



The Use of Public Diplomacy Tools In Uzbekistan's Foreign Relations

Ismatullaev Farhodjon Odiljonovich

Doctor of Historical Sciences (DSc), Uzbekistan National Pedagogical University named after Nizami

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*Correspondence: Ismatullaev

Farhodjon Odiljonovich

Email: farhodismatullayev@mail.ru

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Abstract: This article analyzes cultural cooperation and cultural diplomacy, which are among the key areas in the relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and European countries. The author attempts to show that these relations are being actively demonstrated through various cultural fields – particularly with the developed countries of the European Union such as Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom – by organizing artist exhibitions, photo exhibitions in museums, and displays of traditional folk arts, including ceramic art. The author has also attempted to put forward their own recommendations for further expanding the efforts being carried out in this direction. The article makes effective use of materials from the National Archive of Uzbekistan and the periodical press.

Keywords: Art Exhibitions, Caravan Routes, International Cultural Relations, Museum Events, Globalization, National Holidays, Literature, Music, Louvre Museum, Rueil-Malmaison, Cultural Heritage.

Introduction

It is well known from history that in strengthening a state's cooperation with the outside world and gaining recognition, the richness of its ancient values, art, history, and culture, as well as the greatness of its contribution to world civilization, play a significant role. Undoubtedly, Uzbekistan, with a statehood history of nearly four thousand years, has also been striving in recent years to present its cultural and educational values on the international stage. In this process, material artifacts directly related to our history, preserved in our museums, various cultural centers, and foreign countries, are also being utilized. In particular, collaborative exhibitions and conferences held with European countries in key areas of art and culture have proven to be highly effective and carry significant importance.

Among these, visual arts also hold a significant place in the cultural cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the countries of the European Union. In this area, key directions of bilateral cooperation include showcasing artists' creative works to the public and supporting mutual professional development. One such exhibition was organized in 1995 at the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan in cooperation with the French Embassy, in honor of the 50th anniversary of Victory. The event featured an exhibition consisting of 50 photographs. At the event, works by Uzbek and French artists related to the theme were showcased. Another such exhibition was organized in 1996 in Tashkent, where artworks by French artists preserved

in the collection of the Uzbekistan State Art Museum were presented to Uzbek art enthusiasts. At this exhibition, 45 paintings preserved in the State Art Museum were displayed, belonging to renowned French artists such as Renoir, Claude Monet, Cézanne, Degas, Tissot, Gauguin, Matisse, Van Gogh, Léger, and Braque (National Association of International Cultural and Educational Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan).

Methodology

This article was prepared using historical-legal and cultural research methods, specifically contextual analysis, comparative methods, evidence-based approach, and historical source analysis. The first step involved gathering factual information about significant exhibitions, conferences, and cultural events that took place between 1995 and 2022 as part of the cultural cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the EU member states from public sources, including academic journals, official reports, catalogues, and museum materials.

In order to clarify the nature and future directions of bilateral cooperation, this study also examined visual art exhibitions that represent reciprocal cultural relationships. The events' dates, locations, attendees, and cultural diplomacy function were all thoroughly investigated.

In addition, content analysis techniques were used to investigate exhibition-related events that took place in European nations, specifically France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. This study determined how each event influenced Uzbekistan's reputation, how much interest it attracted from international audiences, and what factors made it successful.

Within the context of the study, cases of inter-museum collaboration, international scientific conferences on the subject, and initiatives to promote cultural heritage were also examined and assessed as successful channels for cross-cultural exchange.

In order to reach well-founded and fact-based scientific conclusions, the article used extensive research techniques based on historical sources, official data, real-world examples, and international experience.

Result and Discussion

The next presentation of artworks took place in 1996 at the Uzbekistan State Art Museum, featuring exhibitions titled "Albrecht Dürer's Wood Engravings" and "Wall Paintings Along the Silk Road", which provided information about the activities of museums in Germany. As a logical continuation of the cooperation, an exhibition of graphic works from the collection of the Karakalpakstan State Museum was presented to German art enthusiasts at the renowned Chemnitz Art Museum in Germany for one month in 1996. Later, one of the cultural events of the same nature was organized in January 1999 in Tashkent under the title "Graphics from Germany in the 1970s" (German Graphics in Uzbekistan, 1999).

In recent years, interest in the history and culture of Uzbekistan has been growing in the countries of the European Union. Taking this into account, a large photo exhibition was organized on June 11, 2001, in the city of Freiburg, Germany, as part of the event "Days of Uzbekistan" (Uzbekistan's History Is Great, Its Future Will Be Great Too). At this event, Uzbekistan's unique history, art, philosophers, thinkers, remarkable architecture, and other

elements of its cultural heritage were presented to German photography enthusiasts. German scholars who visited the exhibition emphasized Uzbekistan's contribution to the cultural development of world nations and acknowledged its worthy place in the history of human civilization.

Presentations and exhibitions promoting Uzbek culture and art have also been held in Italy, serving as an important factor in enriching the worldviews of different nations. The exhibition "Uzbek Carpets and Suzani", organized by the "Musavvir" association led by renowned Uzbek artisan Sh. Shokhalilov in the ancient Umbrian province in the city of Todi, Italy, left a strong impression on art and culture enthusiasts and greatly increased their interest (National Association of International Cultural and Educational Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan). A cultural partnership was established between Deruta, another handicraft city in the Umbrian region, and the city of Rishtan in Uzbekistan's Fergana region (Rishtan Ceramics Displayed in an Italian Museum). In December 2021, a presentation of Rishtan ceramics was held at the Museum of Works of Art in the city of Deruta. The items were donated to the museum as exhibits. These artifacts, crafted by artisans from our country, became a highly valuable gift for the Italian people, who are historically rich in cultural heritage.

Painting exhibitions play a significant role in Uzbekistan's cooperation with France. For example, on April 13, 2017, an exhibition of works by Uzbek miniature artist Davlat Toshev was held in the city of Rueil-Malmaison, France. The event was organized by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in France in cooperation with the municipality of Rueil-Malmaison and the administration of the city of Bukhara, in honor of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. The exhibition, titled "21st-Century Uzbek Miniature Art", once again demonstrated the French public's interest in Uzbekistan and served as a unique invitation for them to visit our country (Sozi, 2017).

The exhibition titled "On the Path of Sustainable Cooperation Between the European Union and Uzbekistan: Traditional Values and New Horizons" was organized on June 13, 2018, at the Tashkent House of Photography (Sozi, 2018). The event provided information about the current state and prospects of relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union. More than forty creative works by Lazizkhan Toshbekov and Lauren Kana Channing were presented at the exhibition. The exhibition reflected the European Union's cooperation with our country, its priority areas, as well as Uzbekistan's culture, people's lifestyle, values, traditions, and customs. Most importantly, the photographers chose as their main theme the noble aspirations of the many nationalities and ethnic groups living in harmony and unity in our country.

In the summer of 2021, as part of the "Social Sciences" international festival held in the United Kingdom, an Islamic art exhibition was organized by artists inspired by the hadiths of the great scholar Imam Bukhari. The event aimed to promote Uzbekistan's cultural and historical heritage and to reveal the true values of Islam. The exhibition was organized in cooperation with the UK-based company "Dacore IT", the University of Leicester, the Imam Bukhari International Research Center under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Malaysia. Renowned miniature artists, masters of calligraphy, graphic artists, talented calligraphers, and photographers participated in the exhibition with their works. The internationally recognized "Sogdiana" National Musical

Instruments Chamber Orchestra performed a special new composition titled “Zikr” for the event, bringing joy and inspiration to the attendees (Sozi, 2021).

The intelligence and wisdom of our great ancestors were clearly manifested in the items they created, including handicrafts, architecture, embroidery, and the art of bookmaking (Shukurjonovna, 2024). The fact that such a rich historical and cultural heritage of our people has been passed down through the centuries evokes a deep sense of pride in all of us. Indeed, this tradition is still highly cherished today.

A great deal of practical work has been carried out to collect and publish Uzbekistan’s tangible and intangible heritage preserved in world museums. For example, on May 14, 2017, an international scientific and cultural congress was held in Tashkent under the theme “Uzbekistan’s Cultural Heritage – A Path to Dialogue Between Peoples and States” (Uzbekistan’s Cultural Heritage in the Focus of the World Community). It is worth noting that this congress also holds particular significance as it was aimed at implementing the Action Strategy for 2017–2021, which outlines key directions for the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Adolat, 2017). Indeed, this document places special emphasis on the in-depth study and preservation of our people’s rich history and cultural heritage, on strengthening mutual harmony among the various nationalities, ethnic groups, and religious communities living in our country, and on enhancing Uzbekistan’s position and role in the international community.

Among the more than 120 foreign and over 100 local experts specializing in oriental studies, archaeology, history, numismatics, textiles, and ceramics, representatives of science from European Union countries such as Italy, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Greece also took part - renowned scholars, as well as heads of museums and research institutes (Shukurjonovna, 2024).

It is well known that the peoples of Europe, including the French, show great interest in the history and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and its study. Taking this into account, an exhibition titled “The Splendours of Central Asia: Uzbekistan at the Crossroads of Caravan Routes” was opened at the Louvre Museum in Paris in November 2022 (Safarovich & Odiljonovich, 2020). Considering that this exhibition is being held in one of the world’s largest museums, the fact that our ancient history and culture are being showcased in the heart of France – a country visited by more than 60 million tourists annually – is a great recognition.

Conclusion

Based on the above considerations, it is appropriate to conclude that cultural relations, exhibitions, and international events all serve to strengthen ties between nations and states. In turn, they contribute to the development of public diplomacy, fostering progress in interethnic relations, mutual understanding, and spiritual closeness. This, of course, also has a positive impact on major political relations, creating opportunities for new forms of cooperation in the future and bringing renewed energy. In some cases, when political diplomacy falls short, the use of cultural diplomacy tools has proven effective, as seen in global practice.

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