

OLGA BOGORODETSKA

Wschodnioeuropejski Uniwersytet Narodowy imienia Łesi Ukrainki (Ukraina)
Uniwersytet Warszawski
ORCID: 0000-0002-5878-0068
bogorodecka@gmail.com

**UKRAINIAN-POLISH PARTNER CITIES’
COOPERATION SINCE THE BEGINNING
OF 2022 WAR IN UKRAINE¹**

The Cooperation of Ukrainian-Polish Partner Cities during the 2022 War

The cooperation of Polish and Ukrainian partner cities has changed significantly since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022. Traditional widely spread cultural programmes and projects were displaced by humanitarian assistance. Ukrainian cities (authorities) and the entire Ukrainian society affected by the war received the support mostly from Poland. The following research shows how cooperation between Polish-Ukrainian partner cities has changed in terms of law, areas of cooperation, the geography of the expanded partnership, and forms and types of assistance since 24 February 2022. Selected examples of partnership cooperation between Ukrainian-Polish cities are analysed taking account of a significant number of initiatives and programmes.

Keywords: Ukraine, Poland, partner cities, humanitarian assistance.

INTRODUCTION

The cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian partner cities has long roots and goes back to 1956, when contacts were first established between Poltava and Koszalin (Kudrytsky 1992: p. 556). The initial

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phase of cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian partner cities in the communist period is characterised by centralised way of conducting agreements. That time an initiative of cooperation came mainly from the representatives of the communist party, according to its ideological and political orientations. The motivation and the context of partnership agreements were incomparable to those signed after Ukraine became an independent state. During the first decade (1991–2001) after Ukraine became an independent state 41 partnership agreements between Polish and Ukrainian cities were signed (Bogorodetska 2016: p. 172). An increase in partnership agreements was also connected with the reform of territorial administration in Poland, which took place in 1998.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the cities' partnerships received a new impetus, being more oriented to society and people's desire to establish contacts. Some of the internal and external factors in both states affected the process of establishing partnership agreements. Poland joined the EU in 2004; its experience of pre-accession reforms and transformation, especially in the field of local self-government, was important for Ukraine and its cities. On one side, Poland wanted to share its experience with its eastern neighbours, especially with Ukraine; on the other side, Ukrainian cities with great potential for transformation were sought to obtain new knowledge and skills to conduct such reforms. Motivation also came from several other internal factors, for example the Orange Revolution. Some scholars claim, however, that the Orange Revolution had nothing to do with the transformation of Ukrainian society. In their work, R. Kuźniar underlined that the Orange Revolution 'in a socio-political sense was simply a spontaneous protest of Ukrainian society against a crude attempt to falsify the election results and Russia's vassal treatment of Ukraine' (Kuźniar 2012: p. 328). Nevertheless, the Orange Revolution was an underlying factor that 'awakened' Ukrainian society. It gave its citizens new values and opportunities to develop civic society and to conduct democratic reforms, in which the closest partner and friend on the international stage was Poland. Cooperation with Polish cities, for the Ukrainian side, became a 'window' to new knowledge and experience of conducting successful reforms. With the Orange Revolution, Ukraine chose a European way of development and Poland became a strategic partner in this process. Polish cities also had the greatest number of partnerships with Ukrainian cities (in 2013, of the 895

partnership agreements between Ukrainian and other foreign cities, the most numerous group – comprising 199 partnership agreements – was Polish) (Bogorodetska 2016: p. 49).

Another important external factor supporting Polish-Ukrainian partner cities' cooperation, common for both Ukraine and Poland, related to the development of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation, especially under the framework of the 'Bug' and 'Carpathian' euroregions. The notion of the 'euroregion' relates to the 'an amalgamation of regional and local authorities from both sides of the national border, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly' (Medeiros 2011: p. 142). For Polish and Ukrainian border areas, euroregions became a locomotive for the development of people-to-people contact – especially considering that most partnership agreements between Polish and Ukrainian cities belong to the border regions: Subcarpathian Voivodeship, Lublin Voivodeship and Lviv Oblast, Volyn Oblast (Bogorodetska 2016: p. 41). Even though most of the euroregions involving Ukrainian and Polish regions were established at the end of the 1990s ('Bug' in 1995, 'Carpathian' in 2000), an intensification of their work has occurred since 2007, thanks especially to the Cross-border Cooperation Programme for Poland–Belarus–Ukraine, 2007–2013. Under this Programme, an important role was the promotion of people-to-people contacts, by which we mean interpersonal ties of the inhabitants of the two cities from different states that were formed due to different governmental or/and non-governmental initiatives, aimed at cultivating mutual understanding and long-term relations. Projects under the Programme (and its continuation – the Cross-border Cooperation Programme for Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2014–2020) created a platform for discussion and dialogue between citizens from Ukraine and Poland (cross-border cooperation). Numerous Polish and Ukrainian cities have established partnership agreements during this period (e.g. Lutsk–Torun in 2008, Vinnytsia–Kielce in 2009, Dnipro–Szczecin in 2010 (Bogorodetska 2016: pp. 176–79).

However, war in Ukraine and the following humanitarian crisis has significantly influenced the partnership cooperation between not only the cities, but also the states in Europe and beyond. The Budapest Memorandum on the Security Assurances of 1994 that was supposed to guarantee the territorial integrity of Ukraine in exchange for Ukraine's renunciation of its nuclear status was ineffective. The Russian Federation, one of the states that signed this document, became the one that violated all applicable rules of international law

by brutally attacking Ukraine. As a result, nowadays we can observe that the usage of soft power is not enough to influence foreign society; at least it does not work with non-democratic states like Russia. A more effective use of the state's power is a smart power concept, brought to life by J. Nye in 2003. Smart power reflects a combination of soft and hard power elements. It is based on the consideration that 'state could use soft power while still relying on the back-up of hard power' (its military strength) (Spies 2019: p. 22). We observe among European states an understanding that the spread of culture (soft power) is effective, but only when it has a strong military base (hard power). That is why Finland and Sweden, peaceful countries that were oriented only to soft power in foreign relations, decided to join NATO after Ukraine was attacked by Russia.

In this article we try to show the importance of continuing to use soft power. Research shows specific examples of the assistance delivered by Polish cities to their Ukrainian partners. The main aim is examining how cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian partner cities has changed in terms of the legal aspects of cooperation, areas of cooperation, geography of expanded partnership, and forms and types of assistance.

In the current research several methods are used, as shown in a poll in the form of interviews conducted with representatives of Polish and Ukrainian local authorities. The interviews were held mostly in person, as well as by phone/email, regarding the situation affecting humanitarian aid supplies and the geography of cooperation. Among the main interviewers were Vasyl Zvarych, Ukraine's ambassador to Poland; Jacek Sutryk, mayor of the city of Wrocław; Andriy Sadovyi, mayor of the city of Lviv; Ihor Polishchuk, mayor of the city of Lutsk; Jan Malicki, director of the Centre for East European Studies; and Natalia Panchenko, Polish-Ukrainian public activist, leader of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland. A significant part of the current research is based on the information and data received from voluntary organisations and people engaged in this process in Poland and Ukraine: journalists, e.g. Witold Jurasz ('Onet.pl'); representatives of 'Leaders of Change Foundation', e.g. Anna Więcek, Urszula Sobiecka; volunteers from the Polish Red Cross, e.g. Paolo Persia, volunteers from the Association of Ukrainians in Poland, e.g. Olena Apchel.

In general, the materials examined mainly consisted of data presented by humanitarian organisations, civil society structures and the official representatives of voluntary organisations. A significant

source of information was received due to personal contacts and interviews with representatives of local government in Polish and Ukrainian cities. In total 22 interviews and numerous consultations with volunteers were conducted.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

We assume that the process of globalisation since the beginning of the twenty-first century has given new impetus to developing international cooperation. We observe an intensive engagement of non-governmental actors in the process of international cooperation, in which a prominent role has been played by partner cities. The cooperation of these cities on the international stage has become more visible and multidirectional than at the end of the twentieth century as it visibly began to influence national foreign policy. The meaning of 'cooperation' relates to the jointly coordinated activity of actors in the international arena, aimed at finding tools for solving problems and achieving the most effective interaction. It is worth saying that international cooperation, according to American researcher Arnold Wolfers, has two opposite vectors: internal and external cooperation. The first regards the state's willingness to improve the situation inside the state. External direction involves the joint efforts of states to fight against a common external problem (Wolfers 1962: p. 32).

Cooperation between partner cities is conducted mainly between two cities located in different states; partnerships between cities within a state are very rare. The cooperation of partner cities encompasses multiple sectors and is oriented on long-term relations. Contact among local governments, local organisations, and most importantly, citizens includes 'an exchange of experiences and consultations mainly of an economic nature' (Zelinsky 1991: p. 3). Quite often, the cooperation of partner cities builds mutual understanding and trust between citizens and creates a platform for people-to-people contact by sharing information about their history, culture, traditions, features of social life, economic development, etc. Such cooperation is mainly reflected in joint projects and ventures, the opening of trade and industrial centres and common cultural and artistic, educational, scientific and other activities.

Theoretical research into the meaning of 'partner cities' cooperation' shows that it can be presented through the prism of multiple concepts,

as a part of 'paradiplomacy', 'city diplomacy', 'twinning' or as a tool of 'public diplomacy' and 'soft power'. The notions of 'paradiplomacy', 'city diplomacy' and 'twinning' are very close in their meaning and purpose. All of them represent cooperation between cities (including partner cities), just from different perspectives. 'Paradiplomacy' is a 'parallel' diplomacy to traditional governmental diplomacy. In a broad sense, 'paradiplomacy' may be defined as a subnational diplomatic activity. Some scholars claim that it is 'direct international activity by subnational actors supporting, complementing, correcting, duplicating, or challenging the nation-states' diplomacy' (Soldatos 1993: p. 48).

Research on the problem of 'partner cities' cooperation' also relates to the presentation of the city as an international actor. From this point of view, 'partner cities' cooperation' may be defined as a type of city diplomacy. The meaning of 'city diplomacy' is based on the consideration that it is a 'conduct of external relations undertaken by official representatives of cities with other actors, particularly other cities, nation-states, NGOs, and corporations' (Acuto 2018: p. 3). Besides 'partner cities' cooperation', there are other types of city diplomacy, such as 'municipal foreign policy', 'city twinning', 'city networks', 'nonmunicipal city networking', etc. (Acuto 2018: p. 4).

The meaning of 'city twinning' (sometimes scientific literature presents this notion as simply 'twinning') is often identified with 'partner cities' cooperation'. 'Partner cities' and 'twin cities' (in US the term 'sister cities' is used) are notions practically with the same meaning. Both are oriented on cooperation, the establishment of mutual understanding and partnership relations with a foreign actor (usually a city). Nevertheless, it was observed that 'twinning' (including 'city twinning') is usually oriented on partnership with cities of similar peculiarities or/and traditions. It can be the same history; city name; specific problem or even similar geographical location, etc.). For example, the Ukrainian city Odesa is a twin city of Polish Gdansk (Bogorodetska 2016: p. 161); both are port cities and face many similar problems and daily issues.

'Cooperation between partner cities' and correlated with it notions of 'city diplomacy', 'paradiplomacy' and 'twinning', are important tools of public diplomacy. An integral part of partner cities' cooperation is people-to-people contacts (daily communication, mutual engagement into the common problems solving process,

etc.). At the same time, people-to-people contacts are a core value of public diplomacy. 'Cooperation between partner cities' is not a key public diplomacy tool; nevertheless, it is a significant instrument for building trust and understanding between the states. 'Public diplomacy' nowadays is one of the main foreign policy tools. It is aimed to influence foreign audiences abroad in a way that help to achieve a state's foreign policy goals (Nye 2008: p. 94). Public diplomacy is one of the most effective ways of influencing foreign audiences abroad, especially using or/and developing constant long-term people-to-people contacts with representatives of different states. 'Public diplomacy' could be presented as a two-way political dialogue addressed at foreign audiences (Ociepka 2013: p. 70). The spheres of people-to-people communication may cover different areas such as sport, history, science, and, most widely, culture. American scholar Nicholas Cull presents public diplomacy as an 'international actor[s] attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public' (Cull 2009: p. 12). The importance of communication and daily people-to-people contacts reflects the nature of public diplomacy.

It is worth saying about the link between public diplomacy and soft power that public diplomacy may be presented as a soft power tool. In other words, 'public diplomacy' is an instrument that presents or reflects the soft power of the state. Soft power, in a broad sense, may be presented as all the soft assets that country possesses, such as culture, traditions, values, etc., directed to attract foreign audiences, to improve a state's image and gain demanding (foreign policy) goals. In general, 'soft power' concerns 'the attractiveness of the presented patterns and the strength of reputation' (Łoś 2014: 235). 'Soft' influence on foreign audience through culture also helps, except of mentioned above directions, to build a platform for mutual understanding. Such understanding is reached, among others, through people-to-people communication, where city-to-city dialogue may play a significant role. Sometimes partner cities' cooperation can hold a distinct advantage over traditional governmental diplomacy – especially in a crisis, cities (authorities and people) may better know the needs of their partners abroad. Government structures may be responsible for the organisational and legal frameworks of cooperation between the states and their cities. However, an understanding of the true needs of the foreign partner may appear from daily communication, various common projects and interpersonal links developed between

people of the two states, which is a core value of partner cities' cooperation. It is worth saying that partner cities' contacts are often based on personal relationships. Private contacts and friendship between city authorities' representatives (mainly between mayors) may build a platform for mutual economic development. It is also an opportunity to advance the interests of the citizens abroad and to promote the city itself.

City partnerships are examined in this article through the prism of public diplomacy, where people-to-people contacts are a core value of those partnerships. Most of the research on Polish and Ukrainian cities' partnership are concentrated on examining their cultural dimension. Nevertheless, considering changes that have occurred since the beginning of the war in 2022, it is necessary to analyse new dimensions of Polish and Ukrainian cities' partnerships.

Legal frameworks for cooperation between partner cities are presented on three levels: international (main documents as regards the role and functions of local self-government in Europe and worldwide); interstate (agreements and treaties between the states), and domestic (specific documents inside of each of the states).

Utilising these legal bases for cooperation, cities freely establish an agreement to legitimise their partnership. It is worth saying that cooperation between partner cities may exist without signing an official agreement, but it is very rare. Traditionally an example of a cooperation agreement could include, but is not limited to, the following aspects: economic, scientific and technical, cultural, sports and tourism. An important part of an agreement is dedicated to exchanging experience and information to realise effective forms of market management, increase production and expand the range of competitive goods and services, using joint ventures, societies, associations and funds. One of the main parts of such agreements includes a chapter dedicated to maintaining common cultural events and holding joint conferences and seminars on various topics. Nevertheless, most of the agreements cover the issue of mutual assistance in case of unforeseen circumstances (epidemics, war) (Bogorodetska 2016: pp. 175–182). The cooperation between cities may be partially defined in the agreements between regional centres of power (voivodships in the case of Poland, and regions in Ukraine).

THE COOPERATION OF THE UKRAINIAN AND POLISH PARTNER CITIES DURING THE WAR

Poland's foreign policy strategy also uses public diplomacy as its main tool. It is based on the usage of soft power, where people-to-people communication plays an important role (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych: 2022). According to the Global Soft Power Index, the ranking of states' 'soft power' usage, Poland in 2022 was in 40th place among 120 states (Global Soft Power: 2022). Considering the directions of Poland's soft power spread, we assume that the Eastern Partnership region is one of the most visible, especially when it comes to Ukraine. Promotion of Polish culture and traditions, as well Polish language, occurs on a large scale. Some of these promotional activities are possible due to developed and multilateral contacts (partnerships) between Ukrainian and Polish cities.

The cooperation between Ukrainian and Polish partner cities before the war were mostly concentrated under the sphere of culture. Numerous festivals, concerts, exhibitions, film festivals and theatre performances were held in common. Polish culture was intensively promoted in Ukraine, especially in partner cities, mainly in the Western part of Ukraine and central cities of Eastern regions. Ukrainian culture was mainly spread in border regions with Poland and the major cities of Poland, such as Wroclaw, Gdansk, etc. A popular form of Polish-Ukrainian partner cities' cooperation is participation in and organisation of cultural, scientific events (conferences, concerts, art exhibitions, etc). For example, the Polesian Summer Folk Festival was held annually in the city of Lutsk and gathered representatives of the spheres of culture and art from different cities around the world. Nevertheless, most of them were Lutsk's partner cities, and from the Polish side, it was, for example, Lutsk and Olsztyn (Polesian Summer Folk Festival: 2022). The predomination of the cultural aspect of different projects and programmes was maintained almost until the beginning of the war in 2022. Numerous cultural partnerships between Polish and Ukrainian cities became oriented, in one day, to humanitarian partnerships.

War in Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian crisis have significantly influenced cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian cities. Multiple changes and transformations were observed:

- the legal framework of cooperation (besides the existing partnership agreements, additional and/or new types of cooperation agreements between some of the cities were signed);
- an increase in partnership agreements;
- the direction of cooperation, from a cultural and scientific orientation to humanitarian aid;
- the creation of partner cities networks;
- a significant expansion of the scale and geographical frameworks of cooperation;
- an improvement of people-to-people contacts.

It is worth saying that legal field for Ukrainian-Polish partner cities' cooperation is still determined by previously (pre-war/peaceful time) signed agreements (signed by mayors of the cities). Nevertheless, in this new reality, an important role is played by agreements of interstate level; agreements signed between the heads of the regional military administrations² on the Ukraine side and accordant voivodeships in Poland; between independent state institutions from the Polish and Ukrainian sides; and between Ukrainian cities' authorities and certain business structures in Poland. New agreements mainly took the form of a 'memorandum'. The interstate level includes not only Polish-Ukrainian bilateral agreements, but also has a broader meaning. For example, several days before the war started in Ukraine, Poland and the United Kingdom launched a new format of cooperation, strengthening security and developing trade between them. Polish, Ukrainian and British foreign ministers signed the Trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation. Warsaw, Kyiv and London should play an important joint role in this agreement as capital partner cities to counter the challenges and security threats to Europe (Європейська правда: 2022).

The Polish-Ukrainian interstate cooperation consisted of various agreements that have influenced interaction between the cities. It is worth saying that most of the agreements had multiple actors signing an agreement. The memorandum could be signed between the cities' or regional's authorities, business companies and certain foundations/organisations. These multiple forms of launching actors were useful, considering the importance of a faster way to reach people in the Ukrainian cities affected by the humanitarian crisis. Among

² Since the beginning of war in Ukraine, the Ukrainian regional state administrations were renamed to the regional military administrations.

numerous agreements in this direction, agreements that were signed with the participation of the authorities of border cities and regions of Ukraine have had a special importance and role. An important factor was the need for faster distribution of humanitarian aid to Ukraine across the border. For example, a memorandum was signed between PKP Cargo Connect, the Volyn Regional Military Administration and the Association of Ukrainian Business in Poland. An agreement aimed 'to facilitate the collection, transport, and distribution of humanitarian aid to Ukrainian cities through the railway terminal in Dorohusk' (PAIH: 2022). The Memorandum was signed during the XV International Forum's 'Polish-Ukrainian Business Days', which took place in Warsaw on 29 April 2022. Another key agreement that accelerated humanitarian aid deliveries to Ukrainian cities during the crisis was a Polish-Ukrainian Memorandum on strengthening cooperation in the railway sector. 'This initiative responds to the Ukrainian need for cargo transport in a situation when the Russian aggressor blocks Ukrainian ports' (Chancellery of the Prime Minister: 2022).

It is worth noting that the list of Polish-Ukrainian partnerships has significantly increased (is still increasing) since the beginning of the war. It was caused, among other things, by the growth of people-to-people contacts (e.g. communication with volunteers from the Polish side who were the first to spread information in Polish cities about the needs of Ukrainian cities most affected by war; for example, Goleniów and Slavuta (Незалежний громадський портал: 2022), Gmina Niedźwiada and Berestechko (Gmina Niedźwiada: 2022) and many others. Some Polish and Ukrainian cities expressed a readiness for partnership and cooperation without signing an agreement immediately. For example, the mayor of Gdynia offered permanent cooperation and assistance to Zhytomyr for 'regaining its glory' (Związek Miast Polskich. Gdynia dla Żytomierza: 2022).

The character of cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian partner cities since February 2022 was redirected from cultural dimension to projects and initiatives of humanitarian aid. The spread of Poland's soft power in Ukraine did not disappear with the suspension of cultural projects, but occurred with much greater intensity, just in another area. People-to-people contacts and daily communication were and are still covering, exclusively, humanitarian support to Ukraine. The notion of 'humanitarian aid' covers people's basic needs (nutrition, water, sanitation, etc.) that are affected by man-made

or/and natural disasters, and encompasses a wide range of issues. The European Commission considers that humanitarian aid is included in the following activities: capacity building, cash transfers, climate change and environment, digitalisation, disability inclusion, disaster preparedness, EU humanitarian air bridges, education in emergencies, European Humanitarian Response Capacity, food assistance, forced displacement, gender- and age-sensitive aid, Grand Bargain, health, humanitarian action in urban crises, humanitarian air services, international humanitarian law, needs assessment, nutrition, protection, resilience and a humanitarian–development–peace nexus, shelter and settlements, social protection, provision of water sanitation and hygiene (European Commission). Owing to the complex situation in Ukraine, the Polish government deployed a wide range of humanitarian aid measures. Polish society greatly supported these initiatives, and showed its solidarity and considerable support (Jurasz Witold: 2022). Poland (both government and society) successfully directed most of the humanitarian aid measures mentioned above in Ukraine (Polishchuk Ihor: 2022). Table 1 presents the direction of aid, and names the Polish cities that have been delivering it.

It is worth saying that some Ukrainian cities appealed to Polish partner cities to provide specific support, mainly medical supplies. On their official web pages, Ukrainian cities declared what types of support their citizens needed most. This information was constantly updated, and Polish partner cities reacted promptly. An engagement of Polish cities in humanitarian aid to Ukraine also sparked the creation of additional partner city networks. New networks appeared owing to cooperation between Polish cities and their partner cities in the EU. Thereby, as mentioned in Table 1, for example, Cracow, in cooperation with German, French and Norwegian partner cities, collected and delivered assistance to Cracow’s Ukrainian partner cities. A wide range of humanitarian aid was sent to these cities. Lviv was among the main cities in Ukraine that received most of the buses sent by Polish partner cities. Mariupol was among the main recipients of aid collected by the fundraiser initiative. Kyiv and Iwano-Frankiwnsk received the greatest part of the ‘needs assessment.’

TABLE 1
Directions of Humanitarian Aid, Delivered by Polish Partner Cities (within the Partner Cities' Networks) to Ukrainian Partner Cities*

	City in Poland	Direction /s of humanitarian aid	City/ies in Ukraine (receiving humanitarian aid)
1	2	3	4
1.	Białystok	1. Needs assessment (first aid items)	Lviv
2.	Bydgoszcz	2. Cash transfers (fundraisers)	Cherkasy, Kremenchuk
3.	Ciechanów	1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments)	Khmelnitskyi
4.	Giżycko	1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments)	Dubno
5.	Cracow individually and in cooperation with German partner cities: Nuremberg, Frankfurt, French: Orlean, Norwegian: Trondheim	1. Needs assessment (buses, medical equipment, ambulances, medicaments, power generators) 2. Food assistance 3. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 4. Cash transfers (fundraisers) 5. Nutrition, protection	Volodymyr, Kyiv, Bila Tserkva, Rivne, Lviv, Khmelnytskyi
6.	Gdansk, Gdynia	1. Needs assessment (buses, ambulances, blankets, sleeping bags, flashlights, mats, batteries, towels, and thermal blankets, professional medical items and equipment: resuscitators, bandages, products for children) 2. Nutrition (including for children) 3. Sanitation and hygiene products 4. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians)	Rivne, Lviv, Odesa, Mariupol, Zhytomyr
7.	Jasło	1. Needs assessment (clothes, flashlights, mats, batteries, towels, and thermal blankets) 2. Food assistance	Truskavets, Sambir, Kyiv (some of the products were redirected from Kyiv to other Ukrainian cities)
8.	Jelenia Góra	1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments, clothes)	Severodonetsk

1	2	3	4
9.	Katowice	1. Needs assessment (buses)	Lviv
10.	Kielce	1. Needs assessment (thermal imaging binoculars, night vision devices, shooting sights, Kevlar helmets, bulletproof vests, thermal underwear, thermal socks, breathable gloves; medical equipment, medicaments)	Vinnytsia
11.	Krosno	1. Needs assessment (water heaters and collectors, mats, thermal blankets) 2. Food assistance	Uzhhorod
12.	Lodz, individually and in cooperation with its French partner city Lyon	1. Needs assessment (ambulances, power generators) 2. Food assistance	Lviv, Kyiv (some of the products were redirected from Kyiv to other Ukrainian cities)
13.	Lublin (the humanitarian aid from France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Great Britain that reached Lublin was redirected to different Ukrainian cities, including partner cities)	1. Needs assessment (batteries, towels and thermal blankets, professional medical items and equipment, medicaments, products for children) 2. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 3. Food assistance 4. Cash transfers (fundraiser)	Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Lutsk, Luhansk, Rivne, Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Vinnytsia, Kryvyi Rih
14.	Mielec	1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments, clothes)	Lviv, Iwano-Frankivsk
15.	Mińsk Mazowiecki	1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments, power generators) 2. Food assistance 3. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians)	Borodyanka (in the Bucha district)
16.	Opole, individually and in cooperation with its German partner cities City of Mulheim an der Ruhr and Ingolstadt (partner cities' network)	1. Needs assessment (medicaments, power generators, respirators, computers, and monitors) 2. Food assistance 3. Cash transfers (fundraisers)	Ivano-Frankivsk

1	2	3	4
17.	Plock	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (buses, (medical equipment, medicaments, clothes) 2. Cash transfers (fundraisers) 	Lviv, Zhytomyr
18.	Plonsk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (home appliances) 	Ternopil
19.	Poznan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (buses) 2. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 	Lviv
20.	Przemysl	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 2. Needs assessment (ambulance) 3. Cash transfers (fundraisers) 	Lviv
21.	Rybnik	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments) 2. Food assistance 	Iwano-Frankiwsk, Bar
22.	Torun	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Humanitarian action in urban crises (the action of securing monuments in Lviv) 	Lviv
23.	Tychy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (buses) 2. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 	Lviv
24.	Warsaw	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (medicaments, clothes, buses) 2. Nutrition 3. Products of sanitation and hygiene 4. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 	Lviv, Kharkiv, Rivne, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kyiv (some of the products were redirected from Kyiv to other Ukrainian cities)
25.	Wroclaw	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Needs assessment (medical equipment, medicaments, clothes) 2. Shelter and settlements (for all Ukrainians) 	Lviv

* **Own elaboration**, based on the data from the representatives of Polish and Ukrainian authorities, diplomats: (Sadovyi Andriy: 2022), (Sutryk Jacek: 2022), (Zvarych Vasyi: 2022) between 15.04-20.05.2022; materials of (Serwis Samorządowy PAP: 2022), (Urząd Miasta Lublin: 2022), (Miasto Bydgoszcz: 2022), (Związek Miast Polski: 2022).

The scale and geographical frameworks of the Polish-Ukrainian partner cities' cooperation were expanded, owing to the appearance of partner city networks (one kind of city diplomacy). It is difficult to count all of them, owing to the constantly growing number of Polish and foreign partner cities, but in the examined period, April–June 2022, there were six partnership networks. Many German cities that were not engaged in the partnership cooperation with Ukrainian cities but had partnerships with Polish cities, sent numerous cargoes of humanitarian aid to Ukrainian cities. Russian aggression united Ukrainians (those living in Ukraine and abroad). Ukrainian diaspora (and Polish diaspora) in Canadian, American, French and Argentine cities expressed their solidarity with Ukraine, organising numerous fundraisers and sharing the facts about the aggression among their communities. Those events have formed a unique platform for cooperation in which multiple government and non-government actors are engaged: citizens, diaspora, city councils, volunteer organisations and social media (Apchel Olena, Panchenko Natalia: 2022). Polish cities were most affected during World War II, and they still remember the pain of war (Więcek Anna, Sobiecka Urszula: 2022). Warsaw was practically destroyed during World War II. Nowadays, Mariupol, largely destroyed, is compared to Poland's capital city. For these reasons and many others, almost all Polish cities were and still are considerably engaged in humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian cities.

Assistance provided by Polish partner cities to Ukrainian, was oriented first on supporting Ukrainian citizens and fighting for their rights and freedoms to live in a sovereign and independent state. Protecting Ukrainian cities is protecting the whole EU (Malicki Jan: 2022). At the same time, the strengthening of Ukrainian cities with the humanitarian aid, received from the Polish side, also helps to keep the defensive line of the Ukrainian cities, especially in the most affected regions, like Donbas.

The tendencies mentioned above led to an improvement of Polish-Ukrainian people-to-people contacts, which are a core value of public diplomacy and soft power in more generally. The rapprochement is observed in the relationships between these two societies. Some manifestations of this include Polish people from different cities (as well partner cities to Ukrainian cities) opening their homes to refugees; collecting and distributing first aid and primary care items; opening information centres, including online services and call centres for Ukrainians in most Polish cities. Many Poles worked as volunteers in

prominent locations, including railway and bus stations (Persia Paolo: 2022). Besides improved people-to-people contacts, a rapprochement at governmental level was observed. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Polish President Duda visited Ukraine more than other leaders/presidents. A deep understanding and close relationship between President Duda and President Zelenskyy is evident. Even during the visit of President Duda to Ukraine on 22 May 2022, when Kyiv was actively attacked, the Polish president delivered his speech in Verkhovna Rada (the Parliament of Ukraine). Those actions highly underlined Poland's solidarity and its support for Ukraine. The Ukrainian side, at the same time, informed on an elaboration of a bill as regards the status and assistance of Polish citizens in Ukraine (a similar document to the one previously approved by the Polish Sejm (parliament) according to Ukrainians (УКРІНФОРМ: 2022).

From yet another perspective, the war in Ukraine gave an opportunity for Polish-Ukrainian relations to 'heal' that may intensify cooperation in the future, both between Ukraine and Poland and between its cities. Some Polish scholars are still very pragmatic about this possibility. They believe that new challenges may appear in Polish-Ukrainian relations (such increasingly negative attitudes to migrants or 'oversaturation' of the topic of Ukraine in the daily life of citizens). However, there is still a big opportunity and positive perspective for reconciliation and the development of people-to-people dialogue, in which Polish-Ukrainian cities' partnerships could be a good platform.

CONCLUSION

The cooperation of Polish-Ukrainian partner cities have come through a transformational process from cultural promotion to humanitarian assistance in which the war starting in 2022 played a key role. The activities of Polish government and society, including their previous cultural dimension and their current humanitarian aid, are both elements of public diplomacy that Poland is realising under its foreign policy strategy. Humanitarian assistance from Polish partner cities was provided to big cities in Ukraine, like Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv, as well as to small towns such as Dubno or Bar, etc. Most of the Ukrainian cities that received humanitarian support from Polish partner cities were situated in the western part of Ukraine. At this point it should be clarified that cities in Western Ukraine (e.g. Lviv,

Ivano-Frankivsk) that received most of the humanitarian assistance (sent as cargo) from Polish partner cities, distributed and sent cargo further across the country, mainly to the cities most affected by war, like Borodyanka, Mariupol, etc. The humanitarian assistance delivered by Polish cities (often with the participation of Poland's partner cities in other EU states) to Ukrainian partner cities included 'needs assessment' of medical equipment, medicaments, etc.; food and nutrition; sanitation and hygiene products; cash transfers; the shelter and settlements to Ukrainian. The cooperation of Polish partner cities with other European partner cities since the beginning of the war has allowed 'partner cities networks' to be established (mostly with German, French, British and Norwegian partner cities) for better joint support and assistance to Ukrainian cities. The process of delivering humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian partner cities is also accompanied by certain changes in the legal field of Polish-Ukrainian partner city cooperation. There were signed documents of cooperation between the cities or regional authorities, business companies and certain foundations/organisations for easier and faster delivery of the cargo to Ukrainian cities across the border. A special role was played in this by the authorities of border cities and regions of Ukraine, like Volyn and Lviv.

Humanitarian assistance from Polish cities to Ukrainian partner cities may serve as a chance for better mutual understanding between Polish and Ukrainian societies in the future. It may also serve as a way to improve Poland's image in Ukraine and Ukraine's image in Poland. At some point, we assume that the strengthening of people-to-people contacts (also through partner city cooperation) and the promotion of soft foreign policy elements such as culture, traditions and values may play a key role in 'healing' Polish-Ukrainian relations.

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