

Paper prepared for the Euroacademia International Conference
The European Union and the Politicization of Europe

Vienna, 8 – 10 December 2011

This paper is a draft

Please do not cite

“Let’s tell Poland to the world”. Activities of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and strategies of Polish cultural diplomacy in the years 2000-2010. Achievements. Facts. Critical notes.

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Abstract

The period of twenty years of Polish transition after 1989 is the history of constructing a democratic country in all areas of public life. New priorities and challenges have appeared. Polish cultural diplomacy in service of a democratic state supports the realisation of strategic objectives of the Polish foreign policy through promoting culture in the world. This period has been marked with success as the cultural diplomacy has played a big role in acting towards the Polish membership in the EU, but it has also encountered setbacks, such as the failure to use the image capital of Solidarity to build a strong brand “Poland in the world. Currently, there are a number of governmental institutions and agendas called for creating a positive image of Poland through culture in the world, including the Adam Mickiewicz Institute¹ which has been in operation for 11 years.

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is a state cultural institution established for promoting Polish culture in the world, building on the example of European powers in this field: the British Council, Institut Français, Cervantes Instituto or the Swedish Institute, with which AMI prefers to be compared with regard to scale and strategy. In my paper I shall present the evolution of the strategy and ways of operation of the AMI as well as the basic tools used for promoting culture abroad. Motto of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute: “*We have been telling about Poland for ten years*” in the context of the anniversary of the Institute invokes a series of questions. What kind of Poland is being told by the Institute and what determines the choices the Institute makes? Where lies the difficulty in creating a positive image of Poland and how has the Polish cultural diplomacy, partly basing on the operations of the Institute, developed its Polish promotional strategies in the past? What is the AMI's new strategy of creating the “Brand Poland” through culture and what does it mean in practice for the Polish culture? What is the position of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute among Polish cultural institutions and the Polish artists? Does the model of state-culture relations practised by AMI not reach too deep into the tissue of Polish culture consequently creating it excessively? How does AMI define its role in the debate over the future of financing Polish culture and economic mechanism into which it is written? This text is not a full description of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute nor does it provide answers to the questions posed. In the text I have presented several, key in my opinion, areas of AMI operation that justly illustrate its character against its European counterparts. Looking through a scientific lens at the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and areas of its operation is in my opinion significant for understanding the challenges that the Polish cultural diplomacy is faced with.

Key words: polish cultural diplomacy, promotion of Polish culture in the world, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Brand Poland, Polish Cultural Seasons.

Introduction

The creation and global strengthening of the “Brand Poland” through culture is currently the most significant strategic objective of the Polish cultural diplomacy. It is a far-reaching and long-term objective requiring many years of coordinated promotional programs of Poland abroad as well as consequent internal activity to support the development of culture, Polish cultural institutions and creative industries, increasingly discussed in Poland.

¹The abbreviation AMI used in the text stands for the full name of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. The wording of the Polish name is Instytut Adama Mickiewicza.

The Polish cultural diplomacy in service of a democratic state has only two decades of experience, however against the background of countries with an extensive diplomatic tradition in this area such as Great Britain, Germany and France, it is still, if no longer a novice, certainly a capable and receptive learner forced to quickly catch up on decades of backlog. I say capable, as cultural diplomacy has been playing a significant role in the actions leading towards the Polish accession to the EU, and receptive as the gathered know-how has been slowly transformed into increasingly visible activities in those countries and regions of the world that have been identified by Poland as key-areas for its interests. Tools used by the Polish cultural diplomacy today for its purposes are becoming increasingly more sophisticated, derived from the best models and examples. Furthermore, with regard to activities of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, a state cultural institution established in 2000 for foreign promotion of Poland through culture and cultural collaboration in line with assumptions of the Polish foreign and cultural policy (Adam Mickiewicz Institute 2008: II, §4) we can speak of a “proprietary” and original activity program in the sphere of cultural diplomacy which transforms the specific nature of Polish contemporary culture into its strong promotional assets.

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute is certainly not the only governmental institution responsible for acting for strengthening the international position of Polish culture and creating the “Brand Poland” brand through culture. In the Polish legal system, there are two ministries responsible for the policy of promoting Poland through culture, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs² with its subordinate diplomatic infrastructure and 21 Institutes of Polish Culture and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage³, which is directly superior to the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. There are also national institutions such as the Book Institute, Theatrical Institute, Polish Film Institute, National Audiovisual Institute, Fryderyk Chopin Institute, International Cultural Centre (an institution acting for the cultural heritage of Central and Eastern Europe, based in Cracow) or the Polish Tourist Organisation with the competences in the field of promotion. In this context, it is worth noticing that in spite of reforming the operation principles, the potential and the developed network of Polish Culture Institutes constituting a significant asset of the Polish cultural diplomacy in the world, is still not fully used. The division of competence and means assigned to all these institutions is problematic, as is collaboration and communication among them (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli⁴ 2011).

The specific nature of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute follows from the fact that as a governmental body established for the purpose of conducting international promotional activity and creating a positive image of Poland through culture, the Institute has a multi-business character and can therefore conduct interdisciplinary projects and coordinate promotional actions from various fields of culture.

Further on, I would like to concentrate on discussing and evaluating the activity and strategy of the Institute, as according to the governmental projects reflecting new strategic directions of promoting Poland, it is the Institute, following its transformation into a "Polish Culture" Institute, that shall be assigned the task of coordinating activities in the field of promoting Poland globally (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego 2008). It is a difficult and complex mission, as according to indications of all recent rankings on the recognisability of Poland as a brand abroad, Poland still occupies further positions than expected. In the Country Brand Index which evaluates countries in 30 different categories, in 2010 Poland was ranked on 83rd position out of 110 countries with regard to attractiveness, although the very same index listed Poland as the 5th in the category “worth its price” alongside of Thailand, India, Mexico and Czech Republic in 2008, and in 2007 Poland occupied 8th place out of 54 countries in the “rising star” category (Country Brand Index 2010). According to the Anholt-GfK Nation Brand Index which evaluates a country's 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 (Anholt 2005, p: 334) - Poland was ranked as 27th out of 50 in 2009 (NIK 2011, p: 3).

Although among 200 countries in the world, Poland - Polska is one of the few countries whose name is very expressive and easy to pronounce in every linguistic system, which alone constitutes an asset in promotion activity, there are still many countries and areas in the world where Poland is not associated with anything or is incessantly mistaken with Holland (the phonetic resemblance of the words Poland and Holland).

² The wording of the Polish name is: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych

³ The wording of the Polish name is: Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego

⁴ The English wording of the Polish name is: The Supreme Audit Office

Changing the image of Poland in the world will therefore be a long-term and multi-dimensional process, which must be based on a consistent message. The most important source of the message is and will be culture. As presented in results of a survey ordered by the Polish Tourism Organisation conducted in 2008 (Polska Organizacja Turystyczna⁵2008 Raport, p: 6) culture is the first spontaneous association with Poland among respondents in the “Top of Minds” category (104 out of 885 votes). Among respondents were representatives of opinion making environments of European countries, journalists and tour-operators from 17 countries - people whose activity influences the creation of the image of Poland in their countries. The task of institutions creating the “Brand Poland” abroad through culture must therefore be to identify, and then, globally popularise works of art and phenomena that hold a large, positive potential for Poland. This is related to a strategic selection of means and collaboration partners preceded by appropriate recognition of needs and objectives of action. From the perspective of post-1989 activity of the Polish diplomacy, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute existing since the year 2000, is becoming an increasingly influential governmental institution that not only executes but actively cocreates the assumptions of the Polish cultural diplomacy.

The growing significance of the Institute as a leading governmental body promoting Polish culture abroad, large competence of the Institute in the field of awarding grants to individual creators and cultural institutions for activity outside Poland, are very important for the internal situation of Polish culture. Decisions and position of the Institute exert an increasingly high influence of the modern artistic and cultural scene in Poland.

“For 10 years we have been telling Poland to the world” - this captivating literary phrase uttered by Paweł Potoroczyn, current director of the Institute, comprises the essence of his Institute's activity (Adam Mickiewicz Institute: 2010, p: 4). The question that springs to mind is the following: what kind of Poland is the Adam Mickiewicz Institute telling today and how does he do it? What changes occurred in the strategy of the Institute and how are they related to the transition of the Polish cultural diplomacy and directions of its development?

Historical context of establishing the Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Let me remind you that the contemporary, post-1989 Polish cultural diplomacy has a very short history of merely 20 years. The brink of 1989 and departing from communism, building democratic institutions and radical economic changes in Poland have led to a situation where in the first half of the nineties issues related to the country's cultural policy internally (institutional reforms and changing methods of financing the institution of culture by the state) and abroad were largely ghettoised. Debates that went on at the beginning of the nineties on the model of state patronage and the level of self-financing of the culture sector in the new socio-economic order rarely touched upon the problem of cultural promotion of Poland, back then regarded externally mainly through the prism of the victory of Solidarity and the figure of Lech Walesa.

Only from the middle of the 90's, along with the clearly formulated Poland's political priority which was to gain accession to the European Union within several years, have debates been started on state strategies of promoting Poland in the countries of the 15 of that time. Culture also had a significant role to play with regard to breaking negative stereotypes and fears among members of the Community related to Polish accession. The first adopted action plans were aimed at building a positive image of Poland abroad, as a country that:

- is part of the European cultural heritage,
- reflects the dynamic nature of changes and contradicts a stereotypical, conservative image of Poland and Poles.

The first European and institutional dimension of these cultural aspirations of Poland in the pre-accession period was its participation in the culture programs of the Community: in the years 1996-1999 in programs of the so-called first generation, namely Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphael, and Culture 2000 in the year 2000-2005 (Jurkiewicz-Eckert Dorota 2006). In the year 2000, Cracow alongside of 9 other cities obtained the title of the European Capital of Culture. Messages of returning to Europe and the European nature of Polish culture were then dominant among the official diplomatic discourse and promotional activity. The atmosphere of that time is symbolically reflected by the irritation of Tadeusz Kantor who was asked about Polish integration with Europe and replied irritated:

⁵The wording of the Polish name is: Polish Touristic Organisation

"Everyone keeps asking me about our return to Europe. If you ask me, I never left it. And although I am tired of repeating the same thing, I shall repeat as many times as it takes to make sure that we all believe it."

Polish cultural entities have gained their first experience in applying for union funds and have begun to take part in European projects. The state has slowly begun to recognise the increasing need, necessity in fact, of conducting a coordinated foreign promotional policy in the field of culture and creating institutional tools for its realisation. Polish foreign policy has begun to need culture. The outcome of this idea was the founding of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in the year 2000.

The Adam Mickiewicz Institute – the objectives

The Institute was established with an ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art (the official present name of the Institution is the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a specialised state institution whose aim was to promote Poland through culture. Its aims are set forth in the Adam Mickiewicz Institute Statute (Adam Mickiewicz Institute: 2008). They are as follows:

II.4.1 "The objective of the Institute's activities is to popularise at an international forum 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"

The Institute meets the above objectives through an extensive task catalogue. There are 16 tasks and in my opinion they currently make AMI one of the most important cultural institutions in Poland, whose influence on the development of Polish culture and promotion of Poland in the world shall increase in the upcoming years. These are among others:

- popularization of Polish cultural activities in the international arena;
- cooperation with other entities for the creation of a coherent promotional image of the Polish cultural identity;
- stable cooperation in terms of programme with foreign posts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others through the preparation of joint promotional projects, as well as means to their realization: concepts, materials, study visits of foreign specialists, etc.;
- preparation and coordination of the execution of projects promoting Polish culture in the form of programme offers prepared by cultural institutions or individual curators, chosen by means of competitions or commissioned by the Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- cooperation with domestic cultural institutions in order to support their cultural initiatives in the international arena;
- activities for efficient functioning and constant updating of the integrated system of information about Polish culture, heritage and language;
- funding of foreign scholarships for Polish artists and specialists in the area of culture, as well as domestic scholarships for foreign artists and specialists in the area of culture from the means at the disposal of the Institute;
- supporting with financial and promotional instruments the foreign editions, on various media, of translations of Polish literature and writings from the area of humanities, as well as foreign publications on the subject of the history of Poland and its culture;
- preparation, on commission of the Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and realization of the Polish cultural offer during international cultural events abroad;
- coordination of the realization of projects related to the celebrations of important anniversaries and other events of great importance for the Polish culture which take place in Poland and abroad;
- initiatives that foster the growth in professionalism among the domestic centres and institutions, also non-governmental ones, in the area of a capability to conduct foreign activities of a promotional character in the areas of culture and national heritage;

The Institute coordinated also the realisation of two Community programs in Poland: The Cultural Contact Point programme and The Europe for Citizens programme

The position of the Institute and its competence with regard to promoting Polish culture abroad frame this institution in the broadly understood structure of Polish cultural diplomacy. The idea of synergising the operations of the Institute, 21 Institutes of Polish culture and the entire cultural infrastructure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as other governmental agendas and cultural institutions should result in composing a strategic and consistent promotional message and the closest possible cooperation of activities aiming at strengthening the brand 'Poland' in the world. Apart from the limited financial means in relation to needs, a major weakness of the Polish diplomacy is still the lack of one strategic document that would formulate this process for many years of promotional activity of all the above mentioned institutes. Currently, AMI is the only one among these institutions to have drawn up such a strategy and is in the progress of implementation. (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza: 2010).

The Polish Culture Seasons- promotion of Polish culture with geopolitics in the background.

AMI – a young institution with high ambitions and a tight budget

The idea of establishing a state cultural institution in Poland specialised in promoting culture abroad, namely the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, referred to the experience of European cultural powers in this area: Great Britain, France, Germany and Spain which turned a network of founded world-wide Institutes into their principle tool of cultural diplomacy. For a young institution, as the Adam Mickiewicz Institute was and still is - reference to institutions with decades of tradition and vast experience was a great challenge but also quite a burden. While The British Council, Institut Français and Goethe Institut or Instituto Cervantes realise their cultural diplomacy goals mainly through teaching the language which is believed to be the most efficient method of capturing the culture of a given culture, in the case of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute teaching the Polish language has never been set forth as its task. With huge disproportion of culture budgets in the aforelisted countries, financial means that the abovementioned institutions have at hand are also incomparable. In 2010 the Adam Mickiewicz Institute's budget amounted to 8,5 mln euro (Adam Mickiewicz Institute 2009, 129); for sake of comparison the budget of the British Council in 2010-2011 was 806,7 mln euro (the British Council 2010: 98). The budget of the Swedish Institute, to which AMI preferred to be compared to was 32.3 mln euro in 2010 (The Swedish Institute: 2011) which is three times the amount that the Polish institution had at hand.

Cultural Seasons – loading dose of Polish culture

From the beginning of AMI's operation it was clear that in order for the presentation of Polish culture to be an efficient element of creating a positive image of Poland, it must gain a certain 'critical mass', with regard to the number and the quality of projects. Promotional action must be concentrated, projects from various domains of art must be realised in prestigious locations and in co-operation with esteemed institutions, preferably spaced in time. This gave rise to the concept of Seasons, multi-topic presentations of various fields of Polish culture: art, literature, film, music, theatre and dance, recently also design, fashion, rock and alternative music.

Days of Polish Culture, Polish Culture Season, Polish Year - project names were selected according to the nature and time of promotion and have become the flagship project and AMI's biggest promotional activities.

Geostrategy of the Polish Cultural Seasons

The selection of countries where Seasons are held, is a derivative of priorities and strategic actions of Polish foreign policy, as well as a reaction to social and cultural processes in Poland.

A Priority: European Union

The first cultural season realised by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute was the Polish participation in EUROPALIA, an annual extensive presentation of national cultures in Brussels and larger cities of Belgium. According to the organisers, this presentation of Polish culture abroad - the biggest one since 1969 - was to become a tool for exerting influence by the Polish diplomacy on opinion-making European elite circles in the context of soliciting for Polish accession into NATO and EU. Also, subsequent Seasons, thanks to such a clearly defined strategic goal of Polish politics, were mainly organised in Western European countries: in Spain, Austria, Sweden, France, Germany.

Eastern Neighbours of Poland

The second half of the 2000 sees the opening of Polish cultural diplomacy to the Eastern neighbours of Poland: the Adam Mickiewicz Institute organised cultural seasons in Ukraine, Lithuania and Georgia. Also, in the current 2011 cultural program of the Polish Presidency in the EU Council coordinated and realised by AMI, one of the strategic projects are actions promoting Eastern Partnership of which Poland is a coiniciator. The most expressive and symbolic project is the "I, Culture Orchestra" – a symphonic orchestra comprising young musicians from Ukraine, Byelorussia, Aserbeidzan, Armenia, Georgia, Moldavia and Poland, who toured around Europe conducted, for example, by Nevill Mariner. Concerts were held in very prestigious halls of Berlin, Brussels, London and Madrid where the orchestra played the repertoire of Prokofiev, Szostakowicz and the Polish composer Karol Szymanowski, whose work is consistently attempted to be introduced by Poland into the cannon of world music. Apart from the musical dimension, the project had an idealistic dimension - I, Culture Orchestra referred to the project of Daneli Barenhboim and his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra composed of young Arab and Israeli musicians. "I, Culture Orchestra" featured young musicians from countries that currently remain in conflict. Intentionally, this project is to realise long term objectives of the Polish Eastern policy, where Poland does not wish to play to role of a strategic intermediary in contacts between EU and its Eastern partners.

Russia

A different role in the history of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute' Seasons is played by Russia. In its actions, AMI referred to the very strong position of Polish culture in Russia and its recognition in the Russian society in the époque of the iron curtain, especially of film, literature and popular music. After 1989, following the adoption of a definitely pro-Western option of integration with the NATO and EU structures, Polish and Russian contacts, also cultural contacts, were greatly weakened and there were fears of jeopardising the positive potential of which culture was an important carrier. That is why since the beginning of its operation, AMI has assigned high priority to Russian projects. Until that time, the Institute has coordinated 3 editions of the Polish Season; the next one is planned for 2014 and is entitled "*Mickiewicz/Puszkina. Moscow, Petersburg. Syberia*", based on the projects of Russian curators. In 2004-2005 a Russian Season was held in Poland on terms of mutual cooperation, and its focal point was the "*Warsaw-Moscow-Warsaw*" exhibition, a large, conceptual presentation of the achievements of Polish and Russian avant-garde. In the assumption of its authors, the exhibition related to historical exhibitions at Centre Pompidou in France and was the first presentation of the Russian avant-garde and independent Russian art in the history and Polish and Russian cultural relations on such a large scale. The exhibition was supposed to fill the several decade gap in this scope, make up for the lack of Russian avant-garde art in Poland and to prove the potential of cultural co-operation of the two countries. As part of powering the Polish and Russian cultural relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs opened the Polish Institute in Petersburg in 2000, while the political Polish and Russian peaks in 2010 resulted in the statutory founding the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, with locations in Warsaw and in Moscow with 1mln euro of annual budget each.

Asia

By realising the objectives of Polish Foreign Affairs, AMI is searching for ways of helping Poland come into being in the strategically significant countries of Asia: in China, Japan and South Korea. In the case of China, the issue of scale is very important: the promotional effect can only be attained through realisation of projects that are spectacular, large-scale and attract the attention of media and the audience. The Asia project had three pillars in 2010: Chinese Days in Poland, a cultural program of part of Polish Pavilion at Shanghai Expo and events of the Chopin Year. It is also worth noting that after the pavilions of France and Africa, the Polish Pavilion was one of the biggest attractions of EXPO - through its architecture and its cultural programme. A continuation of the strategy of Polish diplomacy in this area are projects that are realised as part of the Polish Presidency program in Tokyo and Beijing.

USA

This background serves to present the activity of the AMI in the United States with particular consideration of the specific character of New York. Generally, AMI does not undertake attempts to organise the Seasons of Polish Culture in NY. Paweł Potoroczyn, relying on his extensive diplomatic and managerial experience in the United States (former cultural consul in LA and director of the Polish Institute in NY) believes it unjustified and failure-bound to conduct concentrated and time-spaced Seasons as a form of promoting Poland through culture in NY, in a city where as he says “an interest in a given artistic project can be measured in nanoseconds” (Potoroczyn, 2010). Failures of other countries promoting their culture in NY in a similar way teach to look for new ways for making the Polish culture more present in the US than previously. In 2013, AMI is planning to execute a project of the “US IVY League Campus Blitz” - a presentation of the creative potential of Poland in the most prestigious American universities.

Polish Year in Israel and *Polska!Year* in Great Britain: the laboratory for new concepts

The last two Seasons of Polish culture require a separate presentation: the *Polish Year* in Israel in 2008-2009 and *Polska!Year* in Great Britain in 2009-2010; as both had to be confronted with deeply rooted stereotypes of Poland and Poles, and were the first of the kind with regard the variety of the domains of culture which they presented. It is enough to look at the numbers: 255 projects in Great Britain and 160 in Israel (Adam Mickiewicz Institute, 2009). However, it is not the statistics that decide on the meaning of the two events for development of the Polish cultural diplomacy in the recent years. Primarily, both Seasons realised AMI's new strategy, which decidedly changed the way of thinking and programming of this type of projects.

Evolution of Adam Mickiewicz Institute strategy in 2010-2011. From the 'supplier' of cultural products to the creator of the “Brand Poland” through culture

Seasons as a tool for promoting Polish culture abroad evolved alongside of gaining new experience by AMI. The evolution, which the Institute had undergone for the 10 years of its activity has been accurately described by its current Director Paweł Potoroczyn:

“For the first years we have been showing what liked in the Institute. Then we moved on to showing what other people liked, and we now starting from our own idea, a concept in line with which we create a programme with the help of our foreign partners”
(Potoroczyn: 2010).

Indeed, the first presentations of Polish culture were largely based on the selection and conceptions of the Polish project organisers who prepared a programme based largely on internal Polish hierarchies and reviews, therefore on issues that in their opinion were valuable, original and very European in the Polish culture, and constituted an element of cultural heritage in historical culture, but unjustly forgotten or unknown at all, were in the eyes of the Polish curator worth reminding and adding value. This, what seemed to be a very classical approach to promotion of Polish culture abroad, did not always prove itself right and carried the risk of a failure. They were held during the first year of the Seasons and pertained to projects promoting the Polish historical cultural heritage that did not always find the applause and understanding in the eyes of the critics.

And although from the very beginning, the principle of preparing Seasons and other projects as part of AMI's statute programs was to prepare it in co-operation with foreign institutes - project hosts by organising their stay in Poland, and it soon became apparent that study visits of artists, curators, museum directors and managers of private galleries, artistic directors and managers dealing with theatre, music, dance, directors of film, theatre and music festivals as well as journalists and art critics must be the basic way of building relations and programming the Seasons.

Creating the substantial content of the Seasons in close co-operation with institutions hosting the Polish projects because the proprietary brand of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, its own philosophy of co-operation in the field of cultural diplomacy.

This philosophy assumes that the success of promoting Polish culture abroad depends not only on the quality of a given phenomenon in culture, but also and maybe foremost on good reception and capable reaching the foreign public. That is why it is essential to have local specialists, people of culture and culture managers who are able to evaluate the attractiveness of Polish propositions and chances for their success, artistic and turnout, the long-term potential of mutual co-operation and effect creating the public opinion. They are the ones bearing the substantial and financial responsibility for conducting the program and its success. Potoroczyn calls this “a minimisation of the risk of a failure” which AMI with its limited financial means can not afford (Potoroczyn 2010).

The best examples of this sort of operations are preparations for the Seasons in Israel and in Great Britain: the latter was preceded by 30 months of preparations and 250 visits of British partners. Similar, “organic” work, almost 24 months of preparations of common projects took place in Israel in 2008. Another important assumption is the cofinancing of Seasons by both parties, which naturally allows deeper and larger scale involvement of the partnering side. Adam Mickiewicz Institute uses its own budget to finance large substantial projects with little chance to obtain other sources of financing. Needless to say, Seasons devour the largest amount of means in AMI's budget, almost a half, but without cofinancing from the hosting Party, organisation of the Seasons in a form satisfactory to both parties would not be possible. In the case of large projects, costs are split evenly as in the case of the *Polish Year* in Israel. *Polska! Year* received additional financing of 70% of costs from British cultural institutions (Potoroczyn, 2010)

In Israel and Great Britain, Seasons display a direction of evolving priorities and ways of “telling Poland to the world”. Both have set out an objective to try to change the way of thinking about Poland and Poles through cultural projects addressed to the culturally active audience, artistic elite and opinion-making circles.

The Polish cultural season in Great Britain was promoted by the slogan: “*Polska! Year – A Year of contemporary everything*”, which was the result of the co-operation between Adam Mickiewicz Institute and Wally Ollins in the scope of the Season's promotional strategy. This strategy was based on a survey conducted by Ollins in 2003-2004 in Poland which was supposed to bring about a new brand strategy for Poland (Herezniak: 2010, 205-217). Elements of this uncompleted project were used and developed by him in *Polska! Year*. The sole name of the program with the intentionally used word “Polska”, which is simple and easy to pronounce in all linguistic systems, was to draw interest and indicate originality and dynamics of the country and its modern culture.

In both Seasons, the main emphasis was placed on modernity; this was an intentional and conscious measure whose task was mainly to influence the public to look at Poland through the prism of dynamic culture and not stereotypes or deep historical events and 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, traveling abroad for the first time. We wanted to change that. We wanted to show that Poland is young, creative and dynamically-developing country with diversity of attractions” (Adam Mickiewicz Institute 2009, p: 14)

Why Great Britain?

“Because hundreds of thousands of Poles live here.(...) *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” (Adam Mickiewicz Institute 2009, p: 26).

Both Seasons were the first presentation of the Polish culture whose task concentrated around a very specific concept adopted by AMI, a certain leading idea of promoting Poland through culture. Adam Mickiewicz Institute captured this vision in the slogan “*Poland - the creative engine of Europe*” to which he adopted not only Seasons 2008-2010 but also his actions in the further years. This idea is the basic assumption of AMI's strategy until the year 2016, with regard to the subsequent seasons and large promotional projects as well as other statutory activities of AMI, including the two programs - Promotion of Polish culture abroad (support of institutional projects) and Polish culture around the world (support for individual artists).

What does this new Adam Mickiewicz Institute strategy mean in practice for Polish culture and the institution itself?

Priority: Creative Contemporarity

Analysing the programs of the past two seasons and lists of grants awarded to projects within other AMI programs with regard to promoting Polish culture abroad, it is clear that the main point of interest and involvement of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute is contemporary culture in all its aspects and possible domains -from opera to modern design, comic books and street art, and that the common feature of all projects is a large dose of creativity and innovation.

The past, history, Polish historical memory and cultural heritage - besides Chopin and his music - appear in AMI program rarely, and when it does it is reinterpreted in contemporary context, which is the only way of rendering the past understandable. The contemporary has pushed history out of AMI's activity almost completely, which is certified not only by the content of the Seasons but also projects financed by AMI.

As Adam Mickiewicz Institute is fully involved in promoting contemporary culture, among AMI grant applicants are generally institutions and artists realising projects that are highly modern projects, in form and content. It is obvious that before applicants hand in their forms they analyse the Institute's grant awarding policy as part of first preparations, and even if they do not adapt their project to that policy they certainly strongly consider AMI preferences.

Is there any point in formulating such positioning of AMI among Polish cultural institutions and individual artists as an accusation, if the Institute is able to generate the programme of the entire Season through co-operation with its foreign partners solely on the basis of very good contemporary projects, visually attractive and presenting a very high artistic and content level?

How is the promotion of Poland through creative potential, its culture, an original strategy of the Polish cultural diplomacy and to what extent does this strategy fit into the global and European trends of perceiving culture, where creativity of culture industries is regarded as an opportunity for development? Is the AMI selected strategy of promoting Poland as "*an creative engine of Europe*" and promoting projects with a very profiled nature results in something in the form of "cultural engineering" in relation to the functioning of Polish cultural institutions?

In the young democracy which has not worked out stable financial instruments to support artistic development and independent cultural institutions, the growing importance of such institutions as AMI leads to questioning the model of the state and culture relationship. Is Adam Mickiewicz Institute, whose activity not only channels ways and methods of promoting Polish culture abroad, but whose budget allows for co-financing of a series of projects of Polish artists abroad, does not gain a very strong position and influence on Polish culture? Can the constantly extending areas of involvement of AMI be the source of satisfaction or should they give rise to justified concerns?

It is extremely difficult to answer this question, particularly in the context of a disease which has been devouring Polish culture for its chronic lack of financing.

This disease is in fact "*grantosis*"- functioning of a large number of institutions of cultural life in the rhythm of obtained (or not) national, especially European, grants. The outcome of this situation is e.g.. intentional adapting of projects to objectives defined in the "calls for proposals" of European programs, which largely influences the institutions applying for that grant. Unfortunately, in the Polish reality it frequently happens that an independent cultural institution, in order to be able to obtain funds, suspends or fully gives up activities and statute projects in order to adapt its project to the current priority of a given program.

The outcome of the Polish "*grantosis*" is the fact that the majority of cultural institutions in Poland faces a problem of financial instability, which renders impossible to program long-term activities, including foreign co-operation. Theory and practice of culture management teaches that in the contemporary world the preparation a good foreign project takes around 3 years. This is a perspective for operation of a very small number of cultural institutions in Poland. Until recently, AMI has also battled a problem of the lack of a long-term plan of action strategy and the possibility of long term financial planning, which was adversely influenced the possibility of realising projects with long-term effects; this followed from the annual budgeting of its operation by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Is Adam Mickiewicz Institute a part of the Polish grantosis or a remedy? Considering the Polish reality, this question is altogether rhetorical. It is enough to look at the number of projects realised by AMI or financed residential programs

for Polish artists abroad. Without the support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute a large number of these projects would not take place. Its support would not have been replaced by private sponsoring to support Polish culture abroad that is not developed yet.

History and consistency of the new image of Poland. Why is it so difficult?

Adam Mickiewicz Institute was founded for promoting a positive image of Poland through cultural projects as an important institutional instrument of the Polish cultural diplomacy. Building the “Brand Poland” and efficient national branding must in its assumption be based on positive projects which counterbalance the pretence and martyrdom filled vision of Poland ever-lingered in the world.

This objective shall be accomplished if, also through long-term activities, the frame of perceiving Poland abroad is changed: not through culture and history, but culture. It will be easier to build an image of contemporary Poland as a dynamic, creative community of people open for the future on the basis of culture than on the basis of history, which is too difficult and complex, and due to many years of negligence and forbearance is excessively burdened with stereotypes for the foreign viewer to want to pay his attention to it. The Polish nobility as a mainstay of religious freedom or the Constitution of the May 3rd 1791 as the second in the world and the first in Europe fundamental law, creating the foundations of modern parliamentarism? The Polish cultural, artistic and musical heritage as an example of symbiosis of influence of the West and the East? The Polish cultural diplomacy tried to promote Poland through these values but they did not play practically any role in the changes of the Polish image after 1989. Furthermore, the Polish cultural diplomacy in its activities must consider the fact that in the eyes of a young, active recipient of culture, even the Polish “historical icons” such as Solidarność or Lech Wałęsa have lost significance. If we add the battle for European historical remembrance lost by Poland, when the Fall of the “iron curtain” is identified with the Fall of the Berlin Wall and not with the Solidarity movement, and the Polish diplomacy all over the world must keep combating the expression “Polish death camps”, used frequently in the Eastern press and television to describe German camps in Auschwitz and Treblinka, then it becomes clear that reaching for Polish history is a difficult challenge, additionally bearing a high risk of failure.

Is it the right remedy to tell the history of Poland by deriving from grand museal historical narration in favour of “small history” and its human dimension? The last years of activity of the Polish cultural diplomacy clearly display a bipolarity of thinking about this issue. On the one hand, Poland within the framework of the Polish Presidency in the European Council is organising a grand exhibition in Berlin entitled “*Side by Side. Poland and Germany - 1000 Years of History in Art*”, on the other hand AMI prepared a project “*Guide to the Poles*”, series of 5 documentaries about Poland in times of communism told by the history of Polish rock, fashion, sex, Himalaism and toys.

The involvement of Adam Mickiewicz Institute in historical projects is also inhibited by modern trends in Polish culture that only undertake the difficult historical motifs, for settling scores from the past, full of “idioms” of the Polish experience incomprehensible to a foreign recipient. We are also lacking new institutions that would be the appropriate provider of a clear and modern historical message for the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, which could be transferred by the Institute outside. The construction of the European Centre of Solidarity and the Museum of II World War in Gdansk, the close opening of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews or the beginning of construction of the Museum of History of Poland may be an opportunity not only for the AMI but also the entire Polish cultural diplomacy for efficient activity in the field of historical politics.

Adam Mickiewicz Institute— observer or creator of culture development concepts in Poland?

Force and variety of programs of Polish cultural institutions is one of the prime conditions of success of Polish cultural diplomacy. Needless to say, the stronger the Polish culture potential, the larger number of interesting projects are bound to be created in Poland and the more the promotional value of Polish culture shall expand. This means that if the state notices and wishes to use this potential, it must increase expenditure on culture which has been a domain almost non-existent in the budget. In the Polish model of cultural politics the state generally plays a significant role, yet only 0.5 percent of the Polish Gross National Product is devoted to culture; as a result of this all domains of culture

are in permanent financial crisis which until recently has been left unresponded by the government and explained by the general state of public finance and priorities other than culture.

The idea of marketing culture, so commonplace among political elite in the 90s, and on the other hand the development of various branches of the cultural sector in spite of the lack of significant support from the state have led to popularisation of the thought that "culture will feed itself". Gradually it became clear that as far as this presumption was applicable for commercial culture, in the case on non-profit spheres of culture commercialisation is a big threat. The adverse condition of Polish cultural institution has also been unveiled by European culture programs, where the minimum project value of 50,000 Euro and a 50% own input requirement was and still is a barrier unsurpassable for the majority of cultural institutions (Jurkiewicz-Eckert Dorota 2006) The situation is particularly difficult for independent, private, small cultural entities that do not receive subsidies from the state budget.

The Polish Culture Congress called by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage in 2009 was assumed to be an attempt of diagnosing the state of Polish culture after 1989. The substantial basis for discussion proved to be "Reports on the State of Culture" which all indicated the need for serious value-change of the attitude of the state towards the level of financing culture and a new division of means assigned to culture and cultural education. One of the topics discussed during the Congress was the issue of promoting Polish culture abroad and involvement of state institutions in these activities. The basis for this was a report prepared upon the request of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage by a team managed by the Director of AMI, Paweł Potoroczyn (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego 2009), who actively participated in constructing the opinion of the Congress on changing the principles of financing of Polish culture. Potoroczyn was one of the initiators of the most effective postulate in Congress, namely "1% of NGP for culture". This slogan, was ultimately added to the "*Pact for Culture*", an intentional document signed by the Polish government and the social side, represented by the Citizens of Culture movement⁶, which also included an obligation to gradually increase the culture budget up to the level of 1% of NGP in 2015 (Obywatele Kultury 2009). Although the real executionability of this provision remains in question today, it must be noted that the Congress of 2009, activity of the Citizens of Culture movement, Regional Culture Congresses and the last stage of applying by Polish cities for the title of the European Capital City of Culture in 2016 have powered up the discussion in cultural circles on the directions of cultural development and on the real involvement of non-governmental and non-public institutions of culture in the process of managing the public budget for culture on all levels: nationwide, local and municipal (Bendyk Edwin 2010). In my opinion, the involvement of Paweł Potoroczyn as the Director of AMI proves the thesis on the very strong opinion forming position that Potoroczyn earns for the Institute also inside the country.

A completely new plot in the Polish discussion over the place and role of culture in the contemporary society is the question of culture economics, namely the participation of culture and creative industries in the economic development of Poland. One of the most active participants of this discussion was AMI and Paweł Potoroczyn himself, who views culture as one of the fastest evolving economy sectors in Poland. He quotes a number of data displaying that culture produces 4,5% of NGP and that investment in culture and culture industries is more than justified economywise (Potoroczyn 2010). In this scope Poland still falls behind other EU members, yet for several years it has been extensively promoting, also through its financial activity, the idea of developing and supporting culture industries as industries of the future in Europe.

Applying market categories to culture and 'economisation' of the discourse on culture is a new phenomenon in the Polish public debate it has certainly been driven and publicised by the Culture Congress and activities following from it. „*Culture counts!*” - the slogan of the social campaign of the National Culture Centre of 2011 for raising awareness on the social and economic potential of culture is a trait of the changing paradigm of thinking about the role of culture in Poland. Also AMI recognises the phenomenon of progressing thesaurisation of culture in the world (Potoroczyn: 2010). Polish culture, apart from the sphere of ethic and artistic values which it carries, according to the philosophy of activity of the AMI it is also a commodity that bears its own brand. Polish contemporary culture is promoted by the AMI as a top shelf brand. Obtaining this position in the world requires modern management and marketing tools, which AMI has started to implement in a series of its projects – their success begins to be measured in the category of return rates of Polish expenditure and not just the attendance or number of quotations and reviews in foreign media.

⁶The wording of the Polish name is: Obywatele Kultury.

The contemporarily effective “telling Poland to the world” does not only depend on the number of projects and positions of foreign partners, but to a large extent on publicising and promotional side of these activities. The Polish cultural diplomacy still complains about the misconception of modern mechanisms of cultural promotion through ministerial decision makers, though it seems that also in this domain a slow change is happening. The recent declarations of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage that the general budget for promoting Polish culture will rise, certainly meets the expectations of the AMI which estimates that the success of Polish cultural programs abroad also depends on the means devoted to strictly promotional operations, which in the case of one project may absorb up to 30% of the entire budget. Currently the Institute can not spend more than 3-5% (Potoroczyn: 2010). Strengthening of AMI's budget shall also be a signal for positioning of this institution as the future flagship institution in the strategic promotion of Polish culture abroad.

Conclusions

The 10th Anniversary of the Adam Mickiewicz institute is captured in the slogans that picture the dynamics of its development. 32 seasons of Polish culture abroad, a modern website - www.culture.pl with over 4 million visitors per year, high level of AMI publishing program, thousands of study visits of specialists, curators and journalists and the creation of a strong network of contact in the world enabling efficient realisation of AMI projects. For 10 years Adam Mickiewicz Institute has significantly extended the catalogue of the fields and activities it manages. It is not just concentrated around culture seasons and other programs of promoting Polish culture and Polish artists abroad. It is also the MIDEM trade fair, the international EXPO and the Polish Presidency Cultural Program ending the coming days. It seems that Adam Mickiewicz Institute is aspiring to capture all the more important global promotional strongholds that open the opportunity to present Polish culture through large interdisciplinary projects.

A large number of institutions involved in promoting Poland abroad has brought about a dispersion of competence, financial means, and frequently introduced the competitive edge. All governmental documents related to the promotion of Poland recommend the consolidation and coordination of Polish cultural diplomacy actions. Establishing the “Polish Culture” Institute is still a matter of the future, and is rather far off, however an institutional reconfiguration is inevitable.

Adam Mickiewicz Institute aims at gaining a powerful position among other institutions in the country through consistent reinforcement of its own brand among the international and domestic circle of culture creators, promoters and managers. For two years AMI has been a very active member of the contemporary debate on Polish culture, which certifies that the Institute is not an incidental, objective observer of cultural life in Poland. Adam Mickiewicz wishes to be an important part of that life in line with the assumption that the promotion of culture abroad is an element of the idea of functioning and development of Polish culture as a whole. In my opinion, the position of AMI inside the cultural circulation in Poland as presented above can not remain without influence on cultural institutions it cooperates with.

For the past years, AMI has greatly strengthened its internal marketing activity.

It is frequently present in the Polish media and therefore activity of this institute is much more visible in Poland than the activity of eg. Polish Culture Institutes subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Poland the association of a state institution with culture does not bring the positive connotation, as the memory of censorship, political control of culture and inhibiting the freedom of speech during the communist times is still too fresh.

It is certainly a success of Adam Mickiewicz Institute that in general perception this institution is not associated with a governmental agency, although in fact it is a state cultural institution realising the objectives of the Polish foreign policy.

The Polish cultural diplomacy professionalises its actions and learns how to apply new tools for promoting the country through culture. Promoting Poland through culture should be an introduction to further interest in Poland in other sectors of particularly in economy, tourism and technology. In the strategy of Polish promotion until 2015 it is clearly visible that the way of thinking about culture has changed (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2010). It can also be observed in the language which AMI uses to describe its strategy in the years 2010-2016 and projects it realised (Adam

Mickiewicz Institute 2010). The national brand, effectiveness of communication, building the awareness of perceiving culture as part of the economy - these are notions used by the Institute to capture the concept of its development.

Creation of the “Brand Polska” in the world. The perspectives.

It seems that Polish cultural diplomacy and institutions responsible for promoting Poland abroad are still at the starting point of a long journey. Research and analyses show that in many areas of the world Poland is still not associated with anything specific, and its reputation and image abroad is much worse than the one Poland deserves after 20 years of changes.

“Only the countries that solve problems and heal the world are recognised globally brand wise. We have had a taste of this for a moment, but we have lost an invaluable patent for the word 'solidarity' which could have become our intellectual property, as we had the ideas, we had the logo symbol, the personal symbol and the competence. And we have completely failed to use solidarity as a medium for promoting Polish culture” (NIK,2011, p: 58)

Until now, Poland has not found a different, equally confuting message to the world - after 20 years of transformation, the lack of a bearing "idea for Poland" is a failure of the Polish public diplomacy. Paradoxically, this situation is an opportunity for Polish culture and Polish cultural institutions. After all, if Poland is not associated with anything particular in many parts of the world, why would it be known through culture? I mean culture that would tell the story of Poland in words comprehensible in the world of globalised needs and values. Therefore, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute offered a story of Poland as a country that is creative, innovative and open to new challenges. "Poland as the creative engine of Europe" - will the vision of AMI prove to be the right “idea for Poland”? Time will tell.

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