

Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation

A Study on Japanese Public Diplomacy in Europe: The Role and Future Perspectives of the Japan Foundation

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Through the Public Diplomacy Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan Foundation and other organizations and agencies, Japan implements public diplomacy initiatives to increase its cultural presence and partnership with Europe. Despite these efforts, Japan's soft power in Europe has not yet reached its full potential. Crucial reason for this has been the lack of integration among the cultural promotion institutions. Most of the public and private actors have been acting autonomously, without a particular central actor to unify and facilitate their projects as well as without a common strategy.

This study explores an integrated approach for Japanese public diplomacy in Europe through public-private partnerships. It examines the potential of the Japan Foundation as a central public diplomacy actor, facilitating a Public-Private Partnership Platform among actors and institutions in charge of Japanese cultural promotion.

The study focuses on the introduction of Japanese culture in two European countries – France and Bulgaria. It observes the Japan Foundation's role, contributions and activities implemented between the 1970s and 2018, both autonomously and in collaboration with Japanese and local public and private actors. It compares the Foundation's initiatives in the areas, highlighting particular strong points and the space for further improvement. The study also explores essential Japanese and local actors with potential for future cooperation with the Japan Foundation through public-private partnerships. In addition, through personal interviews of the author with Bulgarian and French representatives, the study examines the image of Japan and the future expectations from Japan. It reveals certain cultural aspects and less explored areas of Japanese soft power, which could be further introduced for increasing Japan's presence in the areas. On the basis of the findings, the study suggests specific project proposals for integrated public diplomacy initiatives in France and Bulgaria through a Public-Private Partnership Platform facilitated by the Japan Foundation.