

KEY FEATURES OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE, MUTUAL PERCEPTION AND CULTURAL SPHERE OF THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN

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Dynamics of bilateral relations with Ukraine over the last 10 years, in particular compared to relations with Russia

The Kingdom of Spain and Ukraine have been developing their bilateral relations since Ukraine gained independence, although the first attempts to set up diplomatic relations date back to the times of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Officially, diplomatic relations were established on January 30, 1992 by signing a joint communiqué by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Prague. In October of the same year Spain opened its diplomatic mission in Kyiv, and in June 1995 the Embassy of Ukraine in Madrid was founded¹.

The legal framework comprises 28 international documents in force, including two Treaties and fourteen Agreements. The current documents cover various areas of cooperation, but there is only one intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation in Education, Science and Culture among them².

Both sides are engaged in an active political dialogue. This January marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. During this time, Ukraine and Spain have developed strong political bonds, improved economic cooperation and expanded cultural exchanges.

For comparison, the restoration of diplomatic relations (then between Spain and the USSR) took place in 1977. Since then, bilateral relations between Spain and Russia have been friendly and free of serious disputes, apart from the expulsion of two Russian diplomats in the summer of 2018 as a result of the Skripal case, as well as the Russian reaction in response to their expulsion, or moments of tension over Russian interference in Catalan

¹ https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/UCRANIA_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf

² <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/stru/u79f5d6fa-e088-454f-87cb-51b7ef0cd46b#Organ>

politics.

Spain is an important trade and economic partner of Ukraine in Europe, in recent years it has become the largest importer of Ukrainian grain in Europe and the fifth largest one in the world. For 11 months of 2021, trade between the countries increased by more than 28% (up to \$2.26 billion)³.

Trade and economic relations between the Kingdom of Spain and Ukraine have long been slowed down by the absence of an agreement on the avoidance of double taxation, which was signed during the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to Spain in 2020. A significant part of Spanish imports to Ukraine is still carried out by third countries: Poland, Hungary, the Netherlands or Spanish companies with production facilities in neighbouring states. Spanish direct investments also come to Ukraine mainly through the Netherlands and Cyprus, with which agreements on avoidance of double taxation were concluded much earlier. The parties are currently carrying out internal procedures necessary for the Convention between Ukraine and the Kingdom of Spain for the Avoidance of Double Taxation to enter into force.

In the near future Ukraine should not expect a dramatic rise in the volume of Spanish investments or financial assistance. Despite some growth in the Spanish economy (5.1% in 2021 compared to a drop of 10.8% in 2020), the unemployment rate remains quite high (13.3% of the population, including 31.1% among young people), as well as the country's significant external debt (117.33% of GDP)⁴.

Over the past 10 years, Ukraine has been visited by the heads of parliament, a number of Spanish ministers and high-ranking officials. Although the royal family has never paid an official visit to Ukraine, King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia (then Prince and Princess) headed the "support group" of the Spanish national football team in Kyiv at the Euro 2012 final together with the then Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy (2011-2018).

In the period from 2012 to 2017, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain, President of the Congress of Deputies of the Cortes Generales of the Kingdom of Spain visited Ukraine twice, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation José Manuel García-Margallo paid a working visit to Ukraine in 2015. In turn, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, twice Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine and the First Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council of Ukraine visited Madrid during this period.

The most significant events over the past 10 years are the official visit of the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko to Spain in 2018, which was the first official visit in 22 years and the first visit of a foreign leader since the appointment of the new Prime Minister of Spain,

³ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/premyer-ministr-ukrayini-ta-ochilnik-mzs-ispaniyi-obgovorili-politichni-j-torgovelni-pitannya?v=62039c02b80ca>

⁴ <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/paro/espana>

Pedro Sánchez, as well as the official visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba in 2020, during which the legal framework of bilateral relations in priority areas of cooperation was substantially expanded. Since 1996, working visits have been carried out at the level of heads of governments, parliaments, ministries and agencies, and the heads of state have met mainly at pan-European and world forums.

To compare the dynamics of meetings between Spain and Russia, the last visit of the Russian Foreign Minister to Spain took place in November 2018, when he was received by King Felipe VI of Spain, which the Russian side highly appreciated, and the ministers signed a plan of consultations for 2019 and 2020⁵. The celebration of the Cross Years also served to strengthen bilateral relations and improve mutual knowledge between the countries: in 2011, the Cross Year of Spain and Russia was celebrated, with a considerable number of cultural events and high-level visits. In 2015-2016, the Cross Year of Spanish and Russian languages and literatures was celebrated, and in 2016-2017—the Cross Year of Spain-Russia tourism. In 2019, the Cross Year of research, science and youth was to be held, but Spain suspended it due to the elections.

In general, relations between Spain and the Russian Federation have maintained a long-term tendency to deepen. Madrid showed interest in cooperation in the energy sector, and not only in the supply of energy carriers, but also in the willingness to create power plants in Russia, develop new hydrocarbon deposits, modernize nuclear power plants, etc. The priorities of cooperation were also education and science, space industry, construction of infrastructure facilities. However, after 2014, relations between the two countries became more strained due to the fact that Spain joined the European sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, although some Spanish officials spoke in favor of “normalization” of relations with Russia: for example, in 2016, the then Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis called for such a course of action⁶.

Since the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, José Manuel Albares Bueno, paid a working visit to Kyiv at the invitation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba, as well as the Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

Although Ukraine is not a priority country in the General Plan of Cooperation of Spain, the dynamics of bilateral relations over the past decade is positive. And the main factor for the intensification of relations was the objective conditions that have developed in recent years due to the emergence of a common problem in both countries: more or less active interference of the Russian Federation in the internal affairs of the state.

⁵ https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Documents/FichasPais/RUSIA_FICHA%20PAIS.pdf

⁶ <https://thediplomatinspain.com/en/2016/12/dastis-proposes-four-important-fields-for-consensus-in-foreign-policy/>

Spain's position on the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the context of the position of the government, individual political forces and public sentiment

Spanish governments, both conservative Mariano Rajoy and social democratic Pedro Sánchez, even before the full-scale invasion, consistently supported European sanctions because of Russian aggression against Ukraine. Since the onset of Russian aggression in Crimea and Donbas, Spain has stood by Ukraine and provided financial and material support.

In turn, Ukraine supported Spain during the “Catalan crisis”—the illegal referendum on the independence of the Spanish region of Catalonia in October 2017. Since then, Spain has adopted a rather harsh rhetoric towards Russia. The Spanish intelligence report provides evidence of Russian security state structures directing the efforts of activists who covered the events in Catalonia in the media. First of all, this refers to the dissemination of publications on the Internet from servers located on the Russian territory, which contained misinformation about the actions of the Spanish government, and contributed to the strengthening of anti-Spanish sentiment in Catalonia and in the world as a whole.

Spain supports Ukraine during the full-scale war—not only at the level of statements, but also through military assistance, humanitarian aid, refugee assistance, etc. During the first month of the full-scale war Spain sent ten flights to Ukraine, seven of them with offensive weapons and three more with defensive and humanitarian cargo. Against the backdrop of the Russian aggression and the crisis it provoked, Spain has launched the largest humanitarian aid package for a single country in its history, totalling €31 million⁷.

In one of his March interviews, Pedro Sánchez stated that Spain intended to send Ukraine only “defensive” materiel as part of the EU peace initiative⁸. However, due to the rapid escalation of the conflict and increasing pressure from the center-right opposition parties of the People's Party (PP), the liberal Ciudadanos and the far-right VOX, he changed his stance. Nevertheless, his harsher rhetoric on the war in Ukraine has come under criticism from his left-wing coalition partner. Moreover, this is not the first dispute between the two coalition partners, PSOE and Unidas Podemos over the Ukrainian conflict.

The Prime Minister of Spain personally visited Kyiv during the full-scale invasion on April 21, 2022, together with his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen. Following the meeting, Sánchez said that Spain would send a new batch of military aid to Ukraine, twice the amount of the previous one. From August to October, Spain sent Ukraine air defense systems, ammunition and armored vehicles, ambulances, medicines and military uniforms. Spain teaches the Ukrainian military how to operate an anti-aircraft battery, conducts training of personnel, and has also taken wounded soldiers for treatment. In general,

⁷ https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/washington/es/Comunicacion/Noticias/paginas/articulos/20220317_not01.aspx

⁸ <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/presidente/intervenciones/Paginas/2022/prsp14032022.aspx>

according to the latest information, Spain has received about 140 thousand Ukrainian refugees, provided Ukraine with 300 tons of military cargo, air defense systems and armored vehicles⁹. According to the Prime Minister, this is a historic, unprecedented effort for the Spanish capacity.

In the face of the large-scale invasion, Spain also announced an increase in its defense spending¹⁰. At the same time, the far-left Podemos party, which is a partner of Sánchez's PSOE party in the ruling coalition, has publicly opposed the plans to increase military spending, and it has also criticized the government's decision to allow the U.S. Navy to deploy two additional destroyers at the Spanish base. The war in Ukraine and, in particular, the supply of weapons caused another clash between the two partners of the Spanish government, as well as an internal split in Unidas Podemos¹¹.

Overall, the war in Ukraine and the complicated security situation in Europe have raised pro-NATO sentiment in Spain, where 83% of people surveyed expressed a positive opinion of the military pact, according to a recent poll published by the Elcano think tank¹².

According to the latest CIS survey, 76% of the Spanish believe that the Kremlin spreads false news and hoaxes to damage, inter alia, the credibility of the Ukrainian army. If we analyze the reaction of Spaniards to fake news from Russia based on their electoral preferences, there are no fundamental differences between voters of one party or another.

Most of the Spanish believe that the Russian army deliberately attacks civilians (85.2%) and that it commits war crimes and crimes against humanity (90%). According to 88% of Spaniards, Putin should be brought before an international court for these war crimes¹³.

Thus, the right-wing Spanish political forces represented in the parliament—center-right People's Party (PP), far-right Vox, nationalist Basque and Catalan parties, as well as liberal-center Ciudadanos—unconditionally express support for Ukraine in a full-scale war and condemn Russian aggression. The far-right advocates the idea of accepting refugees from Ukraine, although in general Vox is strongly opposed to migrants, fearing their influx from Africa.

Under pressure from the right-wing opposition, the ruling left-wing coalition, which initially took a soft stance on the Russian-Ukrainian war, has sharpened its rhetoric and actions in

⁹ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3587669-ppo-ta-bronetehnika-ispania-nadala-ukraini-300-tonn-vijskovih-vantaziv.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-05/spain-to-spend-an-additional-1-billion-on-defense-this-year?srnd=europe-politics#xj4y7vzkg>

¹¹ https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/spanish-coalition-split-over-decision-to-deliver-weapons-to-ukraine/

¹² https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/controversial-vote-on-nato-enlargement-splits-spanish-coalition/

¹³ <https://www.newtral.es/opinion-espanoles-ucrania-rusia-bulos/20220426/>

support of Ukraine. However, there are still disagreements within the coalition on Spain's security policy in the face of a full-scale Russian invasion. Podemos generally oppose plans to increase the military budget against the background of the Russian threat, expand cooperation with NATO; they abstained during the vote on the admission of Finland and Sweden to NATO (some leftists voted against). The statements of the far left politicians emphasize that such a policy is a contribution to further escalation of the war, which puts off a peaceful settlement.

Characteristics of values, sensitive topics and points of tension in bilateral relations with Ukraine

In conducting cultural diplomacy, one should be aware of the fact that Spain is the third country in the world with the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites after Italy and China, but also importantly, Spain's cultural diplomacy focuses on combating cultural stereotypes about Spain and its political past, particularly related to the Franco regime.

The beginning of Spanish cultural activities abroad took place only in the early 20th century with the creation of the Office of Spanish Cultural Relations with the support of Professor Américo Castro. For comparison, at that time France and Germany had a long history of action plans to promote their culture. According to the Alliance Française model, attention was paid to the issues of emigration and the Spanish-speaking population, political and socio-cultural rapprochement with Latin American countries. The system of cultural activities still had limited funding, but at least it began to take shape, especially in Latin America¹⁴.

The civil war and the subsequent victory of the Francoists led to the dismantling of the system and a reorientation of objectives, as the Franco regime abandoned the origins of foreign cultural policy. For almost 40 years, the cultural world was subjected to severe censorship for the sake of spreading exclusively the ideology of the ruler.

Spanish society is still split on the issue of attitude to the key figures of this period and the main opposing sides—the left-wing Republicans, who ruled the country at that time, and the right-wing clerical-nationalist forces (Phalanx).

In the national historiography, one can often find the thesis that the victory in the Civil War of the right-wing forces led by General Franco saved the Spanish people from the establishment of a communist dictatorship and the transformation of the country into a satellite of the USSR. On the other hand, the Franco era was also an era of repression against the left-wing forces that were defeated in the war of 1936-1939, as well as against Catalan and Basque nationalists. Only after four decades of the policy of “amnesia,” when

¹⁴ <https://polipapers.upv.es/index.php/cs/article/view/10816/10832>

the Spanish did not reflect on the events of their past, discussions about the role of Franco's figure resumed.

It is risky for the Ukrainian side to appeal to the messages that Franco's regime, despite its authoritarian policy, saved Spain from communism and even managed to turn the country from a backward agrarian to a highly developed one with a large share of industry in the economy. The more dangerous are the analogies with the events in the history of Ukraine, to consider the Falangists as a kind of analogue of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. Ideologically, the Falangists are indeed close to Ukrainian nationalists. However, it is fundamentally important to realize that in the eyes of the Spaniards, nationalists are one of the two camps that participated in the civil war and actually fought against their compatriots—those who did not share their views.

With the beginning of the democratization process after the death of the dictator, the number of cultural initiatives increased, although at first there was neither a draft of the goals to be achieved nor adequate funding. However, it was after the end of Franco's regime that the principle of actual "resuscitation" of cultural diplomacy was formed—that is, the apolitical nature of Spanish cultural policy. It is about creating such a state strategy of cultural diplomacy in Spain, which will not vary significantly with the change of political elites in the country.

In this context, Ukraine and Spain share a similar history of democratization and internal political crises. First of all, these issues are related to the illegal separation of Catalonia from the Kingdom of Spain, the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine, as well as the fight against stereotypes and the consequences of the former political regimes—de-Francoization of Spain, de-Sovietization, decommunization and de-Russification of Ukraine.

It is in the interests of the Ukrainian side to promote dialogue on mutual respect for the territorial integrity of each country. Ukrainian media compared the Catalan "referendum on independence" with the "referenda" in Crimea and Donbas in 2014. There is one common feature—they contradicted the laws of the state in which they were held. In Crimea and Donbas, voting took place contrary to the position of official Kyiv and without the participation of international observers. Similarly, Catalans went to the polls contrary to the decision of the Spanish Constitutional Court. As in the case of Crimea/Donbas, the Catalan referendum was boycotted by its opponents as illegal. From a legal point of view, Catalonia and Crimea/Donbas are similar cases, however, from a cultural and historical point of view, the Catalan nation exists, it at least has its own language and culture.

It is also essential that in the foreign policy of Spain there is such a phenomenon as "paradiplomacy," which leads to the active participation of the autonomous communities of

the Kingdom of Spain in international processes, the activities of which sometimes do not coincide with the policy of official Madrid.

Prior to the full-scale invasion, the Spanish press, radio and television presented the war in eastern Ukraine exclusively as an internal conflict between “government forces” supported by “nationalist groups” and “people’s militia” and “pro-Russian” forces, with only a passing mention of Russia’s support for the latter. All this accordingly shaped the Spanish public opinion and the Spaniards’ perception of the events in Ukraine, Donbas and attitude to the Russian occupation of Crimea. Even the Ukrainian diaspora in Spain is often ideologically poisoned by Russian propaganda due to the lack of state institutions and cultural policies that would take care of the image of Ukraine in the Kingdom of Spain and Latin America.

Another specific feature of Spanish cultural diplomacy, which at the same time is its weakness, is its *institutional multiplicity*, which is the source of the lack of coordination of cultural policies. The functional division of competencies between the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Culture and Sports, between AC/E, the Cervantes Institute and AECID seems to be rather an unfinished process of constant restructuring of ministries than the result of strategic planning of state policy in the field of culture.

Among the political elites of Spain there are also ongoing discussions about the place of cultural diplomacy in the country’s foreign policy. As for the geographical focus of Spanish cultural diplomacy, there is a clear framework, but as for the *political goals*, their *poor definition and delimitation* is evident.

The strategic goal of the current reform of the system is the formation and promotion of the “Cultural Spain” brand through its national specificity and cultural industry, systematic presence and participation in the major world cultural events, as well as the development of cultural tourism. Through this kind of international activity of Spain, the promotion of its brand is designed to erase the years of isolation caused by the dictatorial regime, directing all efforts to give Spain the image of a modern European country.

High-profile cultural events and key actors in the cultural sector

Spain is well known for its high-profile cultural events and large-scale festivals that take place almost every year, except for the period of restrictions on mass events caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the national ranking of the Observatory of Culture for 2021, the most successful for the cultural sphere are: the events of the Queen Sofía National Museum Art Centre; the Prado National Museum; the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum; the Teatro Real de Madrid, the Guggenheim Museum; the Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona, as well as the Festival of San Sebastian; the PhotoEspaña Festival, CaixaForum and the Festival of Malaga, which are among the top ten

cultural events¹⁵.

Cultural diplomacy is one of the core elements of the image of the Kingdom of Spain, and the strategy of cultural diplomacy is elaborated and carried out through a *wide network of institutions, funds and mechanisms that implement the cultural policy of Spain*.

In the framework of reforming the system of international cooperation and updating the legislative framework, the Government of the Kingdom of Spain is modernizing the institutional, regulatory and budgetary components. In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain has announced a decision to double the budget allocated to the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) within two years, in 2023 the budget will amount to €574.63 million, which is €196.25 million more than in 2022¹⁶. Approved on October 4, 2022, the draft General Budget for 2023, which was developed taking into account the crisis and further consequences caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, also provides that the Cervantes Institute in 2023 will receive 5.87% more funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation than in 2022.

The main funding programs for cultural projects in Spain are the following: state funding programs, local and autonomous community funding programs, funding from private foundations and organizations, awards from foundations and associations.

Announcements of all state funding programs for cultural projects in Spain, as well as the results of the grant competition are published on the official website of the relevant institution:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation as the main provider of foreign policy of the state, which implements the Spanish Foreign Policy Strategy¹⁷ (Estrategia de Acción Exterior, 2021-2024). Currently, the Sixth General Plan of Spanish Cooperation for the period 2022-2025 is being drawn up, which will define the priorities of the territorial coverage of the Plan. The draft of the new Law on International Development Cooperation has already been approved by the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Spain and is expected to enter into force in early 2023, thereby replacing Law 23/1998 of 7 July 1998.

The Ministry of Culture and Sports, featuring a content-rich web portal and an extensive system of cooperation for each sphere, offers grants for active engagement in the promotion of culture, including grants for participation in events, for the organization and conduct of projects in the field of theater, music, circus, dance, film and audiovisual production,

¹⁵ <https://www.lafabrica.com/wp-images/Informe-Observatorio-de-la-Cultura-2021.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/exteriores/paginas/2022/071022-pge-2023.aspx>

¹⁷ <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/consejodeministros/Paginas/enlaces/270421-enlace-exteriores.aspx>

publishing, cultural heritage, etc. In 2022 alone, 32 competitions for grant programs have been held, and the call for applications for participation in the competition for the presentation of Spanish cinematographic films and other audiovisual works in international audiovisual events within the framework of the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan is still open¹⁸.

The contact point of the Ministry of Culture and Sport responsible for the promotion of cultural patronage and public participation in the financing of culture is “**Culture and Patronage**” (Cultura y Mecenazgo)¹⁹. Its activities include research, development of relations between beneficiaries and patrons, data analysis, dissemination of the legal framework for patronage, etc. The beneficiaries can be cultural foundations, associations, non-governmental development organizations, representative offices of foreign foundations included in the Register of Foundations, Spanish sports federations, public universities and colleges attached to them, the Cervantes Institute, the Ramon Llull Institute, public research organizations.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is responsible for the development and implementation of public policy in the field of education and training. The Ministry of Education of Spain provides services for equating foreign certificates and diplomas to the Spanish education system, promotes academic mobility, recognition of university degrees and credits (which is of great importance for foreign students and teachers).

The **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation** (AECID), as the coordinating body for international cultural relations, implements the ACERCA training program for development in the cultural sector of Spanish cooperation. ACERCA always prioritizes its activities in accordance with the provisions of the General Plan of Cooperation of Spain.

A network of diplomatic missions and cultural centres, subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and directly to AECID. Both embassies and consulates are the bodies responsible for the development of public diplomacy on the ground and must act in coordination with other public institutions and civil society organizations, such as the Cervantes Institute, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, as well as autonomous communities and local cultural centers. Currently, there are more than 120 diplomatic missions in Spain, which implement about 2500 cultural events annually. Spain also has a network of cultural centers, but so far this tool has been used only to create Ibero-American cultural space in 15 Latin American countries plus Equatorial Guinea.

¹⁸ <https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano/catalogo/becas-ayudas-subvenciones-empleo-publico.html>

¹⁹ <https://culturaymecenazgo.culturaydeporte.gob.es/inicio.html>

The Cervantes Institute²⁰ is the main organization of cultural diplomacy of Spain, which operates under the schemes of the French Alliance (Alliance Française)²¹ and whose task is to spread the Spanish language and culture. The Cervantes Institute centers are present in 88 cities in 45 countries on five continents. During the visit of Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis to Ukraine in 2017, the parties agreed to open a center of the Cervantes Institute and the Ukrainian Institute in Madrid, however, as of November 2022, only the Center for Spanish Language and Culture “CHISPA” (Centro Hispánico de Lengua y Cultura)²², which in cooperation with the Cervantes Institute conducts DELE exams for knowledge of Spanish and issues international certificates, is functioning in Ukraine.

The State Society for Spanish Cultural Action (AC/E)²³ works to highlight culture as an integral part of the country’s image, and the AC/E’s Program for the Internationalization of Spanish Culture (PICE) promotes and facilitates the overseas presence of the Spanish creative and cultural sector with three lines of co-funded support. Regardless of which support line the project belongs to, the assistance covers travel, accommodation and other project-related costs.

Spain also has a developed private sector that offers funding programs for cultural projects and prizes, in particular, the Spanish Association of Foundations—Asociación Española de Fundaciones (AEF)²⁴, which is in fact the “home of foundations,” a private and independent national association that brings together more than 850 Spanish foundations of a wide variety of sizes, purposes and fields of activity; Montemadrid Foundation, the Spanish Association of Fundraising, the Foundation for Art and Philanthropy, created at the initiative of the Banking Foundation “la Caixa”, the Ramon Areces Foundation, the Foundation of Friends of the Queen Sofia Center for the Arts and others.

The Carolina Foundation (la Fundación Carolina)²⁵, created to promote cultural relations and cooperation in educational and scientific matters, has accumulated enough contacts in 20 years of work to structure its network (Carolina Network), an operational tool for relations with the beneficiaries of its programs. The creation of Carolina Network formulated a type of communication in which associations of former fellows, leadership communities, spaces for promoters, etc. are integrated.

Local funding programmes and autonomous community funding programmes are also carried out by: Ramon Llull University, Comunidad de Madrid, Complexo Matadero de Madrid and programs in conjunction with AECID, Student Residence of Madrid, Bilbao

²⁰ <https://www.cervantes.es/default.htm>

²¹ <https://www.alliancefr.org/en/>

²² <http://www.chispa.com.ua/ua/index.html>

²³ <https://www.accioncultural.es/>

²⁴ <https://www.fundaciones.org/es/inicio>

²⁵ <https://www.fundacioncarolina.es/>

Foundation, Barcelona City Council, Jiloca Training Center, Huesca Provincial Council, Tabakalera International Center for Contemporary Culture, Atlantic Center for Contemporary Art, Medialab-Prado. According to the 2021 ranking of the Observatory of Culture, Madrid, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Andalusia and the Valencian Community rank the first five among the autonomous communities whose cultural support programs are the most valuable²⁶.

CONCLUSIONS

For a long time, Spain has been trying to maintain equally neutral bilateral relations with both Ukraine and Russia, based primarily on its own interests in the economy, energy, education, science, etc. Cooperation with the Russian Federation as a prominent player in the international arena was a priority, but with the beginning of the Russian invasion—first in 2014 in Crimea and Donbas, and later in 2022, when a full-scale war began on the territory of Ukraine—the intensity of Spanish-Russian cooperation gradually began to decline. In the period from 2014 to 2022, there were still calls for a compromise with Russia, although since then Russia has also started to interfere in Spanish domestic politics (which was especially noticeable in the context of Catalonia), but still the vector of Spanish foreign policy has tilted towards unconditional support for Ukraine—in particular, vast amounts of military assistance (an important element of which is the provided air defense systems).

Also on the side of Ukraine is the majority of Spanish citizens who strongly condemn Russian attacks on civilians. However, previously the influence of Russian narratives on the attitude of Spaniards to the events in Ukraine was quite strong. It is noteworthy that this was superimposed on the historical background of Spain, which itself survived the dictatorship of Hitler's protegee and Mussolini.

Spain's cultural policy is built around the struggle against the ideological heritage of the dictator Franco's regime, the period of which was marked by strict censorship and curtailment of Spanish cultural activity abroad. At the same time, Spanish society is still split in its attitude to the opposing sides of the Civil War of 1936-1939—the left republicans and right nationalists. Current cultural diplomacy efforts are aimed at presenting Spain as a modern European country.

The country has at its disposal a whole network of institutions, funds and mechanisms designed to implement cultural policy; as well as significant cultural potential (as evidenced, for example, by the third place in the world by the number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites). The shortcomings include a plethora of institutions whose mandate includes

²⁶ https://on-the-move.org/sites/default/files/funding-guides/OTM_MFG_Spain_ES.pdf

Spanish cultural policy—but lacking a clear division of competencies. On the other hand, it should also be noted that the Spanish side is currently in the process of active reform of institutions and strategies, which should give a new impetus to the development of cultural policy.

Since the large-scale invasion, the contacts of the Embassy of Ukraine with various Spanish stakeholders and, in particular, Spanish government officials have stepped up markedly; the capabilities of the Embassy of Ukraine are fully used to attract maximum attention to Ukraine. In cooperation with compatriots, activities in the sphere of cultural diplomacy are carried out (for example, a bilingual anthology of Ukrainian poetry was published, which aims to acquaint Spanish readers with the works of Ukrainian classics). The common history of Ukraine and Spain also serves as a bridge for establishing partnerships: the fact that Irpin and Guernica became twin cities (both cities suffered significant destruction as a result of wars) is symbolic in this context.

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