NEW PRACTICES AND TRENDS IN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

- The new Cultural Diplomacy strategies require a change in the attitudes, discourses, behaviors, and strategies of representations of Cultural Diplomacy practitioners
- The newer approaches to cultural relations involve a necessary dynamics:
  - from events to projects from bilateral to multilateral, from presentation to co-operation,
  - from products to process,
  - from one-way to two-way,
  - from telling to listening,
  - from self promotion to values promotion
  - from selling an image to communicating it through image cultural values and attitudes.

- The new forms of Cultural Diplomacy are limited to adding new practices and interlocutors to the state as the indisputable subject of any diplomatic practice
- The non-state actors are increasingly becoming political players in the global sphere.
- Several authors remark the connection between cultural relations and the foreign politics of a nation, and take "Cultural Diplomacy" as a specific diplomatic practice, embracing the public communication of foreign policy.

Cultural Diplomacy sometimes is associated with Branding.

- The Branding dimension of Cultural Diplomacy involves schematization in order to obtain a lucrative product.

- What distinguishes the notion of Branding from other forms of Cultural Diplomacy is its commercial motivation.

- Cultural Diplomacy aims to represent the nation in all its complexity by covering multiple facets.

- Country Branding is the opposite, a practice that involves simplification and schematization, restricting message to several concepts of imaging.

- In the past, Cultural Diplomacy was seen as a part of the broader field of Public Diplomacy, and politicies were believed to generate the necessary space for cultural exchange.
- Yet things are different today: it is culture which can generate the operating conditions for politicies.

- The first emerging new direction in cultural diplomacy is (just like in any other field of international relations) the entry of new actors, namely the unconventional "non-state" actors.
- The definition of "non states actors" usually includes NGO's, multinational corporations but also criminal/terrorist networks and sometimes even individuals which either through their wealth (George Soros) or through new technologies are influencing the international arena.
- Thanks to the new technologies in the last decade non state actors often have the financial or technical resources available until recently only to the states. They are more flexible, more responsible to emergencies and for instance often more effective than the states.

- Another emerging new evolution affecting Cultural Diplomacy is the ***multilateralism*** which is fast replacing the old fashioned bilateral approach.
- The multilateral approach is triggering an entire set of modified behavior and new strategies of actions.
- Perhaps the best ground to notice the trend is the European Cultural Diplomacy arena.
  - In 2006 EUNIC was created, as the network of European Union National Institutes for Culture.
  - Concentrating organizations with offices and programs in over 150 countries, EUNIC have in theory unrivaled experience and expertise in Cultural Diplomacy.
  - Steven Green is brilliantly revealing in his essay the acting strategy of EUNIC in at least three stages:

1. Building up partnerships at local country level by forming "clusters" of the institutes operating in a country regardless the cultural field they are involved. Anyway, the more diversity the better. Is not about a chaotic diversity but rather about organizations with a complementary field of expertise. This field of expertise ideally would be specialized at the country level in order to promote specialization and complementarity at for the upper cluster at the EU level. As an example some Baltic states clusters are specialized in wood architecture and restoration while "Mediterranean" clusters may be specialized in stone architecture, and so one. Within a cluster the members agree on joint activities in the arts and language sectors.

2. The thematic clusters once expanding with the help of EU financed programs once solid established institutionally the European Union are expanding worldwide carrying with them (intentionally on unintentionally) both the EU Cultural Diplomacy, and their regions or national state's Cultural Diplomacy.

3. While EUNIC is expanding horizontally in EU, Europe at large and the entire world, it is also deepening its structure vertically. Its members are getting involved in larger more complex projects in a more diverse range of topics. These currently include language policies and use, literary translation and shared arts projects.

- The third trend directly related with the multilateralism would be the formation of foundations set up by governments or international organizations to pursue strategic political goals trough culture.

- For examples Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), Anna Lindh Foundation, and EU Japan Institute

- The **web** will have a major impact in the development of public and Cultural Diplomacy although it is difficult to determine exactly the nature of that impact will be, given the rapid pace of change.
- Organizations involved in Cultural Diplomacy practices often use the web primarily not only as an extension of their marketing or information activities but as a main tool of visibility and dissemination.
- It is not just "another outlet" through which they can inform audiences of something happening, but a major tool designed to increase visibility, to collect instant information about the impact of their message and to expand.
- The trend is confirmed by the gradual move towards the digital media. Effective Cultural Diplomacy at global stage involves an intercultural dialogue and it involves an increased level of interaction, and this interaction trough the virtual space can be effectively realized at very convenient costs.

- The search for communication and dialogue achieved trough interactivity seems to dominate the use of the web for Cultural Diplomacy aims.
- Is not only about a platform to reach foreign audiences more easy and more effectively it is also about an essential dimension of Cultural Diplomacy, more exactly, the ability to engage the target group.
- The search for engagement and feed back demands new kinds of programs and the reshaping of the old ones.
- Also the entire strategy must keep on track with the rapid changes in technologies and social behaviors associated to it.
- In the last five years there was an explosive growth of social web communication trough socialization sites like Facebook facilitated by new dedicated devices like e-tablets and smartphones.

- Probable there is no better recent example of the challenge represented by the technology revolution than the spread of anger and extreme violence triggered by a short documentary film Innocence of Muslims posted on YouTube by a group of extremists.
- It was instantly perceived as an American government inspired action.
- As Philip Seib notes, simply is all about technology: "Ten years ago, the Innocence of Muslims controversy would not have happened. YouTube did not exist, and without this means of reaching a global audience the offensive snippets of the film would never have been seen".

- Film shows the impotence of foreign policy responsible even in a country like US in front of complex and hard to control realities like those contained by YouTube, Twitter or Facebook. With around 72 hours of video content uploaded every minute in 2011 and growing, YouTube in particular is too vast to be controlled or screened even for US dedicated services.

- The recent information explosion through the internet, places Cultural Diplomacy as a part of it at the center of any governmental action.

- In many countries young people taping half a day their Smartphone to navigate on the internet is a common image.

- Two out of three adults in UK have a Facebook account, and people seem to be just addicted to the social media.

- The competition for attention in this environment is fierce and a wise government must adapt its message for the virtual space, instant answers, etc.

- There must be developed new ways not necessarily to control, but to screen properly the content for a kind of early warning.

- Is out of question to affect the free speech and the internet most important asset, its independence.