foreign cultural policy is to create a modern image of Polish culture, reacting to the expectations and needs of the recipients, to stimulate their interest and provide easier access to the Polish cultural heritage, as well as enable participation in the cultural life of the 3rd Republic of Poland. The indirect aim is to objectivise Poland's image abroad in broader social circles, especially among the countries that are essential for the interests of our foreign policy'*.²⁸ The document also indicated which Polish governmental bodies were responsible for international cultural cooperation and the promotion of culture, as well as the institutions and circles that should form a support system for Polish cultural policy and international cultural cooperation. It assigned a special role in the system of promoting Polish culture abroad to the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and defined the priorities of Polish foreign cultural policy: supporting Poland's activities towards EU accession and ratification of the Accession Treaty by the EU Member States; and developing cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, Israel, Brazil, South Africa, and Australia.

Polish foreign policy began to emphasise culture and the institutions that would execute its tasks in accordance with the above priorities. Therefore the Polish government strengthened Polish cultural diplomacy, including the financial aspect, developed a network of Polish Cultural Institutes around the world, and founded the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. The Institute was established in 2000 by an ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art²⁹ (initially under the name Centrum Międzynarodowej Współpracy Kulturalnej Instytut Adama Mickiewicza – Centre of International Cultural Cooperation of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute) in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a specialised state institution whose aim was to promote Poland through culture. Initially,

²⁷ See: *Zagraniczna polityka kulturalna Polski i jej priorytety na lata 2001–2003* (*Poland's Foreign Policy and its Priorities for 2001–2003*), "Przegląd Rządowy", No. 9/2001, pp. 65–77.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 67.

²⁹ The current official name of this body is the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

the most important tasks of the Institute included the promotion of Poland in Europe through culture, in particular in those EU Member States that were deemed strategic to the decision-making process with respect to Poland's accession to the EU.

Since 2006, the Institute has been operating independently as an state cultural institution under the name Instytut Adama Mickiewicza (Adam Mickiewicz Institute, IAM). To date the aims and scope of activities of the IAM have been regulated by two statutes, the first adopted in 2008, and the new one that replaced it in 2012.

The IAM's objectives are enumerated in chapter 2 of the new statute. The purpose of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute is 'to present the Polish culture abroad and initiate international cooperation and cultural exchange in line with the statement of the foreign policy and foreign cultural policy of the Republic of Poland. The Institute shall accomplish its objectives through:

- 1) carrying out projects within the area of culture with respect to:
 - a) promoting Polish culture abroad;
 - b) spreading knowledge of the history and national heritage of Poland abroad;
 - c) events of significant importance for Poland and celebrations of important anniversaries;
 - d) participating in strategic cultural events of global significance.
- 2) actively participating in cultural events around the world, including participation in festivals, trade shows and exhibitions;
- 3) organising cultural events arising from international obligations of the Minister both in Poland and abroad;
- 4) preparing and implementing Polish cultural programs during international cultural events abroad as requested by the Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- 5) representing Poland at important international seminars and conferences regarding cultural issues;
- 6) winning over leaders and opinion makers by means of, inter alia, study tours in order to plan program contents of projects effectively and achieve the expected promotional effects;
- 7) coordinating Polish participation in selected European programs;
- 8) implementing programs within the framework of which natural persons and legal persons may obtain, through competitions, financial support for carrying out projects promoting Polish culture abroad;
- 9) awarding foreign grants to Polish artists and specialists in the field of culture as well as local grants to foreign artists and specialists in the field of culture;

- 10) creating and updating an integrated information system on Polish culture, including ensuring the presence of Polish culture online;
- 11) preparing publications and making films presenting outstanding achievements of Polish artists, distinguishing features of Poles, and national values;
- 12) building a knowledge base in order to effectively plan the program contents of projects, implement them effectively and achieve the expected promotional effects;
- 13) creating and producing items promoting Poland using contemporary designs touching upon the Polish tradition;
- 14) obtaining extra-budgetary funds and using them to accomplish the objectives of the Institute;
- 15) undertaking initiatives for developing the professionalism of local centres and institutions, including non-state ones, in conducting promotional activity in the area of culture.³⁰

It is worth stressing that the previous statute of the IAM of 2008 defined the general objectives differently: *'The objective of the Institute's activities is to popularise at international fora the historical and contemporary achievements of Polish culture in such a way as to promote Poland abroad as part of the state cultural policy and in accordance with the basic principles of foreign policy and foreign cultural policy of the Republic of Poland'*.³¹ Attention here should be drawn to the transition from the aim of *popularisation* of Polish culture in the world to the level of *presenting it* as a well-known and highly regarded brand. The statute of 2012 also clearly emphasises the active nature of the IAM's activities as an initiator of international cultural exchange. The individual tasks of the Institute have been formulated differently as well. The difference between the two statutes can be found in the enumerative list of 15 (previously 16) tasks through which the Institute is to achieve these goals.

It is worthwhile to examine the reasons for these differences. The first is the evolution of the role of the IAM in the system of promoting Polish culture since 2008 and its vision of the position of Polish culture in the world. The second is the evolution of the tools the Institute has developed

³⁰ See: Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and the National Heritage of 9 July 2012 regarding the establishment of the Articles of Association of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Official Journal of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, 9.07.2012, Item 39; English version available at <http://iam.pl/en/bip/charter-of-adam-mickiewicz-institute> (last visited 30.10.2014).

³¹ Cf. Ordinance No. 19 of the Minister of Culture and the National Heritage of 1 June 2012 regarding the establishment of the Articles of Association of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Official Journal of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 1 June 2008, No. 3, Item 29.

since 2008 and the changes in the concept of managing European cultural programmes in Poland. The Institute's extensive powers enshrined in the statute provide it, as a state cultural institution, with instruments and facilities for (partial) channelling and shaping of the state's activities in the field of international cultural relations and cultural foreign policy. The Institute carries out its tasks through a number of programmes and projects, among which the most important so far are the Polish Cultural Seasons, which are supposed to be a 'loading dose' of Polish culture.

2. Cultural Seasons and the evolution of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute's strategy in 2000–2014

Since the beginning of the IAM's operation, it has been clear that in order for the presentation of Polish culture to be an efficient element in creating a positive image of Poland, it must attain a certain 'critical mass' with regard to the number and the quality of projects. Promotional actions must be well-focused, include projects from various domains of art, and be realised in prestigious locations and in co-operation with esteemed institutions, properly spaced in time. These principles gave rise to the concept of Seasons, multi-topic presentations of various fields of Polish culture: art, literature, film, music, theatre, dance, and recently also design, fashion, and rock and alternative music.

'Days of Polish Culture', *'Polish Culture Season'*, *'Polska Year'*, *'Polish Year'* – these project names were selected according to the nature and time of promotion and have become the IAM's flagship project and encompass its largest promotional activities. The selection of countries where projects are held depends on the priorities and strategic actions of the Polish foreign policy. Priority was given to the European Union, the eastern neighbours of Poland, Russia and such non-European countries as USA, India, Brazil, Israel, China, the Republic of Korea and Japan.³² In 2000–2004, the period of preparing for accession to the EU and ratification of the Accession Treaty by the Member States, Polish Cultural Seasons and targeted promotion campaigns in the countries holding the EU Presidency were among the most important elements of Polish cultural and public diplomacy.

As a tool for promoting Polish culture abroad, the Seasons evolved as the IAM gained more experience. The evolution of the Institute, which has been going on for 14 years since the beginning of its operation, was

³² For more information see the website of the IAM and the reports published by the Institute, available at: <http://iam.pl/en> (last visited 30.10.2014).

accurately described by its current director, Paweł Potoroczyn, in a radio interview: *'In the early years we were showing what the people at the Institute liked. Then we moved on to showing what other people liked, and we are now starting from our own ideas and concepts, according to which we are creating programmes with the help of our foreign partners'*.³³ Indeed, the first presentations of Polish culture were largely based on the selection and ideas of Polish project managers, who prepared a programme based mainly on Polish internal hierarchies and reviews, therefore focused on those parts of Polish culture that, in their own opinion, were valuable, original and 'European' and that constituted elements of cultural heritage which had been unjustly forgotten or not known at all, i.e. on issues that were, in the eyes of the Polish curator, worth reminding people of and promoting. This very classical approach to the promotion of Polish culture abroad, did not always prove right and often carried the risk of failure. These projects were held during the first year of the Seasons and focused on promoting the Polish historical heritage, which did not always win them applause and understanding in the eyes of the critics.

The paradigm had to change. The unyielding new principle behind the Seasons has been to create the substantive content of the Seasons in co-operation with the institutions that would host the projects. It became the IAM's main philosophy in the field of cultural diplomacy, a philosophy that was briefly summed up by Potoroczyn in 2014: *'The IAM does not export what people at the IAM like. It exports what people abroad like'*.³⁴

This philosophy assumes that the success of promoting Polish culture abroad depends not only on the quality of a given cultural phenomenon, but also – and perhaps primarily – on its good reception and on effectively reaching the foreign public. Therefore it is essential to involve local specialists, people of culture and culture managers who are able to evaluate the attractiveness of Polish proposals. They are familiar with the local artistic and organisational reality which translates into the final shape of the Polish programme. Their engagement brings hope for building long-term institutional and artistic connections after each Season. They are also the persons who bear the technical and financial responsibility

³³ *Jubileusz 10-lecia Instytutu Adama Mickiewicza (Tenth Anniversary of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute)*, radio interview by J. Kisielewski, Polish Radio Channel Two, 02.04.2010, available at: <http://polskieradio.pl/8/402/Artykul/260876> (last visited 30.10.2014).

³⁴ *Polska kultura wzmacnia swoją pozycję za granicą (Polish Culture Strengthens its Position Abroad)*, radio interview by K. Zielińska, Tok.fm, 02.07.2014, available at: <http://audycje.tokfm.pl/> (last visited 30.10.2014).

for conducting the programme and for its success or failure. Potoroczyn calls this strategy of co-operation with foreign partners the '*minimisation of the risk of failure*'.³⁵ Another important assumption was the co-financing of Seasons by both parties, which naturally caused the hosting partner to become involved more deeply and on a larger scale – for example the British institutions covered around 70 per cent of the costs of the project 'Polska!Year' in 2009.³⁶ Needless to say, the Seasons take up the largest share of the IAM's budget, almost half of it in fact. But without co-financing from the hosting party³⁷ the organisation of the Seasons in a form that would satisfy both parties would not be possible.

The best examples of this sort of operations are the preparations for the *Polish Year* in Israel in 2008–2009, and for the *Polska!Year* in 2009–2010 in the UK. Both these Seasons showed the direction of evolving priorities and the various ways of '*telling Poland to the world*', and were the first presentations of the new strategy of promoting Poland through culture adopted by the IAM in 2008 and captured in the new slogan '*Poland – a creative enclave of Europe*'. The vision adopted at that time concerned not only the coming Seasons 2008–2010, but also adoption of a long-term strategy for the Institute. The *Polska!Year* was preceded by 30 months of preparations and 250 study visits by the British partners. The same 'organic' work, with almost 24 months of preparations of joint projects, took place in Israel. Both of these Seasons projects had the objective to try to change the way of thinking about Poland and Poles through cultural projects addressed to culturally-active audiences, the artistic élite and the opinion-forming milieu. In both Seasons emphasis was placed on modernity: this was an intentional and conscious measure undertaken with the main aim to influence the public to look at Poland through the prism of a dynamic culture rather than through stereotypes or distant historical events and the trauma of the Holocaust.

Why Israel? '*Almost everything young Israelis knew about Poland stemmed from what they saw while visiting the death camps, and this would often create profound trauma in the young, carefree tourists, travelling abroad for the first time. We wanted to change that. We wanted to show that Poland*

³⁵ *Chcą sprzedać polską kulturę* (They want to sell Polish culture), radio interview by J. Kisielewski, Polish Radio Channel Two, 13.09.2010, available at: <http://polskieradio.pl/8/402/Artykul/339108> (last visited 30.10.2014).

³⁶ See: *Autostrada do opery* (The Highway to the Opera), interview with Paweł Potoroczyn, Polityka.pl, 29.09.2009, available at: <http://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kultura/303327,1,rozmowa-z-pawlem-potoroczynem.read> (last visited 30.10.2014).

³⁷ The level of financing of the projects varies and some of the executed projects have been financed as much as 90 per cent by the IAM. See: *ibidem*.

is a young, creative and dynamically-developing country with a diversity of attractions'.³⁸

Why the United Kingdom? 'Because hundreds of thousands of Poles live there. [...] *The Polska!Year* aims to change the image of Poles in the eyes of the British. Poles are respected, but only as conscientious manual workers and technicians. Therefore, our programme focuses on the richness of our culture and the attractiveness and diversity of Polish artistic life'.³⁹

The Polish cultural season in Great Britain was promoted by the slogan: '*Polska!Year – A Year of Contemporary Everything from Polska*' and was a large-scale project with clearly-defined goals. For the IAM as an institution supporting the introduction of Polish culture to the international cultural bloodstream, the priority was to build long-lasting relations between authors, managers and people of culture from both countries. Both the quality of the projects and their good reception among the critics and the British public have opened prospects for further projects and the possibility of introducing further Polish works and authors to the repertoire of British cultural institutions. In the broader perspective of the development of nation branding, *Polska!Year* was a project with the principal aim of building a positive image of Poland as a country of considerable creative potential, albeit so far unknown in the UK, not only in all the areas of contemporary art and culture but also in other fields – a potential that should be discovered and explored.

All the experiences garnered by the Institute became the basis for the Cultural Programme of the Polish EU Presidency in 2011. The programme consisted of two parts: the national part, coordinated by the National Audiovisual Institute; and the foreign part, coordinated by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. The foreign part was the largest ever promotional programme of the Polish cultural diplomacy, with 400 events in ten capitals in Europe and Asia: Brussels, Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Kiev, Minsk, Moscow, Beijing and Tokyo. The aim of the programme was to consolidate and strengthen, through the use of cultural instruments, a positive image of Poland as a modern and dynamic country, with its own rich traditions and history, and as a country well aware of the value of its cultural heritage.⁴⁰ The cultural programme was included in the strategy

³⁸ Season 2008–2009 Report, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warszawa 2009, p. 14.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 26.

⁴⁰ See: *Strategiczne założenia programu kulturalnego Polskiej Prezydencji w II połowie 2011 (The Strategic principles behind the cultural programme of the Polish Presidency in the 2nd half of 2011)*, August 2009, available at: http://mrr.gov.pl/rozwoj_regionalny/Prezydencja/Dokumenty_linki/Documents/Strategiczne_zalozenia_programu_kulturalnego_polskiej_Prezydencji_w_II_polowie_2011.pdf (last visited 30.10.2014).

of the Polish Presidency and its aim was to support its political priorities, as exemplified by the importance attributed to projects concerning the Eastern Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy, and in particular to projects implemented in Ukraine.⁴¹

All culture-related events held under the Foreign Cultural Programme of the Polish Presidency were promoted by the slogan '*I, Culture. Made in the EU. Powered by Poland*', which, according to the intent of its authors, was meant to emphasise two features of Polish culture: its dynamism and high quality. The latter was intended emphasise even more firmly the association of Poland with top quality goods made in Europe. The projects were implemented by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in cooperation with the Polish Cultural Institutes, cultural attaché offices at Polish diplomatic missions, and in direct cooperation with Polish and foreign cultural entities, including NGOs and cultural organisations. The foreign cultural programme was based upon a presentation of projects produced with the Polish Presidency especially in mind, including presentations of the most interesting Polish productions as well as exposition of the 'Polish component' during international cyclical events such as festivals or fairs.

The Foreign Cultural Programme of the Polish Presidency included six principal pillar projects – '*I, Culture Orchestra*', '*I, Culture Puzzle*', '*Karol Szymanowski*', '*Czesław Miłosz Audiobook*', '*Planet Lem*' and '*Guide to Poles*' – accompanied by numerous theatrical and film shows, art exhibitions, concerts of classical and modern music, projects in the area of design and events in public space.⁴² Also, 108 cultural and artistic projects were implemented under the programme, which benefited from subsidies from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage via a competition which was also coordinated by the IAM.⁴³

This extensive foreign cultural programme of the Polish Presidency, lasting for half a year, can certainly be described as 'a loading dose' of Polish culture and regarded as another step towards the creation of the *Polska brand* through culture. It should be observed that just as in the case

⁴¹ A. Umińska-Woroniecka, *Program Kulturalny Polskiej Prezydencji: strategia i rzeczywistość* (*Cultural Programme of Polish Presidency: strategy and the reality*), "Przegląd Zachodni", No. 2/2012, pp. 69–83.

⁴² For detailed description of the programme, see: 'I, Culture 2012. International Cultural Programme of the 2011 Polish EU Presidency. Report', Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Warszawa 2012.

⁴³ The complete list of projects co-funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage under the '*Polish Presidency 2011 – Promessa*' programme is available at: http://mkidn.gov.pl/media/po2011/decyzje/20110825_prezydencja_1_poz_aktualizacja.pdf (last visited 30.10.2014).

of the two Seasons preceding the Polish Presidency, so too the prevailing part of this programme consisted of projects contemporary in both form and content.⁴⁴ This was undeniably the result of the concept adopted several years ago by the IAM, assuming that contemporary Polish culture and art provide the crucial instruments in the process of creating a long-standing, positive narrative about today's Poland, and which should entail strong and modern nation branding relying upon culture. This concept seems to have largely defined the nature and direction of the measures implemented by the Institute, and in fact by the entire Polish cultural diplomacy.

Perhaps the best example to prove this point can be seen found in the hundred projects that Polish cultural institutions executed in the years 2013–2014 in five Turkish towns, as part of the celebration of the 600th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Poland and Turkey. Apart from several projects related to history, with the leading exhibition titled *Distant Neighbour – Close Memories: 600 Years of Polish–Turkish Relations*, the projects in question evidently promoted contemporary Polish art and culture in their very diversified aspects and manifestations, in such domains as music, film, literature, design, theatre, visual arts, photography and architecture.⁴⁵ For the Institute, *‘the celebration of 600 years of our relations is an excellent opportunity to show young Turkish people contemporary Poland – the homeland of free and ambitious people – through Polish values, which could turn out to be similar to the Turkish ones’*.⁴⁶ Consequently, in the IAM's strategy the historical anniversary projects became a broad organisational framework for promoting the *Polska brand* through culture in all its contemporary aspects and contexts.

3. Poland, Polska. The Polska brand – will Poland manage to promote the name ‘Polska’ in the world?

The Polish cultural season in the United Kingdom was promoted by the slogan: *‘Polska! Year – A Year of Contemporary Everything from Polska’*,

⁴⁴ A rare exception was the exhibition titled ‘Side by Side. Poland-Germany. A 1000 years of Art and History’ – a multidisciplinary exhibition in Berlin in Martin Gropius Bau (September 2011–January 2012) showing the complex cultural, artistic and scientific relations between the two nations over past centuries. Contemporary works were displayed ‘in dialogue’ with the ancient works of art, artefacts and documents.

⁴⁵ The full list of projects is available at: <http://turkiye.culture.pl/en> (last visited 30.10.2014).

⁴⁶ Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Report 2012/2013, Warszawa 2013, p. 58, on-line version available at: <http://iam.pl/en/report-20122013> (last visited 30.10.2014).

the elaboration of which was the result of the co-operation between the IAM and Wally Olins, a prominent expert in nation and corporate branding, within the framework of the Season's promotional strategy. This strategy was based on a survey conducted by Olins in Poland in 2003–2004. The aim of the '*Brand for Poland*' project was to develop the guiding idea for the *Polska brand*, upon which a long-term nation branding programme was to be based.⁴⁷ Although the very idea of 'Creative Tension', developed at that time as the leitmotif for the promotion of Poland in the world, has not been strongly reflected in governmental promotion projects (with the exception of the campaign of the Polish Agency for Foreign Investment of 2005: '*Poland – Heart of Europe*'), the findings made by the Olins's team were partially used in the planning strategy for the Polish Season in the United Kingdom. The sole name *Polska!Year*, with the intentional use of the word *Polska*, was designed to attract interest and indicate the originality and dynamics of the country and its modern culture.⁴⁸

The word *Polska* was also incorporated into the openwork design of the wall of the Polish Pavilion for the Shanghai Expo in 2010, and *Polska Music* is the title of the IAM's programme and a website promoting Polish classical music. In June 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs started a project called *Do you know Polska?* – with the website doyouknowpolska.pl, which is a peculiar, non-standard multimedia Polish-English dictionary of modern Polish as used by youth, aimed at stimulating interest in contemporary Poland as a modern European country emanating youth and energy.

At first, the IAM and the Polish cultural diplomatic service used the name of the country – *Polska* – in its native wording instead of its foreign language equivalents as an experiment. However, it has since been used in an increasing number of projects realised in the world, and thus it has changed from an experiment to one of the flagship solutions of Poland's rebranding strategy, to be implemented by Polish institutions

⁴⁷ For more on the context surrounding the introduction of the idea of nation branding in Poland and on the origins of the 'Brand for Poland' project, see: M. Boruc, *Siła tożsamości (The Power of Identity)* in: *Tożsamość rynkowa (Market Identity)*, M. Boruc (ed.), Warszawa 2001, pp. 33–64; W. Olins, *Making a National Brand* in: *The New Public Diplomacy*, J. Melissen (ed.), New York 2005, pp. 169–179. A detailed description of Olins's survey can be found in M. Hereźniak, *Marka narodowa. Jak skutecznie budować wizerunek i reputację kraju? (National Brand. How to effectively build a country's image and reputation?)*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 205–217.

⁴⁸ The name '*Polska*' was used by the IAM for the first time in the name of the Polish cultural season executed in France in 2004. The programme, called '*NOVA Polska*', consisted of an interdisciplinary presentation of contemporary Polish culture in 180 French cities just after the Poland's accession to the European Union.

responsible for Poland's promotion in the world. The concept of using the word *Polska* as an integral (verbal and visual) element of Poland's promotional message was addressed in December 2009 by the Council for the Promotion of Poland in a document titled *Kierunki promocji Polski do 2015 roku* (*The Directions of Poland's Promotion until 2015*).⁴⁹ This document also included a critical analysis of the system of promoting Poland after 1989 and a diagnosis of Poland's promotional potential (economy, culture, science, education, youth, sports, peace missions, development assistance), and identified the priorities of the state promotion policy in terms of content and target regions until 2015. The document was meant to become the starting point for further detailed work on improving the effectiveness and coherence of the strategy of promoting Poland.

The result of this work was the issuance of the *Rules for Communicating the 'POLSKA' Brand*, adopted and published by the Council in October 2013. It is a set of recommendations and detailed guidelines for the institutions, companies and other entities that promote Poland and Polish products in the world. It has been developed by a team of experts in marketing, communication and public relations. The starting point for their work was the vision of the *Polska brand* proposed by Olins, as well as government papers, analyses and reports. The document comprises a series of recommendations concerning the development of a coherent image of Poland and Poles, which – according to its authors – constitute the most important promotional advantage of Poland in the world. It was the intention of the Council for the Promotion of Poland and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give the *Rules* the status of an official set of guidelines setting the standards for the promotion of Poland abroad for the coming years.⁵⁰

The document explicitly recommends the consistent use of the name 'Polska'. '*Regardless of the language we speak, we shall always write and say*

⁴⁹ The Council for the Promotion of Poland, *Kierunki promocji kultury polskiej do 2015 roku* (*Directions of the promotion of Polish culture until 2015*), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warszawa 2010.

⁵⁰ Since its publication on 25 October 2013, the document has been frequently discussed and presented at conferences, debates and meetings with high-ranking representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The recommendations it contains were discussed at the meeting of the Senate's Culture and Media Committee on 10 December 2013, dedicated to the promotion of the *Polska brand* in the world. The meeting was attended by the top-ranking representatives of the government institutions responsible for the promotion of Poland, as well as representatives of business, marketing and public relations involved in the work on campaigns promoting Poland and related research. The minutes of this meeting are available at: http://www.senat.gov.pl/download/gfx/senat/pl/senatkomisjeposiedzenia/4639/stenogram/054ksp_egz_2.pdf (last visited 30.10.2014).

POLSKA. POLSKA is the official international name of our brand [...]. We wish for our native designation to function globally'.⁵¹ Promoting the name 'Polska' in the world is meant to intrigue and attract the attention of foreign recipients. *Poland – Polska*, is supposed to be easy to memorise, and combined with the word 'brand' – *Polska brand* – it is supposed to have positive associations with uniqueness and innovation.

The *Rules for Communicating the POLSKA Brand* adopted by the Council for the Promotion of Poland were reflected in the official campaign promoting Poland in the media around the world in 2014. The promotion campaign for Poland, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the title '*Polska. Spring into new*', was initiated by an official video on YouTube,⁵² launched on 3 June 2014 on the eve of the main part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism and of the first partly free elections in Poland in 1989. The video is narrated by a well-known British photographer, Chris Niedenthal, the author of a world-famous symbolic photograph from the day of the introduction of martial law in Poland. The Poland of today, as seen in the video and described by Niedenthal, is a country of successful modernisation. The video features a panoramic view of Warsaw, illuminated by skyscrapers and the National Stadium and shimmering with colourful fireworks, but they only serve as the background for the main protagonists of the video – young Poles, people hungry for knowledge and success, hard-working, well-educated, smiling, and with a positive attitude to the world. Today they are the strongest asset for the promotion of Poland. For them, as for the Poland of today, the tragic events of 13 December 1981 are but a distant history.

Apart from the new slogan, the video also introduces a new promotional logo for Poland (Image 1) – a red spring made up of geometrical shapes and enclosed in a schematic outline of Poland. Both the slogan and the logo were designed by Wally Olins and his team. As envisioned by the creators and promoters of this logo, as a visualisation of the idea of 'Creative Tension' the spring symbolises the Poles' energy and dynamism. Combined with the new slogan it is meant to reflect the essence of contemporary Poland and complement the message conveyed by the video spot.

⁵¹ The Council for the Promotion of Poland, *Rules for Communicating the Polska Brand*, p. 17, available at: https://www.ms.gov.pl/pl/p/msz_pl/ministerstwo/publikacje/zasady_komunikacji_marki_polska (last visited 30.10.2014).

⁵² The video spot is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umDOHnTQdFo/> (last visited 30.10.2014).

Image 1. Polska. Spring into new. W. Olins' logo and slogan for the Polska brand



Source: <http://www.designtagebuch.de/wieder-eine-neue-marke-fuer-polen/>.

The campaign fit in perfectly with the moment of increased interest in Poland shown by the global media in connection with the 25th anniversary of the overthrow of communism by the Polish society under the aegis of the Solidarity Movement (*Solidarność*). Polish public diplomacy has made an attempt to retain the memory of the events of 4 June 1989 in Poland as the first historical moment of transformation in Europe, which was later overshadowed by the fall of the Berlin Wall, more often associated in the world with the fall of communism in Europe. The highlight of the celebration was the event of 4 June in Warsaw, which gathered over 50 high-level official foreign delegations and thus attracted the attention of all of the most important world media. In the accounts of the event the story of the Solidarity Movement reappeared, reminding everyone about the role played by the movement in the peaceful overthrow of the totalitarian system in Central and Eastern Europe. They were reminded of the famous logo of *Solidarność* (Image 2) and its most eminent people, in particular Lech Walesa.

At the same time, throughout 2014 all Polish diplomatic missions, Polish Institutes and various other cultural institutions implemented projects commemorating this important event under the common motto '25 Years of Freedom' (Image 3). Combined with the 10th anniversary of Poland's membership in the EU and the 15th anniversary of Poland's membership in NATO, the tale of Poland of 1989 became the story of a country that succeeded in a political and economic transformation. The thus-promoted official narrative of the Polish transformation after 1989 fit in well with the dynamics of the national rebranding process typical for post-communist countries, which is essentially based on dissociating

themselves from their communist past and promoting their successful modernisation, inextricably connected with Europeanisation and the membership of the European Union.

Image 2. Cairo commemorates June 4, 1989



Source: <http://www.kair.msz.gov.pl/>.

Image 3. The official logo of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the fall of communism in Poland



Source: <http://www.prezydent.pl/swieto-wolnosci/logo-do-pobrania/>.

Thus it was no coincidence that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose the anniversary of the fall of communism in Poland to launch its new branding campaign in the media around the world. The events of 4 June 2014 were intended mainly as a celebration of the success of contemporary Poland. The campaign related to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism in Poland was developed on the basis of principles formulated by the Council for the Promotion of Poland concerning

the presentation of Polish history in projects promoting Poland. Pursuant to these principles, historical narrations should also be presented with reference to the present, *'the here and now, and if the past, then seen from a present-day perspective. [...] Let us narrate key historical issues by looking at the way they have shaped the lives of contemporary Poles. Let us present those issues as setting who Poles are today, what they have achieved, and how past events are related to the positive national features that we want to promote'*.⁵³ It therefore comes as no surprise that Chris Niedenthal ends his story in the video with the phrase *'Poland is all new'*, and that the entire spot ends with Poland's new promotional logo. The campaign *'Polska. Spring into new'* was running until November 2014 in media such as CNN, BBC, Sky News and Eurosport.⁵⁴

4. The history and consistency of the new image of Poland. Why is it all so difficult?

It follows from the aforementioned documents and analyses that pursuant to the concept of development of nation branding in Poland, the *Polska brand* must be based on positive projects which serve as a counterbalance for the martyrdom-filled visions of Poland which continue to linger on in the world.⁵⁵ This objective will be accomplished, including through long-term activities, if the general perception of Poland abroad is changed not through culture and history, but through culture and the present. Today, it is easier to build an image of contemporary Poland as

⁵³ Council for the Promotion of Poland, op.cit., p. 14.

⁵⁴ It should be noted at this point that the campaign, although perceived by many as a successful element of the strategy of promoting the *Polska brand* in the world, stirred up some controversy in the Polish society itself. The film was criticised for lacking references to the Polish cultural heritage and landscapes. The spring logo, selected on 5 June 2014 by the Council for the Promotion of Poland as a potential national logo and future official promotional symbol of Poland, met with an even more emotional response. The choice of one of three available variants of the logo was put to a general public vote under the campaign *'Logo dla Polski'*, held under honorary patronage of the Minister of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Poland (www.logodlapolski.pl/en) and organised by the Association of Marketing Communication SAR, which financed the project and which is now the sole owner of the rights to the symbol. Social media and the Polish press are full of caricatures and unflattering opinions of Olins's spring, therefore its future as the official promotional symbol of Poland remains up in the air.

⁵⁵ For more on the contemporary determinants and challenges facing Polish public diplomacy, see: B. Ociepka, *Public Diplomacy in the European Union. Models for Poland*, "Policy Papers", The Polish Institute of International Affairs, No. 5/February 2014, available at: http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=16515 (last visited 30.10.2014).

a dynamic, creative community of people open to the future on the basis of culture rather than history – a history that is too difficult, painful and complex, and due to many years of negligence and forbearance is excessively burdened with stereotypes to attract the attention of the foreign public. The Polish nobility as a mainstay of religious freedom, or the Constitution of May 3rd 1791 as the second fundamental law in the world and the first in Europe, creating the foundations of a modern parliamentary system? The Polish cultural, artistic and musical heritage as an example of the symbiosis of influences from the West and the East? Polish cultural diplomacy has tried to promote Poland through these values, but they played practically no role whatsoever in the changes of the Polish image after 1989.

Furthermore, Polish cultural diplomacy must consider the fact that in the eyes of young, active recipients of culture, even Polish ‘historical icons’ such as the Solidarity Movement or Lech Walesa have lost much of their former meaning. If we add to this the battle for European historical remembrance, in which Polish diplomatic and public service must face the fact that the fall of the Iron Curtain is symbolically identified with the Fall of the Berlin Wall and not with the victory of the Solidarity Movement, and that Polish diplomacy all over the world must keep combating the expression ‘Polish death camps’ so frequently used in the Western media to describe the *German* (Nazi) concentration camps built in occupied Poland during World War II, then it becomes clear that referring to Polish history constitutes a difficult challenge, and one which bears a high risk of failure.⁵⁶

This situation stems from the fact that the educational institutions and museums responsible for building the Polish policy of memory in the context of a democratic state after 1989, which should provide a substantive foundation also for the Polish cultural diplomacy and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, were developing too slowly. Making historical policy hostage to contemporary disputes between political parties and the long-lasting lack of agreement as to its form, content resulted in abandoning or delaying the construction of the modern museum infrastructure that was to document the Polish historical experience and present it to the general public. The first new narrative museum after 1989, and for many years the only one, was the Warsaw Uprising Museum, opened in 2004, on the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Currently, it is

⁵⁶ For more on the determinants of Polish foreign historical policy after 1989, see: B. Ociepa and M. Ryniejska-Kiejdanowicz, op.cit., pp. 5–6; B. Ociepa, *Miękka siła i dyplomacja...*, op.cit., pp. 155–166.

one of the most frequently visited museums in Warsaw. In 2014, two other institutions important for the Polish politics of memory were opened: the European Centre of Solidarity in Gdańsk, commemorating the Solidarity Movement and promoting its heritage; and the permanent exhibition of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, documenting the presence of Jews in Poland from the Middle Ages to the present times. The European Centre of Solidarity was opened on 31 August 2014 as part of the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of Poland regaining freedom and the 34th anniversary of the historic Gdańsk Agreement. The grand opening ceremony of the exhibition on Polish Jews, in turn, was held in October 2014. At the same time, the last stage of the construction of the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk is still in progress. The aim of the museum is to present the war experiences of Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe under the German and Soviet occupation, which are still little known in Western Europe and beyond. Final decisions on the location of the Polish History Museum should be made in 2015. The museum had in fact been established in 2006, and even though it has only had a temporary seat, since then it has been organising exhibitions and projects devoted to Polish history, including events organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as one of the tasks of Polish public diplomacy. In the long term, integration of the new museum institutions in the circulation of ideas, projects and activities related to Polish history translate into a more efficient activity of Polish cultural diplomacy in the field of historical politics.

In this context, 2014 was a particular challenge for the Polish public and cultural diplomatic service to make at least three important Polish anniversaries into international events and to show to the world these moments in Polish history, and that of its heroes, above all carry a universal ethical message. Apart from the already mentioned 25th anniversary of the fall of communism, the year 2014 was also the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jan Karski, a heroic emissary of the Polish Underground State and an eyewitness of the extermination of Jews by the Germans on Polish territory. Karski found his way to the West in 1942 and appealed to the political elites and public opinion of the UK and the USA to intervene and stop the Holocaust. Preservation of the memory of this Polish hero, who was posthumously decorated with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom and the highest honours in many other countries, is an important task and a challenge for the Polish public diplomacy, in particular in the context of the stereotype of Poles as anti-Semites and of the struggle to eliminate the use of the expression 'Polish concentration camps'. As part of the celebrations of the Jan Karski year, exhibitions, concerts, seminars,

and conferences dedicated to his activity were held in most European countries, in the USA, in South America and in Japan.⁵⁷

The year 2014 also marked the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Poland's tragic bid for independence, commemorated for both Poles and the world by the Warsaw Uprising Museum. On 29 August, three days before the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, an exhibition devoted to this event was opened in the museum of the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin. The exhibition, designed by the Warsaw Uprising Museum, was intended as a response to the fact that 70 years later, there was little or no knowledge in the German historical memory about the German occupation of Poland, the Warsaw Uprising, and the crimes against the inhabitants of Warsaw. Germans associate Poland in the context of World War II with Auschwitz and the Holocaust. The exhibition was a huge success in terms of attendance; it was viewed by 280,000 visitors. Studies conducted by the Warsaw Uprising Museum showed that the exhibition performed its task well and has contributed to broadening the rudimentary knowledge about the Uprising and the course of World War II in Poland among viewers from all over the world, and has allowed them to better understand the Poles' attitude towards history.⁵⁸ The exhibition's pro-freedom message was also very important, as was the fact that it fit into the Polish context of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the overthrow of communism in Europe. The last part of the exhibition presented Poland's struggle, under the communist regime, to preserve the memory of the Uprising, as well as exhibiting the birth of the Solidarity Movement and the events of 4 June 1989. The exhibition was concluded with photographs of contemporary Warsaw, which has risen from ruin and become a modern, lively metropolis.

The 70th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II in 2015 will be an equally serious challenge for Polish cultural and public diplomacy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched the procedure of selecting projects promoting the Polish contributions to the Allied victory in 1945 and the Polish historical narrative about World War II among European

⁵⁷ The detailed programme of the celebrations of the Jan Karski Year is available at: http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/public_diplomacy/the_year_of_jan_karski/ http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/public_diplomacy/the_year_of_jan_karski/ (last visited 30.10.2014).

⁵⁸ Among the visitors, 74.8 per cent declared that their knowledge about the Warsaw Uprising has deepened, and 77.6 per cent declared that the exhibition helped them better understand the Poles' attitudes and their perception of history. A summary of the exhibition is available at: http://www.1944.pl/o_muzeum/news/wystawa_powstanie_warszawskie_1944_w_berlinie_podsumowanie (last visited 30.10.2014).

societies. According to the rules of the competition, funding will be provided to projects which will strengthen a positive image of Poland as a country that derives its contemporary international activity, e.g. peace initiatives, from a tradition of a common struggle against totalitarianism and from the difficult Polish wartime experiences and the post-war period.⁵⁹

One may rightly ask if it is possible at all to include the remembrance policy and Polish history in an evocative strategy of developing the *Polska brand*. Beata Ociepka, the author of a series of papers on Polish public diplomacy and international communication, notes that *'Polish cultural diplomacy is on the way to find the balance between presenting its tragic and glorious past and its successful modernization, which has a geopolitical dimension in relation to Germany and Russia. This policy is hardly a success, as there is a conflict of memory inside the societies of "new" and "old" Europe and between Poland and its neighbours'*.⁶⁰

Given the experience garnered by Polish cultural diplomacy and the institutions promoting Poland in the world after 1989, it is clearly visible how difficult it has been to reconcile the Polish remembrance policy with the Polish promotion policy, the latter of which is based on conveying to the world the vision of a cheerful, young and creative Poland. The difficult experiences related to the promotion of Poland through historical projects have certainly contributed to the re-orientation of the IAM's promotional strategy. After a closer analysis of the projects realised by the Institute in recent years one can see that Polish historical memory and historical cultural heritage – with but a few important exceptions⁶¹ – rarely appear in the Institute's programmes. And where they appear, the historical and cultural heritage are mainly presented in contemporary contexts and with cultural references, in order to translate the language of the Polish historical experience into the language of universal associations and emotions, or in projects which depart from the grandiose historical narrative and instead focus on 'small history' and its human dimension. An exquisite example of the latter approach to history in the IAM's actions in one of

⁵⁹ See: Ministry of Foreign Affairs RP, Regulamin konkursu na realizację zadania publicznego 'Współpraca w dziedzinie dyplomacji publicznej 2015' (*Regulation of the Competition for a Public Project 'Cooperation in the Field of Public Diplomacy 2015'*), paragraph 2, point d, available at: <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/8cfe4e20-d92e-4d9b-9100-31cd5236e80c:JCR> (last visited 30.10.2014).

⁶⁰ B. Ociepka, *Polish Public Diplomacy*, "E-International Relations", 08.10.2012, available at: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/10/08/polish-public-diplomacy/> (last visited 30.10.2014).

⁶¹ Among others, the IAM was the co-organiser of an exhibition dedicated to the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 presented in Berlin.

the leading cultural projects by the Foreign Cultural Programme of Polish Presidency, entitled '*Guide to the Poles*' – a series of five documentaries about Poland during the times of communism told through the history of Polish rock, fashion, sex, Himalaism and toys.

It becomes clear – after analysing the content of the past Polish Seasons, the International Cultural Programme of the Polish EU Presidency in 2011, and the lists of grants awarded under other Adam Mickiewicz Institute programmes with regard to promoting Polish culture abroad – that the main point of interest and involvement of the IAM is the promotion of the *Polska brand* through contemporary culture in all its aspects and possible domains, from opera and literature to modern design, comic books and street art. The present approach, free from embroilment in the difficult narration of past remembrances, has mostly pushed history out of IAM's activity.

5. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute – an indispensable institution for the development of the Polska brand?

Over 14 years, the IAM has significantly extended the catalogue of the activities it manages. It is not just focused on the Seasons and other programmes for promoting Polish culture and Polish artists abroad.⁶² It is also focused on the MIDEM trade fair and the international EXPO. The Institute also coordinates two European Union programmes in Poland, financing cultural projects under the new budget perspective 2014–2020: '*Creative Europe*' and '*Europe for Citizens*'. It seems that the IAM is aspiring to capture all the more important global promotional strongholds that open the opportunity to present Polish culture through large interdisciplinary projects.

The strategic areas of the IAM's activity also include the promotion of Polish design as an important element of promoting the *Polska brand* in the world. The IAM supports the participation of Polish designers in the major events dedicated to design all over the world. Projects promoting Polish design have become a permanent element of the calendar of Polish Cultural Seasons. The IAM has published two referential books: *Polish Design: Uncut*, dedicated to crucial achievements of Polish design after 2000, and *Print Control*, on contemporary Polish graphic arts. The thrust of Polish design, as described by the IAM, aims at building the awareness of existence of strong Polish brands and dynamic young designers

⁶² The IAM coordinates two programmes of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage: Promotion of Polish Culture Abroad and Polish Culture in the World.

and ranks among the IAM's most valuable and interesting activities over recent years.

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute has gained a powerful position among other institutions in the country through its consistent reinforcement of its own brand among international and domestic culture creators, promoters and managers. In 2009, the IAM prepared a report for the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage on the state and prospects of the promotion of Polish culture in the world,⁶³ which was then discussed at the Congress of Polish Culture, the most important forum for discussing culture after 1989. In 2013, the report was invoked by the authors of the *Rules for Communicating the Polska Brand*, the most important strategic document in the field of Polish national branding at present,⁶⁴ and the IAM's vision of '*Poland as a creative enclave of Europe*', cited in the *Rules*, has become the strategic framework and point of reference for the directions of promotion of the *Polska brand* in the world.

One might query whether the constantly extending areas of IAM's involvement of the IAM should be a source of satisfaction or give rise to some concerns. It is extremely difficult to answer this question, particularly in the context of the disease that has been consuming Polish culture owing to its chronic lack of financing. This disease is, in fact, a sort of 'grantosis' – the functioning of a large number of institutions of cultural life in the rhythm of obtained (or not) local, national and European grants. The outcome of this situation is, for example, the intentional adaptation of projects to the objectives defined in the 'calls for proposals', which largely influences the institutions applying for the grant. Unfortunately, in the Polish reality it often happens that in order to be able to obtain funds an independent cultural institution must give up some of its statutory activities and adapt to the current priority of a given programme.

The consequence of this Polish 'grantosis' is the fact that the majority of cultural institutions in Poland are faced with the problem of financial instability, which makes it impossible to programme long-term activities, including foreign co-operation. The theory and practice of culture management teaches us that in the contemporary world the preparation a good foreign project takes around two years. This long-term perspective of operation is possible only for a very small number of cultural institutions in Poland. The adverse condition of Polish cultural institutions has

⁶³ See: O. Wysocka, A. Laskowski and N. Dubińska, *Od wymiany kulturalnej do nowej inteligentnej siły* (*From Cultural Exchange to New Intelligent Power*), P. Potoroczyn (ed.), op.cit.

⁶⁴ See: *The Rules for Communicating the Polska Brand...*, op.cit., p. 6.

also been revealed by European culture programs, where the minimum project value of 50,000 Euro and a 50 per cent own input requirement has been and still is an insurmountable barrier for the majority of cultural institutions.⁶⁵ The situation is particularly difficult for independent, private, small cultural entities that do not receive subsidies from the state budget.

One may thus ask whether the Adam Mickiewicz Institute a part of the Polish 'grantosis' or a remedy. Considering the Polish reality this question, although important, is altogether rhetorical. It is enough to look at the number of projects implemented by the IAM or the residential programmes it has financed for Polish artists abroad. Given the weakness of private patronage and the still insufficient corporate sponsorship, government assistance is often the only thing that allows for the execution of Polish projects abroad. Without the support of the Institute, a large number of these projects would not take place. The IAM has also been a very active member of the contemporary debate on Polish culture and its trends, hierarchies and values, which shows that the Institute is not an objective observer of cultural life in Poland. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute has become an important co-creator of the Polish cultural life and, as a result, cannot remain without influence on the cultural institutions it cooperates (or not!) with.

Conclusions

Developing the *Polska brand* is one of the long-term goals of Polish public and cultural diplomacy. Since the role of culture in this process changes and grows, the tasks of Polish cultural diplomacy and the institutions responsible for the promotion of Poland in the world through culture are subject to changes as well.

From the perspective of the post-1989 activity of the Polish diplomacy, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute has become an increasingly influential governmental institution that not only executes, but also actively co-creates, the principles of the Polish cultural diplomacy. Since 2008, the IAM has been consistently implementing a strategy of combining Polish culture with the notion of the *Polska brand*.⁶⁶ From the perspective of its own

⁶⁵ For detailed analyses of the EU programmes in the field of culture and their influence on the culture sector in the EU Member States, see: D. Jurkiewicz-Eckert, *Cultural Policy of the EU – How It Works in Practice* in: *Introduction to European Studies. A New Approach to Uniting Europe*, D. Milczarek, A. Adamczyk and K. Zajączkowski (eds.), Warsaw 2013, pp. 730–744.

⁶⁶ See: Strategia Instytutu Adama Mickiewicza 2010–2016..., op.cit.

history, the IAM has evolved from a 'supplier' of cultural products to the creator of the *Polska brand* through culture. Its activities in recent years have become an important testing ground for the directions of development of national branding and consolidation of the development strategy of the *Polska brand* through culture. The IAM has been consistently promoting the image of Poland as a creative, innovative country open to new challenges. Its activities are aimed at inducing further interest in Poland's other sectors, especially the economy, tourism and technology sectors. The use of the word *Polska* in names of projects and programmes was tested in the IAM's projects.

The growing domination of the IAM among state institutions promoting Poland abroad and the IAM's ever broader competences result in its growing ambition with respect to the role that it wants to play in Polish cultural diplomacy and, more broadly, in Polish cultural life. As Potoroczyn says: *'We have not been promoting anything anywhere for a long time now. Instead, we have been establishing relations, telling about Poland, and in fact looking after the cultural dimension of the national brand [...]. The national brand, according to Anholt, comprises six dimensions and we have appointed ourselves the custodian of one of these dimensions, namely culture, because it is good to commit to something greater than just the promotion of Polish culture abroad. National brand – that starts to sound obliging'*.⁶⁷ This is true also in the context of the Polish internal hierarchy, values and activities in culture. Due to the growing position of the IAM as the leading and most important institution in the system of building the *Polska brand* in the world through culture, the excellent PR in both the Polish and foreign media, and the success of the Institute in promoting Polish culture in the world, there are only a very few voices critical of the functioning of this institution.⁶⁸

The overall assessment of the achievements of all Polish governmental institutions for the promotion of Polish culture abroad is a completely different matter, however. The evaluation of the achievements of the Polish cultural and public diplomacy and institutions responsible for shaping a positive image of Poland abroad is still not unambiguously positive, as proven by the results of the evaluations of the promotion of Polish culture abroad conducted by the Polish Supreme Audit Office,⁶⁹ as well

⁶⁷ *Polska kultura wzmacnia swoją pozycję za granicą (Polish Culture Strengthens its Position Abroad)*, radio interview by Katarzyna Zielińska, op.cit.

⁶⁸ See: A. Ziętek, op.cit., p. 81.

⁶⁹ Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, *Informacja o wynikach kontroli promocji polskiej kultury na świecie*, (Information about the results of the assessment of the promotion of Poland in the world), Warszawa 2011, available at: <http://www.nik.gov.pl/kontrole/wyniki-kontroli-nik/kontrole,7876.html> (last visited 30.10.2014).

as the studies conducted by various research centres, institutions and academic researchers.⁷⁰ In their assessment, the institutions responsible for the promotion of Polish culture and the development of the *Polska brand* in the world have proved unable to capitalise on the huge potential of the Solidarity Movement to consolidate Poland's position in the world. After more than 20 years of transformation, they have not managed to find a different, equally confuting message to the world. Are the actions taken by the Council for the Promotion of Poland, described in this paper, the right and effective response to the lack of consistent promotion of the *Polska brand* in the world? What role will the *Rules for Communicating the POLSKA Brand* of 2013 play in the coming years? Will the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other institutions responsible for the promotion of Poland in the world be implementing the new principles and how will they do it? So far, the Polish public opinion has been receiving contradicting signals in this regard.⁷¹

The lack of an essential 'idea for Poland' and the problems with the successful promotion of the Polish historical narrative is a failure of the Polish public diplomacy and the institutions responsible for promoting Poland abroad. Paradoxically, this situation is also an opportunity for Polish culture and Polish cultural institutions. After all, if Poland is still not associated with anything in particular in many parts of the world, why could it not be known through contemporary culture and Polish cultural and creative industries?

⁷⁰ See, among others: M. Florek and M. Jankowska, *Eye on Poland. Promocja i wizerunek Polski w oczach międzynarodowych ekspertów marketingu miejsc* (*The Promotion and Image of Poland in the Eyes of International Experts in Place Marketing*), Warsaw 2012, available at: <http://bestplaceinstytut.org/www/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Eye-on-Poland-raport-w-pol.-wersji.pdf> (last visited 30.10.2014); A. Ziętek, op.cit., p. 82; P. Kieliszewski and M. Poprawski, *Instytucje publiczne i dyplomacja kulturalna. Potencjały i wyzwania* (*Public institutions and cultural diplomacy. Potentials and challenges*), "Zarządzanie Publiczne", No. 3/2009, pp. 19–32.

⁷¹ An example of the inconsistency of the Ministry's actions are two films about Poland, produced in 2014, with fundamentally different promotional messages. After the clip '*Polska. Spring into new*', the new film to promote Poland was '*Polska. Where the unbelievable happens*', shown in social media, But its content and message deviates from the directions of development of the strategy for communicating the *Polska brand* to the world as provided for in the recommendations of the Council for the Promotion of Poland and officially promoted by the Ministry. However, it should be noted and highlighted that the promotional slogan '*Polska. Where the unbelievable happens*' contains the word 'Polska' in its wording, as recommended by the Council and the document *Rules for Communicating Polska Brand*. On the other hand, the Ministry officially included the *Rules* in the competition for projects in the field of public diplomacy in 2015, which seems to confirm the importance of the document and the recommendations it contains to the development of long-term strategies for the promotion of Poland abroad.

'Poland as a creative enclave of Europe' – will this vision of the IAM prove to be the right strategy for the promotion of the *Polska brand* in the world? Is it a vision that will solidify the association between high-quality projects and their cultural, specifically Polish DNA? Is the consistent shifting of focus from historical narration to the promotion of the achievements of modern Polish culture the right strategy for Polish cultural diplomacy in the long term, particularly in the context of new developments in the historical policy of Germany and Russia? Today these questions are not easy to answer, even though it seems that the choice of successful modernisation, innovation, and Polish creativity as the major themes for the promotion of the *Polska brand* in Europe has already influenced the activities of the Polish cultural diplomacy.