

ejlhss

ISSN : 3031-7347

<https://doi.org/10.61796/ejlhss.v1i7.754>**THE ROLE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND “SOFT POWER” IN THE RELATIONS OF UZBEKISTAN WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION****Ismatullayev Farhodjon Odiljonovich**

Doctor of Science in History (DSc)

Associate Professor of Tashkent State Pedagogical University

farhod.ismatullayev@mail.ru

Received: May 22, 2024; Accepted: Jun 29, 2024; Published: Jul 20, 2024;

Abstract: The article analyzes the role of cultural diplomacy in strengthening the cooperation of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the European Union. The author points out that these contacts are carried out especially within the framework of days of culture, appearances, festivities, conferences, film and theater weeks on the basis of scientific sources, daily press and archival materials

Keywords: The Republic of Uzbekistan, the European Union, cultural diplomacy, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, globalism, civilization, literature, music, theater, cinema, art exhibitions, friendship society, cultural heritage

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license**Introduction**

In the contemporary era of globalization, the issue of developing cooperation between states and peoples is becoming an urgent issue for all times. In such circumstances, the role of cultural diplomacy is invaluable in ensuring that peoples understand each other, exchange ideas, and participate in the development of cooperative ties. Through cultural diplomacy, there is an opportunity to find solutions even to political and economic issues.

The use of cultural diplomacy is effective in establishing and developing international organizations and interstate relations. At the same time, it plays a decisive role in achieving success in the economy, investment, and political diplomacy, which are crucial for a country's development. For example, by participating in international tourist festivals and introducing Uzbek culture, art, and values to foreigners, Uzbekistan showcases its tourism potential, encouraging future visits to the country. This will lead to an increase in the flow of tourists to Uzbekistan, the growth of the economy, and the creation of jobs. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is also important for economic development and the establishment of political dialogues.

In addition, through cultural diplomacy, different peoples have the opportunity to get to know each other's art, language, literature, cinema, theater, crafts, and values. In international relations, interactions in the realm of diverse cultures create broad opportunities for the rapprochement of states and peoples, the establishment of friendly relations, and the exchange of ideas from a spiritual perspective.

Result and Discussion**Discussion**

In its foreign policy, Uzbekistan pays great attention to the issues of cultural diplomacy with foreign countries and international organizations [1:58-64]. Cooperation in this direction has also been established with the European Union, the only integrated organization that unites 27 European

countries into a single union and serves as an example for the whole world with its political, economic, and cultural achievements. This cooperation is currently under development.

The analysis of historical research shows that the historical roots of cultural cooperation between the two regions go back to ancient times. For example, during the reign of the Roman emperor Andrian (2nd century AD), the court officials wore clothes made of Marocand silk brought through the Great Silk Road [2].

In the development of cultural diplomacy between Eastern and Western countries, the era of Amir Temur and the Timurids is distinguished by its uniqueness and progress. During the reign of Amir Temur, cooperative relations were established with countries such as France, Spain, and England [3].

Henry IV's letters to Amir Temur and his son Mironshah in 1403 are an example of this perspective. At that time, the socio-economic and political conditions in Europe necessitated that the English establish contact with the countries of the East and the peoples of the region. The vast kingdom created by the great Amir Temur was the center of attention not only in Asia but also in Europe. Nearly six centuries later, the descendants of the peoples of these two regions have restored mutual relations. Political and cultural cooperation has been reestablished between the two regions.

In this regard, it is also worth noting that cooperation in cultural fields between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the countries of the European Union is implemented on the basis of signed bilateral and multilateral agreements. All member countries of the European Union actively participate in this cooperative process. However, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and the more developed countries of the European Union, such as Italy, France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Austria, and Latvia stands out for its comprehensiveness.

Cooperation in this direction is being carried out consistently with ancient Rome, that is, the Republic of Italy, which is considered the cradle of European civilization. The inextricable connection between its great history and the present, combined with its inexhaustible intellectual and spiritual potential, has turned Italy into one of the largest and most influential countries in the world, with powerful industry and science, and a bright future [4: 67].

The intellectuals of Uzbekistan and our artistic community are deeply interested in Italian culture. When we think of Italy, first of all, we think of this beautiful ancient city of Rome and its glory, medieval renaissance works of art, humanism, and the homeland of opera, which is a classical art. Therefore, establishing cultural relations with Italy means connecting with both the ancient and modern worlds. Moreover, there is a notable appreciation for the history, culture, and art of Uzbekistan in Italy. The fact that the study of Timurid history began first in Italy among European countries demonstrates their significant interest in the history of our country.

Famous Italian writers such as Dante Alighieri with "Divine Comedy", Boccaccio with "Decameron", sonnets of Petrarch and Virgil, Giani Rodari with his fairy tales have all attained the status of world masterpieces. Particularly, translating these works for Uzbek readers plays a crucial role in fostering closer relations between peoples and providing an opportunity to appreciate literature from both regions [5]. Therefore, it is no coincidence that relations with Uzbekistan, which was the center of Eastern culture in ancient times, began long before the signing of the agreement in the field of education, science and culture.

Interest in the culture of Uzbekistan is increasing year by year in European countries. Of course, various festivals and culture events, which are regularly organized, play an incomparable role in increasing these interests.

One of such cultural events of international importance was organized in January 2017 in Pesaro, Italy, the second international friendship festival "Italy – Uzbekistan" [6]. The famous Italian artist Aida Abdullayeva and the international cultural association "Verbumlandia" with the support of Pesaro City Hall and Pesaro-Urbino Province, Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan, National Agency "Uzbekkino" were the organizers of this event. At the opening ceremony of the international festival, it was noted that our country has a rich historical and cultural heritage. The exhibition, concert program and fashion show organized as part of the conference were widely covered in the Italian

mass media. The exhibition of samples of the works of Uzbek artists Akmal Nur, Alisher Alikulov and Tahir Karimov left a great impression on the guests of the event.

Concerts with the participation of Uzbek and Italian musicians were organized as part of the festival. A night of piano music was held in the city of Yezi with the participation of pianists N. Husanova and M. Ilyasova [7]. In this festival, which encompassed many events, the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of our homeland was demonstrated. Just as Samarkand and Rome are cities of the same age, the Uzbek and Italian peoples culturally enriched each other and laid the foundation for future cooperative relations.

Cooperation in this direction is being actively carried out with the center of world culture - France. In the development of bilateral cooperative relations, the visit of the President of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev to Paris on October 9, 2018 opened a new era in the history of relations [8]. During the visit, it was acknowledged that cultural and humanitarian relations are developing steadily. Specific directions for expanding cooperation in the fields of culture and art, tourism, science and education, and archaeology were also identified for the future

Result

If we look at the history of relations in this direction over the past 25 years, we can see that the joint program between France and Uzbekistan on “Cooperation in the fields of science, culture, and education” has played a significant role, and as a result, the achievements reached have been effective [9].

On April 10, 2007, the showcasing of young fashion designers’ art from Uzbekistan at the renowned Louvre complex, the presentation of the anthology “125 Years of Uzbek Photography”, and the photo exhibition at the French Art Building were significant events in the history of our cultural relations [10]. The dress show was held in one of the central halls of the Louvre. During the performance, the audience once again got acquainted with the traditional and modern music and dance art of Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that considering the infrequency of events held at the Louvre Museum in France, it underscores the significant attention given to our culture and art. Additionally, it should not be overlooked that out of the 75 million tourists visiting France annually, 50 million visit Paris, with 20 million specifically going to the Louvre to see the legendary Mona Lisa [11]. It is evident that Paris became one of the centers of world culture many centuries ago and continues to hold that status. Therefore, museums play a crucial role in the development of cultural diplomacy. Additionally, it is pertinent to study the significant successes France has achieved in the field of tourism as a model and implement them practically, tailored to the conditions of Uzbekistan.

It is becoming a tradition to hold art exhibitions in cooperation between Uzbekistan and France. The next exhibition was held on April 13, 2017 in Rueil-Malmaison, France, dedicated to the display of the works of the Uzbek miniaturist artist Davlat Toshev [12]. The event was organized by our country’s embassy in France in collaboration with the city hall of this city and the city hall of Bukhara to commemorate the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our countries. It is noteworthy that cooperative relations between the cities of Bukhara and Rueil-Malmaison were established in January 1999 and continue to thrive. Specifically, the ongoing exchange of delegations, cultural events, and joint projects enhances the friendly relations between our peoples [13].

The French have shown great interest in Uzbekistan, situated in the heart of Central Asia, renowned for its rich history, culture, and masterpieces of medieval Eastern architecture. Over the years, hundreds of residents of Rueil-Malmaison have visited our country, experiencing the fascinating sites and hospitable people of Bukhara. The exhibition on “Uzbek miniature art of the 21st century” once again highlighted the French public’s interest in Uzbekistan and served as a unique invitation for them to visit our country.

A similar cultural dialogue continued at the Louvre Museum during the visit of Uzbekistan’s President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev to France. The museum exhibits are divided into 6 collections, with the Eastern collection alone occupying 24 halls. It houses thousands of artifacts related to the history of

our country. For instance, items such as Amir Temur's letter to Charles VI, the candlestick crafted by Sahibqiran for the mausoleum of Akhmad Yassavi, ancient weapons, inscriptions, and other artifacts testify to our great past. President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, who examined these historical sources directly in the museum, emphasized the importance of regularly organizing exhibitions in cooperation between Uzbekistan and French museums, as well as expanding scientific cooperation between archaeologists and historians [14].

It is well known from history that European nations, including the French, have a deep interest in the history and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and its exploration. Considering this, an exhibition dedicated to the history of Uzbekistan is planned to be held at the Louvre Museum in 2021. This event will mark the first exhibition in this renowned museum dedicated to a country from the Commonwealth of Independent States [15].

Theater and film art occupy a special place in the cultural relations between the countries of the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Both of these art fields serve to bring people closer to each other and to get an impression of the achievements of national culture through stage exhibitions.

It has become customary to host European film festivals and film weeks in Uzbekistan. In January-February 1998, the 10th French Film Festival was held in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Navoi regions, featuring the participation of renowned actor Alain Delon. Nine films created in various years were screened during the festival [16]. The organizers of the festival provided an opportunity for the Uzbek audience to become acquainted with numerous masterpieces of French cinematography. This initiative greatly contributes to cultural enrichment and further enhances cooperation between the peoples of both countries.

Following this tradition, the next year saw the organization of a film festival in Tashkent, initiated by the embassies of four European Union countries: Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and France [16].

Such events are organized in European countries featuring productions by Uzbekistani cinematographers. For example, the Uzbek Film Festival held in Great Britain in the fall of 1999 was a great success. Films such as "Yettinchi o'q", "Sevishganlar", "Nafis", "Voiz", "Alisher Navoiy" were screened in cinemas across London and other cities in England, generating significant interest among a diverse audience [16].

Theater plays a significant role in the development of cultural diplomacy. The field of theater holds a special position in Uzbekistan-Italy cooperation. For instance, in 1996, the opera "Lucia di Lammermoor" by the Italian composer K. Donizetti was staged at the Tashkent Opera and Ballet Theater, with substantial support from the Italian embassy in bringing this masterpiece to fruition [17]. They bring their peoples closer together by promoting cultural exchange between the two countries and spreading the literature, art, and culture of each country in their respective territories [18].

Cooperation in the field of theater is also progressing with Germany, where works of German writers are staged by our local theaters. One notable cultural exchange occurred on January 18, 2019, at the Surkhandarya Regional Theater, featuring the performance of German writer Lessing's play "Nathan the Wise" [19]. The play was interpreted by the team of the Uzbek National Theater. It is noteworthy that the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Uzbekistan became the sponsors of "Natan the Wise".

Conclusion

Based on the above considerations, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Firstly, one of the priorities of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is the development of relations with the European Union under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Special attention is being given to the development of cultural cooperation in all areas within bilateral and multilateral relations. The "Friendship" societies formed with the member states of the Union also play an important role in effectively organizing these relations.

Secondly, in the contemporary era of globalization, the issue of developing cooperation between states and peoples is becoming an urgent issue compared to all times. In such circumstances, the role of cultural diplomacy is invaluable in ensuring that peoples understand each other, exchange ideas, and participate in the development of cooperative ties. It is possible to find a solution to even political and economic issues through cultural diplomacy.

Thirdly, archival materials also confirm that cultural relations between Eastern and Western peoples date back almost two thousand years. However, a unique and enhanced diplomacy was forged during the time of Amir Temur and the Timurids. Even during that era, cooperation flourished in literature, art, and science. The Spanish ambassador Rui Gonzalez Clavijo and Amir Temur's ambassador Mohammad Qazi played pivotal roles in fostering relations between their countries and contributed to the development of mutual cultural ties. The works of Rui Gonzalez Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador, still serve as valuable sources of information on the history, culture, and diplomacy of that period.

Fourthly, Uzbekistan has regularly been cooperating with the European Union and its member states in various cultural fields, including artists' exhibitions, cultural days, museum events, scientific conferences, festivals, theater, and film events. Countries such as France, Italy, Germany, Latvia, and Bulgaria, among the more developed members of the European Union, consistently engage in these collaborations.

Fifthly, the role of museums in the development of international cultural relations is immensely significant. They play a crucial role in fostering closer ties between people, enriching cultures, and advancing international relations. Additionally, cultural relations serve as a pivotal factor in elevating interstate relations to a higher level of quality. Importantly, this has a very positive effect on the annual increase in the number of tourists visiting our country.

In short, cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role and occupies a significant place in Uzbekistan's integration into the global community, successful collaboration with various international organizations, strengthening ties between states and peoples, shaping friendships among diverse cultures, ensuring international harmony, preserving universal values, and promoting tolerance

References

- [1]. Sayfullayev D. Yangi O'zbekiston madaniy diplomatiyasining mintaqaviy jihatlari // O'zbekistonda ijtimoiy fanlar. – Toshkent, 2020. – № 1-2. – B. 58–64.
- [2]. НА РУз, ф - М-2., д.-172, л.-13.
- [3]. МИД РУз // Цель и задачи внешнеполитического курса Узбекистана. <http://www.mfa.uz>
- [4]. Karimov I.A. Bizdan ozod va obod vatan qolsin. –T.: O'zbekiston, 1996. T.2. – B.67.
- [5]. НА РУз. Информация о деятельности Общества “Узбекистан-Италия” // Ф-м-2, д – 172, л –41.
- [6]. Italiyada bo'lib o'tgan xalqaro anjuman O'zbekistonning boy madaniy salohiyatini namoyon etdi // Xalq so'zi. – 2017. – 4 yanvar.
- [7]. Italiyada bo'lib o'tgan xalqaro anjuman O'zbekistonning boy madaniy salohiyatini namoyon etdi // Xalq so'zi. – 2017. – 4 yanvar.
- [8]. O'zbekiston – Fransiya: uzoq muddatli hamkorlikni yanada kengaytirish va mustahkamlash yo'lida // Xalq so'zi. - 2018. - 10 oktyabr.
- [9]. O'z MA. Fond – m -2, ro'yxat – 1, jild – 48. varaq – 30.

- [10]. Parij sinovlari O'zbek madaniyati Fransiya poytaxtida yana bir bora namoyish etildi // Xalq so'zi. – 2007. – 11 aprel.
- [11]. Parij sinovlari O'zbek madaniyati Fransiya poytaxtida yana bir bora namoyish etildi // Xalq so'zi. – 2007. – 11 aprel.
- [12]. Fransiyada o'zbek rassomining ko'rgazmasi // Xalq so'zi. – 2017. – 14 aprel.
- [13]. Fransiyada o'zbek rassomining ko'rgazmasi // Xalq so'zi. – 2017. – 14 aprel.
- [14]. O'zbekiston – Fransiya: uzoq muddatli hamkorlikni yanada kengaytirish va mustahkamlash yo'lida // Xalq so'zi. 2018. 10 oktyabr.
- [15]. O'zbekiston – Fransiya: uzoq muddatli hamkorlikni yanada kengaytirish va mustahkamlash yo'lida // Xalq so'zi. 2018. 10 oktyabr.
- [16]. Нуриддинов Э. Международное сотрудничество Республики Узбекистан со странами Европы. –Ташкент: Чўлпон, 2002. – С. 163–164.
- [17]. НА РУз Национальной Ассоциации международных культурно-просветительских связей Республики Узбекистан // Информация о деятельности Общества “Узбекистан-Италия” // Ф-м-2, оп - 1, д – 172 л –41; Ф-м-7, д – 725, л –105- 107.
- [18]. O'zR MA. O'zbekiston Respublikasi va Italiya Respublikasi o'rtasida do'stlik va hamkorlik to'g'risidagi shartnoma, 8-modda // Fond. m -7, ro'yxat – 1, jild – 719, varaq – 110.
- [19].** Elchixona asar homiysi // Xalq so'zi. - 2019. - 20 yanvar.
- [20]. Ismatullayev F. & Ahmedova, S. Some problems of the cooperation of Uzbekistan and Italy // Scientific journal of the Fergana State University, 2(1), 2019. -pp.113-114.
- [21]. Ismatullayev F. & Axmedova, S. O'zbekiston-Italiya hamkorligining ayrim masalalari // Farg'ona davlat universiteti, (1), 2019. -p.28.
- [22]. Odiljonovich I.F. The role of art exhibitions in the development of cultural relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union // Journal of pharmaceutical negative results, 2022. - pp.1522-1524.
- [23]. Ismatullayev, F.O. Some aspects of Uzbekistan's cooperation with the European Union in the field of transport and logistics // International journal of history and political sciences, 2(07), 2022. -pp.9-13.
- [24]. Ismatullayev F. International cultural relations of Uzbekistan (On the example of the European Union) // O'zbekiston milliy universiteti xabarleri, 1(5), 2020.
- [25]. Ismatullayev F. Uzbekistan cooperation with the European Union in the trade-economic and social-humanitarian spheres (on the example of Bulgaria) // O'zbekiston milliy universiteti xabarleri, 1(6), 2020.

- [26]. Safarovich, S.S. & Odiljonovich I.F. Symbiosis of civilizations as an important factor in the formation and development of scientific thinking in Uzbekistan // Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal, 1-12. 2020