

## ATTITUDES FORMATION TOWARDS THE EU BY THE EU DELEGATION TO UKRAINE

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The article illuminates perceptions and attitudes towards the European Union, which are formed within the Ukrainian mass public by the EU Delegation to Ukraine as part of its diplomatic work in the relevant country.

Стаття висвітлює сприйняття та ставлення до Європейського Союзу, котрі формує серед української громадськості Представництво ЄС в Україні в межах своєї дипломатичної роботи у даній країні.

Статья высвечивает восприятие и отношение к Европейскому Союзу, которые формирует среди украинской общественности Представительство ЕС в Украине в рамках своей дипломатической работы в данной стране.

**Ключові слова:** Європейський Союз, дипломатія, Україна, Представництво ЄС в Україні, євроінтеграція.

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Nowadays effective and successful formation of public attitudes by foreign actors is particularly important in the countries, where collaboration and negotiations with government and political elites are complicated by ideological, economical and other limiting circumstances [21, 16]. One of these countries nowadays is Ukraine. Despite the stated interest in European integration of Ukraine the current government led by the Party of Regions proved to be a difficult partner for the European Union, since the process of foreign policy decision making is not transparent and the real objectives of the Ukrainian government are not clear. Therefore, in this situation the main receiver of the diplomatic messages of the EU might become citizens, since they have a possibility to reshape the government's position.

Since the Maastricht Treaty the EU is an influential regional power influencing the domestic politics of the neighboring states, changing their economic wellbeing through foreign aid as well as altering normative perceptions and ideological beliefs of people living in them. As a result, societies of the neighboring states have deep knowledge about the EU as well as quite often inflexible notion about advantages and disadvantages of the EU foreign policy behavior [12].

One of the countries which experienced and continues to experience unprecedented impact from the EU is Ukraine. Every year it receives a substantial financial aid from both the EU Member States and the EU in general. Moreover, it was a geographical area of one of the EU civilian operations, e.g. European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM). All the aforementioned facts give evidence that Ukraine is a big testing ground for the export of the EU ideas [29, 476].

The main aim of such research is to „de-centre“ the formulation of the EU's role on the international arena and in influencing foreign audiences, in particular in weak neighboring countries, depending on the support (financial and ideological) from the EU. The article will show how the EU is perceived and accepted by the non-European actors.

Influence of the European Union on the general public of the neighboring states is highly relevant and frequently discussed topic. Among the most famous authors one can name J. Zielonka [29], whose research proved the existence of the globalizing impact of the EU public diplomacy on the weak recipient societies, B. Ociepka and M. Ryniejska [23], who researched the aforementioned subject in the context of Eastern Europe, M. Comelli and R. Matarazzo[16], the study of whom showed that official delegations of the EU have possibility to formulate public opinion in the target states. The case of Ukraine with regard to the EU's influence on the Ukrainian mass public was particularly researched by A. Gawrich, I. Melnykovska, and R. Schweickert [19], R. Vanderhill [28], as well as by J. Langbein and K. Wolczuk [20].

Among the Ukrainian researchers the topic of the EU's foreign influence on the attitudes towards the EU among Ukrainian population was covered by V. Gumeniuk [3], who analyzed general openness of the Ukrainian society towards the ideas of Europeanization; by A. Sapsai [10], whose research illuminated the traps of the European integration and its influence on Ukrainian mass public; by V. Geets [2], study of whom devoted particular attention to the institutions of socialization existing within the EU.

However, existing research suffers from several weaknesses. To begin with, most research is devoted to the historical description of the EU-Ukrainian relations and mutual influences. Moreover, the majority of research is normative in its nature, explaining and listing the rules and proposed practices which will help to build effective EU's influence in a given state. As a result, the latter

scientific findings are repeated and duplicated in manuals and instructions of various governments and public agencies; that causes the spread of similar ideas and principles. This research, in its turn, will be devoted to practical side of this issue, i.e. to the description of the official message of the EU Delegation to Ukraine about the European Union, which is spread within the Ukrainian society.

This article will be devoted to the analysis of the public diplomacy message of the EU Delegation to Ukraine as the institution which fulfills ambassadorial duties at the territory of the relevant country. In particular, the research question is the following:

*What kind of attitudes is the EU trying to form within the Ukrainian society through its official representation?*

The research consists of two parts: (1) description of work of the EU Delegation to Ukraine as an environment of attitude forming; and (2) content-analysis of main documents produced and published by the EU Delegation of Ukraine.

The first part of the article is supposed to give general overview of the EU Delegation's work in Ukraine, as well as provide some information concerning specifics of role of the Head of Delegation. The second part will concentrate on content-analysis of official statements the EU Delegation to Ukraine, Eurobulletins, newsletters and co-operation news published by it, as well as mass-media statements of Jan Tombinski. This analysis will help to highlight what kind of attitudes towards the EU the Delegation is attempting to form in Ukraine.

The EU Delegation to Ukraine fulfills the functions of representation of the EU interests on the territory of Ukraine. Despite the fact that the majority of its activities are directed towards the government of Ukraine, it also conducts public diplomacy, which means that among its priorities there is an objective of forming positive image of the EU within the Ukrainian society.

According to its official web-site, the predecessor of the EU Delegation to Ukraine used to be the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine, but since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force (1 December 2009), it was transformed into EU Delegation to Ukraine [27]. As far as this institution has the status of the diplomatic mission, it possesses an official mandate, which can be conditionally divided into traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy parts. The first part includes development of political and economic cooperation with the government of Ukraine, control of the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Ukraine [24], and conduction of European Union's assistance programs [27]. The second (public diplomacy) part of The EU Delegation's mandate consists of "increasing awareness of the EU, its institutions and its programs" and "inform[ing] the public of the development of the EU, explain[ing] and defend[ing] individual EU policies" [27]. The implementation of these public diplomacy objectives of the EU Delegation are conducted through the following actions:

1. Publishing Eurobulletins, Newsletters, EU Co-operation news (both electronically and in the form of printed press). These documents are often republished by Ukrainian mass-media and NGOs.
2. Publishing statements of the EU Delegation to Ukraine. Such statements usually take place as a result of crisis situations or events in which the EU has direct interest.
3. Making mass-media statements by the Head of Delegation. Since Jan Tombinski, the current Head of the EU Delegation hasn't published any official statement yet, his statements made during press-conferences are of particular interest with regard to public diplomacy.
4. Conduction of events. The EU Delegation to Ukraine arranges numerous social, educational and cultural events on the territory of Ukraine, aiming at promotion knowledge about the EU.

The EU Delegation to Ukraine also supports the functioning the network of centers of European information: Ukrainian public organizations, the main objective of which is to inform the population of Ukraine about the advantages of the European integration [22].

According to Ryszarda Formuszewicz and Jakub Kumoch, the work of the EU Delegation highly depends on the personal approach of its Head [18, 8]. To begin with, in contrast to pre-Lisbon period, when the joint position of the EU was represented by the country holding the EU presidency, nowadays the Delegation of the European Union to the given state (for example, Ukraine) not only represents the EU externally: the representative of the Delegation also chairs the meeting where the common positions are developed. Since such meetings are usually taking place at the ambassadorial/ Head of Delegation level, this person has a considerable influence on decision making [16, 2]. In addition, the budget of the EU Delegation, as well as management of the various EU programs carried out in the given country, are also subjects to full control and responsibility of the Head of Delegation [16,5]. Therefore, the Head of Delegation is not only an appointed diplomat, whose main duty is accurate reporting, but an important politician, representative of the EU position and its voice in the country where he is working.

The importance of the individual characteristics and experience of the Head of Delegation are particularly important in the case of Ukraine, where the issues of freedom of speech, rule of law, human rights and many others associated with democracy are still questionable. The previous Head of Delegation, Jose Manuel Pinto Teixeira (2008-2012) proved to be radical in his evaluation of Ukrainian political processes and legal system. He repeatedly criticized lawsuit of the former Prime-Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko, mixed election system of Ukraine, provisions of Ukrainian Criminal Code and the actions of the President of Ukraine [6], [7], [13]. Such actions not only provoked conflict escalation between the EU and Ukrainian government, but also gave birth to contradictory attitudes within the Ukrainian society. As a result, during the last months of his work as a Head of EU Delegation to Ukraine, Jose Manuel Pinto Teixeira was not recognized as the official representative of the EU by the Ukrainian government [11].

Thus, the beginning of Jan Tombinski's work as the Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine was waited for and welcomed by both the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian society. Jan Tombinski was said to be chosen among other five contenders (mainly of the British diplomats) owing to his active support of European integration of Ukraine during the Polish Presidency in the second half of 2011. In addition, he has experience of working in "problematic" countries in deep crisis (Bosnia and Herzegovina) or during active implementation of European standards (Czech Republic). In 1989 he created and became the president of European Integration Association in Krakow and was an active member of famous Solidarity trade union, which also advanced his profile for Ukrainian mass public [14].

The new appointment of the Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine made in the context of diplomatic rotation 2012 resulted in the considerable advancement of the image of the Head of EU Delegation and, logically, of the EU Delegation to Ukraine as a whole. Despite the fact that this research is limited to the timeframe of work of the current Head of the EU Delegation, it is still important to take into consideration that both social and political environment in which the EU Delegation is working in Ukraine now is more friendly and perceiving than it used to be in 2008-2012.

Content-analysis of some of the aforementioned verbal data produced by the EU Delegation to Ukraine gives the possibility of illuminating what kind of vision and understanding of the EU the Delegation wants to form among the Ukrainian citizens.

The texts for content-analysis will be divided into the following categories:

1. Statements of the EU Delegation to Ukraine. This kind of texts is particularly important for the research, because it reflects unmediated position and messages of this diplomatic institution. Since within the timeframe of the given research only two statements of this kind were published, both of them will be included into the analysis.

2. Eurobulletins, Newsletters and EU Co-operation news. These verbal sources are supposed to hold the main informative and promotional messages. Since there is a large set of these texts, the samples for analysis will be chosen by simple random sampling. To make the task of content-analysis realistically manageable, the amount of samples was deliberately limited to 3 (one eurobulletin, one newsletter, one EU co-operation news article).

3. Mass-media statements of the Head of Delegation. This kind of sources is the most interesting, because it reflects the personal position of Jan Tombinski. Taking into consideration his influence of the work of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, explained above, these texts might illuminate messages not mentioned in other samples. In order to equalize the amount of samples from this and the previous categories, 3 statements will be chosen by simple random sampling.

The primary analysis will be conducted separately for each of the aforementioned categories. Then the findings will be generalized for the final conclusions.

Since the beginning of work by Jan Tombinski as the Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, only two official statements have been published. The first was published on March 19th, 2013, and is called "Statement of the EU Delegation on Ukraine's increase of import tariffs for passenger cars" [25]. The second text is "Statement of the EU Delegation to Ukraine on the personal attack of a FEMEN activist against MEP Elmar Brok" [26], published on March 22nd, 2013. Both statements are available at the official web-site of the EU Delegation to Ukraine.

The content-analysis tables (see Table 1, 2) demonstrate that the EU Delegation in its statements divides two separate areas of its perception: inappropriate actions from the Ukrainian side and criticism from the EU Delegation's side. It could be assumed that such kind of messages demonstrate the existence of opposition between the EU and Ukrainian understandings of acceptable political and social behavior. Thus, the EU Delegation is formulating messages which are aiming to illuminate "normative" and "justified" (from the point of view of the EU) perceptions and, therefore, result in conflict attitudes. Such position could be understood as both sharing values and creating intercultural tensions.

Despite the fact that two statements cannot show the whole range of attitudes and messages produced by the EU Delegation to Ukraine, their amount itself, as well as their content give a glimpse of the existing conflict between the EU Delegation and Ukrainian society, which, thus, motivates the EU Delegation to formulate the statements within the framework of appropriateness/inappropriateness of Ukrainian social and political events and process.

**Table 1.** Analysis table of meaning units and codes of statements of the EU Delegation to Ukraine

Meaning Unit <sup>1</sup>	Code <sup>2</sup>
Personal attack against MEP	Aggression against MEP
Topless attack against the European deputy	
Unprecedented personal attack on MEP	
Allegations are false	Refuting of information
EU Delegation to Ukraine strongly condemns	Strong censure by the EU Delegation to Ukraine
EU expressed its strong concerns	
Extremely damaging	Negative description of Ukrainian policy
New trade barrier	
No proper legal justification	
Negative economic impact	

NOTE: The data in the table was collected and analyzed by the author of the research in its entirety

**Table 2.** Analysis table of codes, categories and theme of statements of the EU Delegation to Ukraine

Theme <sup>3</sup>	Conflict between the EU Delegation to Ukraine and society/government of Ukraine		
Category <sup>4</sup>	Not appropriate actions of Ukrainian citizens/ Ukrainian government		Criticism by the EU Delegation to Ukraine
Codes	Aggression against MEP	Negative description of Ukrainian policy	Refuting of information Strong censure by the EU Delegation to Ukraine

NOTE: The data in the table was collected and analyzed by the author of the research in its entirety.

As it was mentioned above, these documents serve as the informational mediator between the EU Delegation to Ukraine and Ukrainian society. Within the timeframe between September 2012 and May 2013 the EU Delegation to Ukraine produced 4 Eurobulletins, 29 newsletters, and published 5 co-operation news. Despite the fact that the number of different kinds of documents is disproportional with regard to the fact that each of them will be represented only by one sample, the task here was not to describe the variety of information published by the EU Delegation, but to cover different types of documents and their main messages.

Thus, for each sub-group, the text for content-analysis was chosen with the help of online random number generator. The tables (see Tables 3,4) present the results of analysis of Eurobulletin # 2 [4], Newsletter # 6 [1] and co-operation news article # 3 [17].

The content analysis showed two major messages. Firstly, the EU Delegation to Ukraine aims to represent the EU itself as Union of prosperity, democracy and justice, where economic or political problems are always solved. Even if this political unit (also called “federation of national states”) faces temporary difficulties, they are immediately removed owing to “European standards” of politics and economy. As a result, the methods of achieving such wealth are pictured as “normative”, applicable to Ukrainian realities. Secondly, these norms and experiences can be transferred to Ukraine; that will advance its “daily life” and simplify the process of European integration which is described as final objective of Ukraine.

**Table 3.** Analysis table of meaning units and codes of Eurobulletins, newsletters and co-operation news

Meaning Unit	Code
Positive EU membership	European integration as positive improvement
Effective instrument for country modernization	
Strengthening the legal system	
Common space of knowledge and innovation	

<sup>1</sup> Meaning units are words or sentences which relate to the main contextual meaning.

<sup>2</sup> Codes are tools for labeling the meaning units for simplification of further analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Theme is the central topic of the text, aimed at illuminating its latent content.

<sup>4</sup> Category is an exclusive (not overlapping) group of similar content.

European perspectives	"European" means "normative"
Democratic values and norms	
Real European public space	
In accordance with European standards	
European experience	
European methods of politics	
Close relationship with civil society	Benefits for Ukrainian society and state from the EU
The EU is our major partner	
Protecting citizen rights and freedoms	
Maintain order in soft way	
Change thinking of people	
[The EU] improves communication with society	
The EU is helping Ukraine	
To bring wealth to rural areas	
Eastern partnership improves daily life	
Better quality of life, better business environment, easier travel to the EU	
We help local communities	
Motivating cultural policy reforms	
Assistance to civil society	
Positive cultural contributions to ... social inclusion	
Fighting corruption	
Strengthening of security on the continent	Wealth and stability in the EU
Flourishing of the EU states	
Federation of national states	
Europe has soul	
European mechanism of stability works	
Leading world player	
European year of citizens	
Stable level of inflation in the EU	

NOTE: The data in the table was collected and analyzed by the author of the research in its entirety

**Table 4.** Analysis table of codes, categories and theme of Eurobulletins, newsletters and co-operation news

Theme	The European Union as place of welfare, aiming to integrate Ukraine			
Category	The model prosperous European Union		Positive Ukraine's gains and perspectives within European integration	
Codes	"European" means "normative"	Wealth and stability in the EU	European integration as positive improvement	Benefits for Ukrainian society and state from the EU

NOTE: The data in the table was collected and analyzed by the author of the research in its entirety.

Logically, to count and to verify all mass-media statements of Jan Tombinski was challenging owing to their informality, selective media coverage and lack of reliable searching engines suitable for this task. Thus, it was decided to use the archive of UNIAN [5], the biggest and most reliable Ukrainian information agency, which covers all events and news which took place at the territory of Ukraine and which is the primarily source of information for mass media in Ukraine.

The archive of UNIAN showed that Jan Tombinski made 25 statements on various topics regarding Ukrainian politics and social life. In order to equalize the analysis of this kind of documents with ones mentioned before, it was decided to analyze three of them. The online random number generator chose statements # 5 [5], #25 [15], #2 [8] (for content analysis table see Tables 5, 6).

According to Jan Tombinski, Ukraine has to fulfill numerous requirements and substantially advance its politics and policy in order to be capable of joining the EU. In order to achieve this, it has to meet so-called "European standards", promotion of which is the major duty of the EU Delegation to Ukraine. It also must be highlighted that Jan Tombinski doesn't avoid radical

phrases, such as “to change mentality and culture”. Nevertheless, in all his statements the EU is always regarded as the assistant in the free choices of Ukrainian government and society.

**Table 5.** Analysis table of meaning units and codes of mass-media statements by Jan Tombinski

Meaning Unit	Code
Standards of the European Union	The EU as an example for Ukraine
European way	
European integration is effective instrument	
Necessity of fighting corruption in Ukraine	Goals for Ukraine
Change mentality and culture	
Irreversibility of democratic changes in Ukraine	
Get closer to European standards and laws	
Ukraine has to fulfill all requirements	
Potential benefits of European Neighborhood Policy	EU's assistance
The EU and its MS can help Ukrainian institutions	
Deepening relationship between the EU and Ukraine	EU Delegation's role
Modernization of the country	
Removing barriers and stereotypes	

NOTE: The data in the table was collected and analyzed by the author of the research in its entirety

**Table 6.** Analysis table of codes, categories and theme of mass-media statements by Jan Tombinski

Theme	Improvement of Ukrainian politics with the help of the EU			
Category	Ukraine's objectives based on EU example		EU Delegation's help	
Codes	The EU as an example for Ukraine	Goals for Ukraine	EU Delegation's role	EU's assistance

NOTE: The data in the table was collected and analyzed by the author of the research in its entirety

Three different types of texts demonstrated various dimensions of EU Delegation's message concerning the image of the European Union. Despite the fact that all of them are either produced or published by one diplomatic institution, the main idea of texts from the aforementioned groups shows that forming the attitudes towards the EU within the Ukrainian society is often made in diverse ways.

Statements of the EU Delegation to Ukraine showed the conflict environment in which this institution is working. Thus, the difference between European approach to normativity of political and social processes and Ukrainian realities resulted in generating message which obviously shows the gap between the EU and modern Ukraine, picturing the former as an example for future development of the latter.

However, texts generated regularly (not in crisis situations) present the EU as an assistant and reliable partner for Ukraine<sup>5</sup>. Eurobulletins, newsletters and co-operation news depicted the EU as prosperous and wealthy “federation of national states” which could be joined by yet not developed Ukraine.

This explanation of the relationship between the EU and Ukraine is supported also by the mass-media statements of the Head of Delegation. Being an important diplomatic actor, Jan Tombinski also emphasizes the importance of the EU as normative power, which can help Ukraine to advance economically and politically.

In sum, the EU Delegation to Ukraine creates *the vision* of the European Union as friendly partner, willing to and capable of helping Ukraine to improve its standards of living and, thus, in the long-term period to become its Member State.

<sup>5</sup> The vision of the EU as an assisting partner is conventionally accepted both in the EU and Ukraine. Similar findings were achieved by Julia Langbein and Kataryna Wolczuk in their analysis of the impact of the EU in Ukraine (Langbein Julia, Wolczuk Kataryna. (2011) ‘Convergence without membership? The impact of the European Union in the neighbourhood: evidence from Ukraine’, Journal of European Public Policy, 19:6, 863-881)

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