

**Establishment of Public Diplomacy
In Slovakia
An Effective New Approach**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work.

(signature)

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Abstract

This paper examines the present Slovak PD with its positive and negative components and outlines the requirements for a modern and effective PD. It describes the challenge of establishing and occupying a legitimate and relevant place of PD in the Slovak foreign policy and activities. It points to a serious need of a having a unifying element in too general, fragmented and uncoordinated activities of most Slovak governmental and municipal institutions thus far. It claims that civil society and the private sector must be brought on board in order to include the entire spectrum of the Slovak society. If sustainability and credibility is to be achieved, fundamental values generated by the Slovak people must become a basis for any future strategic considerations in this area. Creating a distinguishable image of Slovakia in the fierce competition of other countries requires a consistent, diligent and patient effort by all relevant stakeholders. The paper pays special attention to the sometimes strained political relations between Slovakia and Hungary and argues for the greater use of PD to influence positive change. The paper concludes by suggesting that priority should be given to further development and modernization of the Slovak PD and that carefully elaborated and targeted PD should become an increasingly important asset for the Slovak foreign policy.

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List of Abbreviations

PD Public Diplomacy

NB Nation Brand

SK Slovakia

HU Hungary

Council Council of the Slovak Government for the Country's Presentation

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1. Introduction

Public diplomacy (PD) is a new and expanding subject in international affairs and at the same time also the one, which countries neglect at their own peril. The economic, political and cultural consequences of globalization, the emergence of new global actors, including non-state actors, as well as new media and communication technologies have all had direct effects on the concept of public diplomacy.

The aim of this paper is to explore the role of public diplomacy in building the international status of Slovakia. It demonstrates how Slovakia can apply PD in the most effective and sustainable manner.

In spite of being a relatively new country registered on the world map only since 1993, Slovakia is not completely new to this concept. It had already been an important part of Slovakia's Euro-Atlantic integration strategy and corresponding activities; however, it remained fragmented with relevant domestic institutions and actors following their individual interests and agenda. The development of PD in Slovakia has been characterized by the lack of a holistic, whole-of-the country and all-inclusive approach. The paper explores how best to design and organize the Slovak PD, with whom to engage and involve in these efforts and what should be the target countries and target group and expected benefits of such activities.

Today, Slovakia is a full-fledged member of the EU, both EURO and Schengen zone and a successful, democratic and economically developed country. With its population of only 5.4 million and area of mere 49,000 km², it is considered to be a small country. However, with its GDP per capita (PPP) USD 21,200 (in 2009) it holds the 59th place in the world and before the economic crisis in 2007 it was even the fastest growing economy in the EU. This forms a solid basis for an all expected effort to work persistently and diligently on our image abroad sharing our success story with the world. Lagging behind in this very important field could be – especially in comparison with other perhaps less successful countries yet with more advanced PD - harmful in many respects. Positive image building is a long-term commitment requiring a great deal of diligence.

The study points at the absence of a unified and consistent PD in Slovakia. It was compiled with the vision to create an avenue for stakeholders that would enable them to determine how best to pursue PD, define its targets and yield the best possible benefits for the country. There is no single and generally agreed definition of PD. This paper suggests that each country must establish its own definition of PD reflecting its own specific circumstances.

Based on a recent representative public opinion poll conducted in Slovakia, four key values have been identified, reflecting the overall preference of the population - safety, education, dignity and exceptionality. The study proposes these values to form the fundamental basis for planning and implementing all further PD activities.

The paper also describes the practices of three countries – Canada, Finland and the Czech Republic reflecting and applying the lessons learned from the field of their

respective PD. Their international standing and their country brand values are compared based on available ratings.

Further, the paper describes the sensitivities in the relationship between Slovakia and Hungary and argues that PD can play a useful role in shaping their future partnership and cooperation in a positive and constructive manner. While this field is still open for discussion and further research, the paper recommends scholars to pay due attention to this issue.

The paper further elaborates on the use of the internet in PD and its impact on consumers, businesses and governments that must be fully taken into account and incorporated in the Slovak PD. Here, the paper proposes the use of “fluidboxes” as a helpful tool making use of the diversity of on-line communication in PD.

I hope my study will help better understand the concept of public diplomacy from a perspective of a small and young country and that it will provide sufficient information on the ongoing processes of creating a unified public communication and presentation model. Finally, I believe it will prove the relevance and need of further developing this concept as well as encourage further study at national level.

In order to make readers more familiar with the practices that we pursue in PD today, a situation to be called typical or even symptomatic is described further below.

Day one:

A Slovak delegation led by the Head of State is officially received at the highest level by the President of country X. The official meeting between the two presidents is followed by presentations of Slovak delegation members representing various government agencies and institutions. The President of Slovakia opens this segment

with a general overview of bilateral relations and the prospects of future mutual cooperation and presents recent developments in Slovakia in an inviting and positive light. The Slovak Minister of Economy provides information on the business environment in Slovakia with the focus on presenting Slovakia as an attractive and ideal location for doing business and highlights the government's support and incentives to promote foreign investment and trade, including numerous industrial parks. Representatives of Slovak Tourist Agency do their part hoping to attract tourists and visitors to Slovakia showcasing the rich history, cultural traditions and natural beauty of the country with flocks of sheep on meadows. The Minister of Transportation describes the government's priority to build hundreds of kilometres of highways as a new infrastructure project, which is long overdue, to encourage tourism and business to come to Slovakia. Although the media coverage was quite intensive and largely positive, it has not affected the general public sufficiently enough to the extent it would positively shape their decision making process concerning visiting or investing in Slovakia.

Day two:

Another delegation (let's say from the Czech Republic) headed by its president also comes to the country "X" with the very same purpose. Even their messages towards their hosts are similar to those from the past day containing same values, political and economic stability and favourable conditions for business or holidays. The media coverage resembles yesterday's news perfected by new pictures.

Day three:

Another delegation (this time a Slovenian one) headed by its president comes to the same country "X" and the pattern repeats itself.

Few months later:

People of the country “X” are not sure which president to associate with which country and what the message communicated to them was and ultimately they would inevitably ask the logical question – What is actually the difference among those countries? What were they telling us? And even if they remembered something, they would probably pose themselves even more frightening question – Which delegation said what? The three delegations, the three small states and the three similar messages resulted in one understanding full of questions, ambiguity and confusion. And finally, as it normally goes with common people, it boiled down to lack of interest and yawning and all together forgotten in time. There was nothing, which could have stirred the attention of targeted population, no benefits yielded and mutual perception not even by a little step enhanced or improved. So, what to do to clearly distinguish, say in North America, that the three mentioned states are totally different and strive to achieve other goals?

On top of it, to the bad luck of the Slovak delegation, the messages sent out were confusing, blurry and general. There was a lack of homogeneity, information provided was not unified in terms of ultimate goals and it looked like the country/brand presented consisted of many contradictory elements. Again, the logical question to raise would be – So what do they deem important there? And how actually the country looks like? Is it sheep with meadows that we should fancy or a modern country? So, if presenting one country by many representatives, what should be done so that the message, even if generated from different thematic environments, shapes up as clear and comprehensible as possible?

Following is an old legend from Slovak history used to project the idea that “In unity there is strength”, which is the message I would like to generally convey concerning the presentation of Slovakia as a country.

In the late 9th century King Svatopluk had founded the Greater Moravian Empire. King Svatopluk governed with a strong hand, a stubborn will, and a wise head, and successfully defended his empire against enemies who wished to conquer it. But a time came when Svatopluk grew old and sick, and he worried about the future of his country, because his sons were impossible to agree among themselves. The story revolves around the theme of being able to break sticks singly but not when they are bound together.

Similarly as the strength of being united guaranteed the Great Moravian Empire its power and prosperity, also sending out unified messages about Slovakia must be one of the powerful tools of PD. Providing heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory information might confuse its recipients and result in an unclear, indefinable and hard-to-remember image.

Another wisdom can be applied on the Slovak PD from a well-known Aesop’s fable about the turtle and the rabbit. The turtle never quit regardless of how difficult the race was, while the rabbit knowing he is the sure winner made several stops, fell asleep and lost. The moral of this story is that with persistency and diligence you can win against the better or in contrary, with inactiveness you can lose against the worse.

To better understand the context of the fable and its relationship to Slovakia, it is worth mentioning it in at least three different dimensions:

- A) Regional context – Central Europe like other regions of the world is, despite of cooperation and solidarity, full of competition and catching up with each other if someone enjoys a full speed development in a given area. We have already witnessed some success stories followed by complacency and setbacks as a result of it, and on contrary, sleepers waking up and passing the others. Slovakia belongs exactly to the latter mentioned category and our efforts to create a sound PD fall well within it.
- B) Historical context - 20 years after the fall of communism coupled with the harshest economic crisis in generations brought about a new schism in thinking in Central Europe. Being fully integrated in all relevant transatlantic organizations but at the same time totally dependent on outer economies, stirred a demand for a new and even more robust presentation to the external audience along with the question “What is next?” Nobody will want to stay behind and even though we might feel as frontrunners now, we should pretty much focus on building the image of our country through our success story.
- C) Symbolic context – the phrase of the second paragraph of our national anthem talks about “a Slovakia having slept for thus long”. After the Velvet revolution, we had been considered to be an outsider by all surrounding countries for many years; however, we caught up with the rest and became leaders in many respects (they – rabbits who fell asleep, we – turtle that did it step by step). It is up to us now not to fall asleep and underestimate the efforts of our neighbours.

Today, a unified and well thought-out PD is absent in Slovakia. We ultimately need to make an effort and work persistently and diligently on creating our image abroad by primarily telling the world about our success story. Otherwise, our rival countries, even though not so successful but smart enough and sustained in their promotion,

might defeat us in many respects. Positive and distinguishing image building is a long-term commitment requiring a good piece of patience, dedication, and perseverance.

This work was written with an honest intention to draw the avenue how to pursue PD, how to define targets and how to gain the best possible benefits of it for Slovakia. We will return to our little story at the end of this work.

2. Definition of PD in Slovakia's context

There is no single, all-embracing definition of PD. Numerous authors offer variety of definitions and individual countries define, understand and pursue PD in different ways.

The introductory lecture of PD at DiploFoundation (Rana, 2009) offers three definitions of PD.

The first one is covering activities of the governments directed at foreign publics.

The second one targets both foreign as well as domestic publics.

Both the first and the second definitions also include the activities of non-state actors as contributors to PD.

The third one identifies PD with "soft power" based on persuasion and attraction and encompasses non-state actors at home and abroad as important networking elements in the foreign policy-making and the positive image-building process.

One of the best definitions of what PD is can be considered: "The promotion of national interest through understanding, informing and influencing foreign (and I would add also domestic) audiences'. (Scott, 2009c)

In Slovakia's context I would opt for the combination of the second and third definition, i.e. I understand the Slovak PD as an ability to create the image of our country in ways that attract the choices of foreign investors, businesses, tourists,

students or other ordinary citizens in carefully selected countries together with forging the positive image of Slovak citizens about their country and its policies. It means communication of the Slovak government aimed at foreign and domestic public to reach their “hearts and minds”. Since most of the messages that both foreign and domestic audiences get about Slovakia stem not primarily directly from the government but are generated through a variety of ways, e.g. the media, people-to-people contacts, goods and services of Slovak origin, cultural events, films or personal visits, the role of the government is to establish a solid and sound basis stimulating the positive messages to be received by the outside world.

PD, in its widest sense, arching over cultural and economic diplomacy, education, media management, tourism and ethnical political diplomacy is a “new-born baby” in Slovakia today.

2.1. Soft/Hard and Domestic/Foreign

In depicting Slovakia’s PD of today by using two axes in the Figure 1 – soft/hard power and domestic/foreign audience – we can see that:

- in principle, Slovakia has no significant military or economic hard powers, therefore PD activities, if any, are pursued in the area of soft power. There is only one exception – the Slovak-Hungarian (SK-HU) bilateral relationship with ethnical tensions, the harsh anti-Hungarian rhetoric of Jan Slotá, Chair of the right-wing Slovak National Party (SNS) – which I would assign to the slightly hard part of the chart. The Slovak-Hungarian relation and possible contribution of PD to its improvement is discussed in deeper detail in Chapter 6.

- PD is pursued with domestic as well as foreign audiences. At the domestic level the MFA briefs domestic public on a daily basis through the media and its website, however, it does not exert any additional effort to conduct a two-way communication. In principle, this amounts to an explanation of one's position, or supply of information, i.e. a one-way communication flow. I witnessed a situation when a Slovak student approached me with the request to help with her homework to formulate the main role of diplomacy. Neither on internet nor in literature was she able to find this elementary piece of information as no one from her whole class did.

Therefore I drew the chart on the domestic part not covering 100% of the field. In order to be successful, Slovakia's PD has to engage all possible layers of the society in the two-way dialogue on foreign-policy issues.

- Slovak PD targeting foreign publics in a general and non-selective way is flawed. There is a serious gap in this approach. Slovakia, as a small country, must carefully select target countries and target groups according to our specific interests in each of them.

Figure 1: Slovakia's PD of today

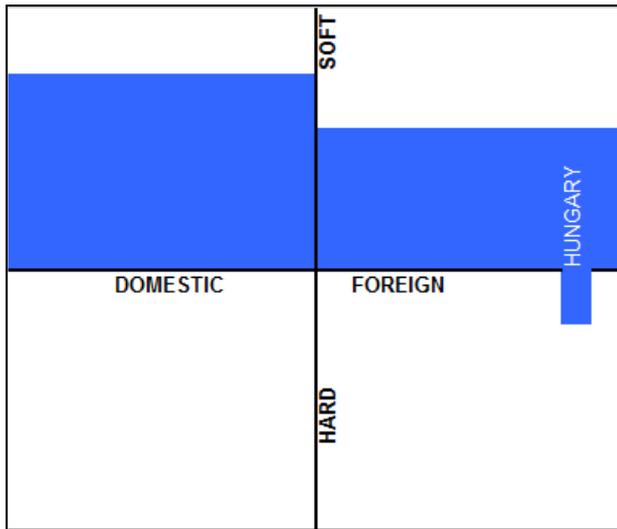
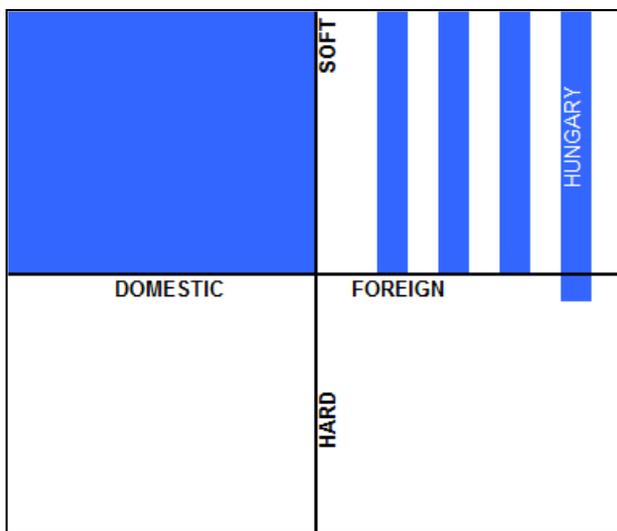


Figure 2 is illustrating my view on “ideal face” of the Slovak PD. What we can see here is a full coverage of area with domestic public interactions and a strict selection of targets abroad that are covered more intensively. A hard part of power in SK-HU relationship is diminished.

Figure 2: Ideal Slovak PD



2.2. Reactive, Proactive and Active PD

The character of Slovakia's PD today can be also expressed by Leonard's conceptualization of the three dimensions of PD (Leonard, 2002) – see Table 1.

Table 1: Three dimensions of Slovakia's PD

Purpose	News handling	Strategic communication	Relationships-building
	<i>Reactive</i> hours and days	<i>Proactive</i> weeks and months	<i>Activities</i> years
POLITICAL	GOOD at domestic level GAP in work with foreign correspondents MIXED at post level	MIXED in pursuing strategic messages on individual issues GAP in managing country's perception as a whole	GAP
ECONOMIC	Ibid.	MIXED in specific promotion GAP in country's values promotion GOOD in tourism promotion	GAP
SOCIETAL/CULTURAL	Ibid.	MIXED on culture promotion	GAP/MIXED

Reaction to news as they occur

Government structures deal with domestic media on a daily basis. In this respect we have to mention that with the growth of democracy, the Slovak media principally take critical, even antagonistic positions towards the current government. It is normal in a democratic society when the media take a critical stance; however, their specific behavior seems to be one-sided and thoughtless and destructive. They have been privatized during the previous government and their owners sympathize with the current opposition.

Since foreign correspondents have limited access to the government they rely on domestic media as a source of information. This logically results in a lack of coverage in foreign media or publishing only sensational or biased stories about Slovakia. It is not an exception that foreign media are often more amiable than domestic ones.

The Slovak embassies react individually to daily news in the media in their host countries – they don't have any source of attractive stories for them to make use of. Their work generally depends mostly on the frequency of a bilateral relation and on respective ambassador's profile.

These gaps have to be overcome by improving focus on foreign media and information provided to them.

Economic diplomacy is a priority of the Slovak government; however, its coverage through PD is not adequate. Especially abroad, there is a communication gap in promotion of our economic achievements. I suggest making better use of publications and findings of such relevant institutions as the OECD that evaluates on a regular basis development in the member states and its conclusions are often very positive for Slovakia.

Proactive strategic communication

The individual institutions - economic, tourist, cultural or educational – are able to communicate proactively on specific issues. It is however, the overall picture of the country based on real and common nation values translated into messages of all institutions that forms the attitudes toward us. Chapter 5 of this paper discusses this approach based on values that are missing in proactive strategic communication today. Headquarters has to provide sufficient strategic information incorporating nation values as a lifeline and the embassies have to adjust them selectively

according to the specific needs of their constituency. Innovative internet tools – as described in Chapter 7 – have to facilitate communication campaigns.

Strategic proactive communication involves determining specific events over the year where specific messages about Slovakia are to be communicated and activities performed as planned. Slovakia has identified the following events for 2010: the Olympic Games in Vancouver, Football World Cup, Ice-hockey World Championship and EXPO Shanghai. Although all relevant institutions met several times; unfortunately no significant result had been achieved yet with the lack of finances described as an insurmountable obstacle. Nevertheless, I consider it positive that the meeting took place and the participants informed each other about activities prepared by respective institutions. . This practice has to continue with the improved coordination of messages in order to better use synergy effects.

Relationship-building

Relationship-building is embodied in long-term activities; it means developing lasting and positive relationships of a variety of people towards Slovakia – students, artists, sportsmen, tourists, business people, activists, media, etc. – mainly in personal contacts. These activities are not visible at the first sight and being quite complex, it is hard to evaluate their effectiveness. Long-standing relationships are built during cultural performances of artists from Slovakia, during shopping, if consumers use a Slovak product, if they watch a Slovak film, when foreign investors invest or businessmen conclude businesses here. It means that it is not just a governmental effort with a huge budget but the country itself establishes relationships itself on a daily basis. At the moment of decision to interact with Slovakia it is crucial that a great deal of this background work has already been done.

Today, there is a gap in a concerted and whole-of-Slovakia relationship-building. In cultural sphere we have the most inherent and commonly accepted view – we are “selling” our country through shepherds, sheep-cheese and folklore that in reality doesn’t correspond with the modern picture of today’s Slovakia.

2.3. PD and/or Nation Branding

PD and nation branding are two closely interrelated concepts. There are, however, different views on the degree of their integration and their mutual relationship.

Nation branding (NB) has been evolving from marketing and branding. Speaking about branding in the context of nations could lead people to think about the same promotional techniques as used for commercial products and services – applying logo, slogan, design and investing a huge amount of money into advertising. And many people have even a moral objection to this idea.

Public diplomacy stems from international relations and goes beyond traditional diplomacy in more respects. According to Scott (Scott, 2009c), the most important attributes of PD are people, power, attracting, convincing, credibility, partnerships and networks and facilitating in contrast to traditional diplomacy that is characterized by state power, coercion, imposing, secrecy, self-serving and directing.

Nevertheless, the interrelationship of PD and NB has been evaluated by more authors.

Szondi (Szondi, 2008) offers five different views on degree of integration between PD and NB. The first one where these concepts are unrelated, the second and the third where one is part of the other, the fourth describes them as two distinct but

overlapping concepts and in the fifth one the concepts are exactly the same as synonyms. He claims that the boundaries of the two areas are still forming and it is difficult to foresee which model will become dominant in the future.

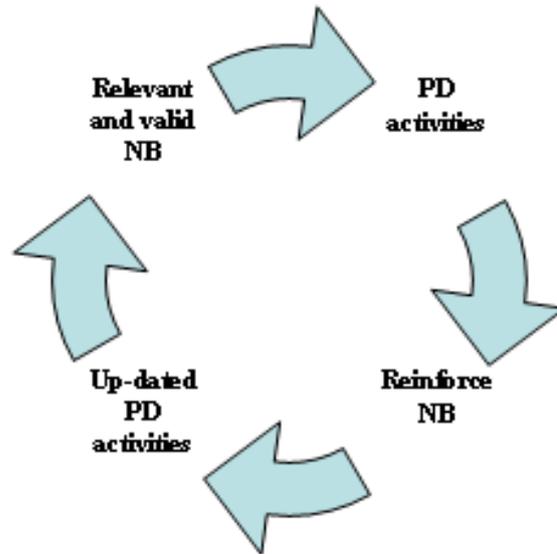
Other authors consider NB just as a tool of PD.

Anholt is reported to have remarked: “Is PD part of branding or branding part of PD?” (Scott, 2009b). Clearly, there is more to PD than branding – take education, culture, sports, etc diplomacy as an example.

I think that countries should apply both concepts with intensity depending on their respective culture, financial and human resources and their specific situation. For Slovakia, I would visualize their combination as a self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing spiral – see Figure 3.

To have a relevant and valid Slovak nation brand we need to promote it through PD. That would reinforce the validity and relevance of NB which in turn attracts more audience and gains more support by own citizens stimulating again new PD activities.... It is very important not to stop this spiral by e.g. changes of governments because starting again and again from the zero point means losing time, energy and money. Therefore, the creation of NB and PD activities has to be managed carefully based on the whole-of-nation consensus.

Figure 3: PD – NB spiral



There were some NB efforts in the past (in 2005) leading to establishing the logo of Slovakia - a butterfly, but it has not been explained why this choice and what values it represents. The only one explanation available is that while considering symbols of heart, star, sun, river or mountain the butterfly was the best choice. In fact, the process of this logo creation was publicly criticized for non-transparent selection of creative agency and for its relatively high price.

Also a slogan has been created branding Slovakia – “A little-big country”, perhaps trying to put in contrast the size of the country with a level of its achievements. It is known that both logo and slogan have been quite a costly exercise not supported by corresponding PD activities so they ended up without general recognition and as a total failure.

In order the spiral can work and get self-reinforced we need to cultivate PD as a profession, train diplomats and provide them with courses of study necessary to master its unique techniques and skills. Both PD and NB have evolving dynamism and need a body of knowledge. They are to be understood as multidisciplinary fields

requiring a broad spectrum of competences – involving diplomacy, marketing, branding, communication, PR, economy, culture, tourism, education, environment, politics or international relations.

The Diplomatic Academy established recently at the Slovak MFA has included PD into training courses for diplomats already posted abroad in the past. Since the lecturers at the academy are mainly ambassadors or other diplomats from the MFA without sufficient practical and theoretical “know-how”, the quality of these courses is questionable as regards PD. Training in nation branding is specifically not included in the course of study. It is highly recommended to invite external lecturers who would bring a broader expertise into the subject and who would thus increase the quality and professionalization of our diplomatic service in these evolving and significant areas.

Summing up, there is no doubt a sound and well thought-out public diplomacy is needed in probably every country of the world, let alone the small country like Slovakia. There are obviously many reasons to do so depending on the specific situation, but one aspect remains the same – whether we call it strategic communication, media strategy, relationship building or simply talking to foreign publics through scores of various agents – it is about creating an image we all wish for.

Slovakia is no exception. Starting from the very scratch, it is learning by implementing process. We still don't know all the basics, we lack experience, but importantly we strive hard. We have laid a solid basis to be successful, if there is a follow-up and sustainability. However, also dedication, coordination, education and last but not least financial resources are a must during the upcoming months and years.

If we are to improve our relationship with Hungary in a long terms perspective, we have to step up this effort. If we want more students to study in this country or bring in more investors, there is no other and more efficient way of doing other than through a professional public diplomacy. And at the end of tunnel there is a light, which we wish to call “brand Slovakia”.

So, what kind of public diplomacy for Slovakia? One that is focused on presenting “a modern, safe and prosperous country” with professionals in strictly selected countries through all state-of-the-art technical and human tools.

3. Practices of Other Countries

3.1. Canada

3.1.1. Introduction

Canada is a modern, diverse and technologically advanced country with a strong economic power and enjoying high international respect based on its role in maintaining global peace and security. The importance of public diplomacy has long been recognized by Canadian policy-makers. Today, nobody in Canada questions “whether” but “what is the best way” to carry out public diplomacy so that the country is seen and heard the way and to the degree it should be.

3.1.2. Positioning

Canada traditionally holds leading positions in numerous global ratings. It is using all the country has to offer - strong business and tourism offerings, amicable people, diverse culture or attractive landscapes. Its sustained marketing effort is resulting in country’s top positioning:

In the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index (NBI) that measures consumers’ perceptions, Canada has always been included among the top ten (however, it dropped from the fourth in 2008 to the seventh position in 2009) (anon, 2010b)

According to the 2009 FutureBrand that measures country's tangible and intangible assets, Canada is No 2 global country brand with "strong, diverse business and tourism offerings and a solid marketing effort" (anon, 2010c). According to the East West Nation Brand Perception Index that measures media's perception, Canada belongs to the top 10 as well (moved up from 22nd position in 2008) (anon, 2010a).

The International Institute for Management Development in its IMD's World Competitiveness Yearbook lists Canada at the 8th place in 2008 and 2009. In this ranking competitiveness means not only growth or economic performance but takes into consideration also the "soft" factors, such as the environment quality of life, technology, knowledge, etc (International Institute for Management Development, 2010).

In the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) Canada rose from 13th position in 2007-2008 to 10th position in 2008-2009 and finally to 9th position in 2009-2010. GCI examines many factors enabling countries to achieve sustained economic growth and long-term prosperity (World Economic Forum, 2009).

According to the 2010 A.T. Kearney Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index, a regular assessment of senior executive sentiment, Canada moved up from the 14th position in 2007 to the 9th in 2010.

Finally, in the Economist Intelligence Units' business environment ranking 2008-2012 that reflects 10 main criteria and number of indicators used by companies to formulate their business strategies Canada moved up from the 5th place 2003-2007 to the 4th.

What is the main source of Canada's excellent image? Canada is not associated with any strong commercial brands; it doesn't have any internationally recognized political

leaders nor any specific cultural assets. Also not many people are closely familiar with its multi-facet character. In the late 1990s, when Canada was criticized over its forest policy, it was called the „Brazil of the North“. It worked hard to shed that label.

In 1976 Canada joined G7 - an economic and political group of the seven world's largest industrialized nations. Canada is a great place to invest; it has a strong economic growth and low taxes on new investment. Canada's banking sector and a currency are recognized as one of the most stable in the world. Canada demonstrates its commitment to promote open markets – NAFTA agreement that created one of the largest free trade areas contributed to significant growth of trade and FDI to Canada.

Canada, as a “country of immigrants” is founded on democracy. It is known for its positive role in global security and the defence of human rights and human dignity.

We can see that Canada shows long-term endurance and control to remain an attractive country on the global market.

3.1.3. PD Structures

During my visit at the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department of Canada (DFAIT) I have learned that the federal government of Canada delegated to them the primary responsibility and competence for managing its image abroad. Nevertheless, many other departments of the federal government, also at the provincial, regional and municipal level, as well as number of non–state actors are playing increasingly active role in spreading the country's story and in influencing the perception of Canada in the world. The most active departments at the federal level besides DFAIT are: Heritage Canada, which manages participation at world fairs; CIDA, the agency for development assistance; Human Resources and Social Development

Canada, responsible for international academic mobility; Canada Council for the Arts; Industry Canada; Canadian tourism Commission and others. Canada with its federal structure, attempts to get as much as possible synergies of federal and provincial activities (DFAIT, 2009).

3.1.4. Views of “insiders”

According to Evan H. Potter (Potter, 2009a, p. 16-20) there are 3 factors contributing to Canada’s image problem:

- “Canadian disease of doing the right thing but underfunding it”. Potter shows following expenditures on public diplomacy (in Can\$ million): France 2,876; USA 1,652; UK 1,308; Germany 848 and Canada 109
- scattering of public diplomacy resources between many departments at the federal level
- sensitivities in pursuing sometimes different provincial and federal interests abroad

In his book “Branding Canada” he also suggests that foreign service officers at Canada’s 174 missions abroad that have instant access to counterparts and that have ultimate responsibility to reinforce positive perceptions of Canada abroad need more training in PD (Potter, 2009a, p. 198-201).

Mark McDowell, Director of Public Diplomacy and Domestic Outreach at DFAIT mentioned that currently there were not very convenient conditions for public diplomacy activities; the government is not considering it as a priority and its budgets are constantly cut. New organizational structure at DFAIT has just recently been created and the PD section is now seeking a right position in it. Coming Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver are presenting a challenge for all of them.

Danielle Thibaut, the Director General of Invest in Canada presented the country's strategy of attracting the foreign investment. The section currently employs 52 people and has an annual budget of \$ 3 million CAD what she considers to be absolutely inadequate. This budget is used for participation in world fairs and exhibitions. For production of just one short video clip she has spent 10% of the total budget.

Elisa Kaltcheva from the Advocacy Strategy Division is responsible for inviting the foreign journalists with regard to specific projects, for example the Arctic region, operations in Afghanistan, etc. Her annual budget is \$1,8 million CAD. She is missing a roof organization for Canadian PD activities.

In my meeting with E.H.Potter (Potter, 2009b) he expressed his view how important for a nation it is to specify and awake its own identity, qualities and values. He emphasized the importance of involvement of NGOs and private businesses and their cooperation with government in creation of the positive image of the country abroad. Building up a general image means in my opinion wasting the means without positive results. Therefore it is important to be focused on advocacy of specific advantages and features of a country and the PD strategy should be different in different countries. According to him it is crucial to sustain the political will for support of PD in longer time horizon as the visible results can be reached in many cases in more than 10 years. He considers it being a "tragedy" if a country has "something good" and nobody knows about it. On the other hand if a country promotes its image that is different from reality it can lose its credibility. He considers the Olympic Games in Vancouver as an excellent opportunity for promotion of Canada as well as other countries.

3.1.5. Conclusion

Canada boasts multiple advantages and great potential. The country was among first to implement the idea of PD and respect the need and fundamental importance of PD.

The international image of Canada has always been associated with its global peacekeeping role and its inclusiveness and multiculturalism. Canada also puts a lot of PD effort not to be in the shadow of the United States and to be distinct from them.

Some critics claim that post 9/11 Canada, problematically, adapted its own PD policies to serve American interests. Also, that due to American call for “North-American” security, Canada is using similar PD approaches aimed against terrorism and Islamic extremism – lies and official deception.

In the war on terrorism Canada is projecting itself as a reliable ally supporting the USA in its global role in counter-terrorism and the public safety agenda. Canada and the USA are both members of NATO and NORAD. The policies of these military institutions were reshaped after 9/11 with consequent impact on the policies of their member states. The Security and Prosperity Partnership launched by three NAFTA countries – the USA, Canada and Mexico - in 2005 is also addressing a common security approach to protect North America. The liberal immigration policy of Canada was considered as a threat, so it was tightened up – e.g. in 2009 re-introducing visa-regime towards an EU member state – the Czech Republic.

Reviewing Canada-US relationship we have to also to consider that Canada and the USA enjoy an exclusive economic relationship: the USA absorb almost 80 percent of the Canadian exports, the two countries have one of the world’s largest investment

flows and a huge energy trade. Therefore Canadian focus on partnership with the USA is not only neighbour-state phenomenon but also a very pragmatic approach.

Some people can view Canada's deployment of troops to Afghanistan (with saying no to military involvement in Iraq) as readjusted PD in order to promote its military commitments and to serve the military aims of the USA. Other people could see it as Canada's raising profile as a peacekeeper. The military and development assistance are becoming more and more incorporated into the PD since they create the international image of the country and they need coherent messaging. In military and development agendas, PD is placed at the sharp end of both international and domestic public relations.

Today, under the current government, the PD professionals call for more whole-of-government and whole-of-Canada approach, for more resources and more coherent strategies. It seems that PD activities have been dramatically scaled down. Perpetual evaluation, results' monitoring of numerous ratings and feedback conclusions' implementation together with taking into account the voice of PD professionals in the past definitely helped Canada gain international respect, attractiveness and positive image in the long-term. Hopefully, the country will come back to its previous PD efforts and use all benefits resulting from them.

In conclusion, the lessons for us to learn from Canada's PD are as follows:

1. Despite the changes of governments it is worth to keep the highest possible continuity in PD strategies and activities.
2. Canada has a high positive rating in the world and benefits from the cumulative effect of its PD programs and events (e.g. Olympics), however

domestic policy splits over Canada's international relations cannot be healed by PD campaigns.

3.2. Finland

3.2.1. Introduction

Finland with its population of 5.4 million people is similar in size to Slovakia. Finland is generally considered to be a welfare EU member state due to its high GDP per capita, advanced high-technologies, educated people, the respect to environment and its deep inclination to arts. Finland has a well elaborated and organized strategy and structure of public diplomacy and country brand promotion. Considering the effort that Finland is making there are surprisingly not many references to Finnish PD in the specialized literature.

3.2.2. Positioning

In the Anholt-GfK Roper (NBI) 2008 Finland ranked 18th out of 50 countries. Finland is outperformed here by other Nordic countries (Norway, Denmark and Sweden) (anon, 2010b)

According to the East West Nation Brand Perception Index Finland keeps the 22nd position (improved from 24th in 2008) out of 200 countries (anon, 2010a)

In the IMD's World Competitiveness Yearbook Finland jumped from 15th position in 2008 up to 9th position in 2009 (International Institute for Management Development, 2010).(International Institute for Management Development, 2010)

In GCI Finland keeps the same 6th position from 2007-2008 also in 2008-2009. It is getting the high score for macroeconomic stability, budget surplus, low indebtedness, high national savings, transparent institutions, high education grade, technical

development and innovation and financial market functioning (World Economic Forum, 2009).

In the Economist Intelligence Unit's business environment ranking Finland improved its 3rd place in 2003-2007 to the 2nd place in 2008-2012. In its newest report (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009) Finland is expected to have the best global business environment in 2009 – 2013 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009).

3.2.3. PD Structures

From my visit at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) I learnt that all major players in Finnish international communication (ministries, tourism, export and investment promotion, foundations, private companies) are organized in the Finland Promotion Board. It is chaired by MFA and the most important members are: Finnish Tourist Board, Finpro, Invest in Finland, Economic Information Office, Tekes (support of R&D), Finnair, Finnish Forest Foundation and others. The main task is to coordinate all relevant international communication and to develop the country brand. MFA coordinates plans and finances journalist visits, world fairs and exhibitions, big campaigns, web-portals, etc. A new section for PD, communication and information was created at MFA in September 2008. MFA is also the initiator of the National Brand Project. The objective of this initiative is to define brand identity and brand image of Finland in order to enhance business, investment and tourism as well as to gain increased international political influence. Jorma Ollila, Chairman of Nokia Corporation and Royal Dutch Shell, is chairing the project. The project is supposed to be finished after a broad national discussion by mid 2010 and implemented by the end of 2010. MFA also pays big attention to public-private cooperation at specific occasions, such as Shanghai World Expo 2010, Frankfurt Book Fair, etc. What is

interesting is the MFA's approach implementing special PD Country Programmes in 11 focus countries (Finnish MFA, 2009).

3.2.4. Views of “insiders”

Pertti Torstila, Secretary of State of the Finnish MFA (Torstila, 2009) mentioned that Finland had begun with systematic approach to the country image creation in 1980. They started to be focused on three areas: education, culture and environment and they achieved positive results due to the whole-of-nation support. The idea of the new image gained besides financial backing from the government also an extreme support of the media and of wide public. According to his opinion this level should be permanently sustained by implementation of new suitable projects. A website “what Finland is” for nation-wide discussion about Finland's reputation building was launched and people can offer EUR 0, 02 to support this project.

Timo Heino, Director of the Public Diplomacy Department stated that the Finish MFA had special funds for PD and highlighted the importance to allocate these funds in an effective way. For instance, Finland invests yearly about EUR 1,5 million in the visits of foreign journalists, the cultural visits and publications for them. They have about 200 of such visits per year. For EXPO Shanghai 2010 they have allocated EUR 4 million. Finland has well elaborated system of presentation of country abroad. They have tailor-made action plans for 11 focus countries with identified target groups. All actions are systematically planned in long-term horizon and they involve the most relevant and influential actors from non-governmental sector.

3.2.5. Conclusion

Finland has appealing ingredients for strong positive image abroad – outstanding macroeconomic results, excellence in high-tech and science, splendid educational system, culture, multinational corporation Nokia with world-wide brand recognition or

famous diplomat Martti Ahtisaari, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his engagement in resolving the international conflicts and who was a UN Special Envoy for Kosovo. However, Finland has still to learn to sell them better. As Anholt Simon said: "Part of Finland's task is to establish more of its own true identity internationally without sacrificing any of the benefit of this regional perception." (Anholt, 2009). It means, Finland needs to differentiate itself from other Scandinavian countries. This is especially important for small, export-oriented economies.

Finland is famous by organizing various educational exchange programs. The Centre for International Mobility provides scholarships for foreign students that are interested to study in Finland. One can obtain an academic degree here studying in English. This way the country is winning long-term positive attitudes towards Finland of many young people from different countries.

Establishment of the Finland Promotion Board together with its National Brand Project means going the right way. The government is well aware of the PD need, takes the initiatives and wants to involve the whole country - companies, industries, academic institutions and many layers of population. The first results are visible in improved international rankings. At the same time the Finns are patient and they know that many years can go by till they reach substantial results.

In conclusion, the lessons for us to learn from Finland's PD are as follows:

High profile brand name Nokia is closely connected with Finland. Positive brand name association is elevating Finland's profile. Through Nokia and its talented engineers Finland and its people can identify themselves with the positive attitude toward advanced technologies and demonstrate Finnish management culture and values. It is an excellent tool of PD to use the country's strong brand to display best

business practices, exquisite service programs and sound corporate social responsibility practices abroad.

It is crucial for small country to be focused in PD on limited number of countries that are considered most important. Preparing PD action plans for these identified countries the activities are becoming predictable, easily manageable and can yield high results.

3.3. Czech Republic

3.3.1. Introduction

The Czech Republic shares a long common history with Slovakia within former Czechoslovakia until they peacefully split in two independent states January 1, 1993. Former socialist Czechoslovakia was active in creating its positive image in the form of traditional economic, cultural, educational, ethnic, networking, etc. diplomacy. However, from the very moment since the split in two independent states, the Czech Republic as well as Slovakia was challenged to start from scratch. They had to create a distinct image from that of its communist past. Simon Anholt in this context wrote that:

One of the most damaging effects of Communism was the way in which it destroyed the national identity and the nation brands of the countries within the Soviet Union. By stopping the export of their national products and preventing people from travelling abroad, and in many other ways, the Soviet regime effectively deleted the old, distinctive European nation brands – Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, even Russia itself – that had been created and enriched over centuries of more benign rule. Most of these states are now working hard to rebuild their images and their identities, and it is a slow and painful process. (Anholt, 2007, p. 118).

Both countries adopted in early 1990s far-reaching stabilization, liberalization and democratization reforms and both countries accessed OECD in 2000 and the EU and NATO in 2004. The most internationally famous Czech political figure Vaclav Havel was a leader of political changes in November 1989 and its first president. Today, the Czech Republic is one of the most stable and prosperous countries of the post-communist region of Central and Eastern Europe. The country is attractive for its rich history, ample culture, nice landscape, friendly services-providers and relatively well-developed infrastructure. And it “owns” the world-known brand Skoda exporting cars globally. With its 10 million citizens it is double the size of Slovakia.

3.3.2. Positioning

In the Anholt-GfK Roper (NBI) 2008 the Czech Republic ranked 31st out of 50 countries. It is surprisingly overtaken by Poland (30) and Hungary (28) (anon, 2010b).

According to the East West Nation Brand Perception Index the Czech Republic has the 39th position (compared to 26th in 2008) out of 200 countries (anon, 2010a).

In the IMD’s World Competitiveness Yearbook the Czech Republic dropped from 28th position in 2008 up to 29th position in 2009 (International Institute for Management Development, 2010).

In GCI the Czech Republic improved its 33rd position from 2007-2008 to 31st in 2008-2009. It is getting the high score for basic indicators, however less scores for efficiency enhancement and innovation factors (World Economic Forum, 2009).

According to the 2010 A.T. Kearney Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index, a regular assessment of senior executive sentiment, the Czech Republic moved up from the 25th position in 2007 to the 17th in 2010

In the Economist Intelligence Unit's business environment ranking the Czech Republic shifted from its 24th place in 2004-2008 to the 22nd place in 2009-2013 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009) (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009).

3.3.3. PD Structures

The model structure was established in 2005. The "Concept for a Unified Presentation of the Czech Republic" (Concept) was approved by the government. The Council of the Czech Government headed by the minister of foreign affairs was created. The Council is coordinating the presentation activities of individual actors and creating conditions for joint presentation of country abroad. Its main objectives are (MFA of Czech Republic, 2006):

- change the label of the country as post-communist with cheap labour
- increase FDI and revenues from tourism
- increase effectiveness of financing for presentation and marketing activities
- support positive image building and enhance trustworthiness of the country internationally

The Council elaborated the Concept that was further broken down into short-, medium- and long-term objectives for single ministries, office of the President and of the PM and the House of Parliament. Czech Tourism (National Tourism Promotion Agency of the Ministry of Regional Development) and Czech Trade (National Trade Promotion Agency of the Ministry of Industry and Trade) were included as well.

3.3.4. Views of "insiders"

Jan Kohout, Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that although in the first years of existence of the Council there was substantial financing of the project, it has not yielded expected results. He claims the reason is that the individual institutions didn't

allocate sufficient number of (and with proper experience and skills) human resources in order to effectively carry out the project. Therefore it is difficult for the MFA to coordinate them (Kohout, 2009).

3.3.5. Conclusion

The deep political and social reforms of the country from early 1990s resulted in the transformation of both, the identity and external image as well. The whole region of Central Europe, including the Czech Republic, became more attractive for investment, business, touristic or cultural visits from abroad. Keen competition between the countries of the region to attract and retain these interests forced them to create corresponding structures that would deal with this challenge. Today, the Czech Republic has many good things to offer and the question is how to best grasp the PD agenda. The governmental structures are at place and the state is ready to make sizable investment.

In my opinion, the PD should rather be viewed more complexly than just a presentation of the country abroad. It should not be about coordination of individual governmental actors only. PD has to promote and be based primarily on the national identity and nation's values. The Czech Republic has well-known (if not world-known) political figure in the person of Vaclav Havel and also global brands such as Skoda Auto or Pilsner beer. Their potential should be fully exploited. Inclusion of the private, academic and civil society sectors offers to the PD activities much broader perspectives and appears to be the precondition for successful management of country's reputation abroad. Smarter allocation of financial resources could be also considered. Training for specialized professional PD career track and PD courses for mobilization of all mission staff should be introduced. As a small state the Czech Republic should prioritize its PD targets - both geographically and thematically.

In conclusion, the lessons for us to learn from the Czech PD are as follows:

1. For the efficient involvement of individual governmental institutions it is vital for the MFA to have the Concept approved by the government. In our regional culture the resolution of the government has sometimes the only coercive power for institutions to act.
2. Identification of the national identity and nation values should be the corner stone of PD.
3. Involvement of the business, academy and civil society is crucial.

3.4. Overview

In this Chapter we analyzed three countries with their PD approaches. We can find many different and also many common characteristics among them and their way of carrying out PD, nevertheless it allows the following conclusion to be made:

- PD and relationship building with foreign public takes years, even decades.
- If a country is fully PD committed, has corresponding structures and follows a right strategy its perception abroad and positioning in numerous ratings is positive (see Table 1).
- Positive perception and rating generally lead in turn to higher prosperity in form of higher attraction of tourists, increased export, stimulated inflow of investments, boost in investor confidence or enhanced political influence.
- PD is directly linked to politics and the messages sent out are vitally dependent on a sustained support of governments.
- Whole-of-the country approach is crucial and the government together with private sector and NGOs are valid and unavoidable elements of the process.

- PD activities focused on limited number of the most important countries are bringing higher value added.
- If correctly carried out PD might boost self-esteem and help raise the national pride of own citizens in their own country.

Table 2: Country position

INDEX	INDICATOR	COUNTRY'S POSITION			
		CANADA	FINLAND	CZECH REP	SLOVAKIA
NBI 2008 *	consumer's perceptions	4	24	31	na
NBI 2009 *	"	7	22	na	na
FutureBrand 2008	tangible & intangible assets	2	na	na	na
East West 2008**	media's perceptions	22	6	26	63
East West 2009**	"	10	6	39	91
MD's World Competitiveness Yearbook 2008	hard & soft factors	8	15	na	30
MD's World Competitiveness Yearbook 2009	"	8	9	na	33
GCI 2007-2008***	economic factors	13	6	33	47
GCI 2008-2009 ***	"	10	6	31	46
Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index 2007	senior executive's sentiment	14	na	25	na
Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index 2009	"	9	na	17	na
Business environment ranking 2004-2008	indicators used by companies	5	3	24	35
Business environment ranking 2009-2013	"	4	2	22	31

* Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index

** East West Nation Brand Perception Index

*** Global Competitiveness Index

4. Slovak Republic and PD

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. PD History

Czechoslovakia was established in October 1918 after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I as one of the succession states. It was the most industrialized part of the former Empire but in spite of being a democratic republic it fought with many ethnic problems, while Slovaks felt the dominance of the Czechs. The ethnic Germans and Hungarians of Czechoslovakia have never really accepted the creation of the new state.

As a new identity it needed to pursue PD – at that time named promotion, propagation or publicity – in order to justify its independence in Europe after World War I and to promote its industrial products on world markets.

After the Nazis had seized power in Germany in 1933, they began accusing Czechoslovakia of unrests and of brutally suppressing the German minority forming over 20% of the entire population. Again, PD and advocacy had to be used in order to overcome this situation.

After World War II we can characterize the Czechoslovak PD as the period of propaganda in service of the communist ideology. As Scott (Scott, 2009a) points out: “(PD) can be distinguished from propaganda...far from indoctrinating and subjugating a people to an ideology, public diplomacy represents an empowerment of the people.” Propagandistic promotion of socialism and Marxism-Leninism endured in Czechoslovakia until the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

After 1989 Czechoslovakia became a democratic country again. During this period of massive economic and societal changes the role of PD had an important place. Even though the PD during these years was not sophisticated, it was carefully observed by the whole world.

Gaining its full independence only in 1993 Slovakia has been a relatively “new” country on the world map. The accession process to the EU, OECD and NATO forced the country to reshape its image abroad while at the same time persuading its own society of the desirability and the correctness of the accession processes. “The term PD was not used widely in Central and Eastern Europe before 1989, and the accession processes were conducive to the development of PD as a concept” (Ociepka a Ryniejska, 2005, p. 1)

4.1.2. The EU Accession and PD Activities

As a foreign policy priority EU membership was laid down in the Manifesto of the Government of the Slovak Republic already in 2001. It was a strategic priority of all main political forces in Slovakia thus creating a bipartisan consensus on this issue. The target was to conclude accession negotiations by the end of 2002 and to become a member of the EU on January 1st, 2004. From the PD point of view, the main domestic factor was to achieve the substantial support of the Slovak public. Externally, it was vital to politically persuade governments and parliaments of all EU

member states of the importance and merits of EU enlargement. It was crucial to convincingly and assertively uphold this interest with foreign partners.

The public opinion survey in EU countries (Euro barometer, 2001, p. 83) was showing negative attitudes to the enlargement – Slovakia was losing with ratio 38 “for” and 39 “against”. For comparison, Hungary was at 46/32, the Czech Republic 42/36 and Poland 44/36. The survey in each of the 15 member states demonstrated that the support for enlargement is the lowest in France and Austria (50% against) followed by Germany (43%) and by the countries of Benelux – see Table 3.

Table 3: Public opinion in the EU member states to enlargement

The EU member state	agree %	disagree %	The EU member state	agree %	disagree %
Greece	70	18	Luxemburg	46	41
Italy	59	22	Finland	45	37
Spain	58	18	Belgium	45	39
Sweden	56	32	Netherlands	40	39
Denmark	56	35	Germany	36	43
Ireland	52	20	France	35	50
Portugal	52	21	Austria	32	50
EU average	50	33	Great Britain	31	36

(Euro barometer, 2001, p. 82)

Due to low support for enlargement the European Commission prepared the communication strategy to address broad public both in the EU member states and the candidate countries. The total budget of EUR 147 million was approved. The

candidate states earmarked additional resources from their budgets. The Slovak government budgeted EUR 1,3 million it had earned from the privatization.

Focus: The PD activities in Slovakia were primarily directed at the countries with the lowest support for enlargement and at EU presidency countries, i.e. in 2002 – Spain and Denmark and in 2003 Greece and Italy. In these countries “multiplication target groups” – i.e. groups that are well positioned to disseminate the information – the media, politicians, think-tanks, academic communities, civil society and businesses were addressed.

Message: To demonstrate political, economic, societal preparedness and maturity of Slovakia for EU membership and to react effectively to concerns and skepticism of EU member states.

Special attention was paid to the long-term sensitive issues related to the accession – Romas, environment and nuclear energy.

External activities: All activities were coordinated with activities of the EU Commission, the Visegrad Group and other candidate countries. At the MFA there was a new EU Integration Section established and new responsibilities through the whole institution delegated. The embassies worked out their 6-month plans of activities including the cooperation with the Slovak Cultural Institutes and offices of honorary consuls. Special events for PD actions were selected – Europe Day, 9 May; high-level visits, cultural and historical events, Slovak Days. Visits of the media were organized. European integration experts from EU member states were invited.

Business missions were deployed abroad in order to establish contacts with their partners and to learn the conditions of the EU common market together with

presentation of Slovak culture and arts including culture of minorities living in Slovakia.

Domestic activities

In December 2000 the National EU Convention was convened – a nation-wide forum for Slovak citizens interested in discussing Slovakia's future in the EU. It reflected the entire spectrum of society – it consisted of political parties, academic circles, church, interest groups, trade unions, municipalities and regions as well as NGOs. A working group from the MFA facilitated the work of the convention. The discussions were held in the presence of the media and the outcomes were published on the web. The debate resulted in a set of recommendations for the national position on common and individual sector policies of the EU. In February 2002, after institutionalizing the discussion about the future of the EU also at the EU level, the Slovak representatives presented the positions of Slovak citizens at this forum and at the same time briefed the National Forum about this discussion.

In October 2001, 59% of people in the candidate countries regarded their country's future membership in the European Union as a good thing and only 10% as a bad thing. In Slovakia this ratio was 58/5 compared with Hungary 60/7, the Czech Republic 46/9 and Poland 51/11 (Euro barometer, 2002, p. 56). The results indicated that:

- The domestic support for future EU membership in Slovakia was higher than the support in EU countries
- The opinion of the Slovak public was more supportive than the average opinion in all other candidate countries

This shows that the PD activities were more intense towards foreign publics than to domestic one.

4.1.3. Conditions and Environment for PD

After obtaining EU membership the PD task became different, while some people may have thought that the PD effort was not needed anymore. In contrary, Slovakia with just over 5 million inhabitants must use PD to reinforce its influence in international environment taking into account its limited size, raw material basis, military and economic power.

As Batora pointed out (Batora, 2005, p. 1): “For small and medium-sized states PD represents an opportunity to gain influence and shape international agenda in ways that go beyond their limited hard power resources.” He also claims that (Batora, 2005, p. 6): “Foreign perceptions of small ... states are usually characterized by lack of information and at best by long-established stereotypes.” He added that small states usually are not subject of global public discussions with exception of crisis or scandal. His (Batora, 2005, p. 7-8) brilliant explanation of three elementary differences between PD challenges of small states and major powers can be summarized as follows – see Table 4.

Table 4: PD challenges

PD CHALLENGE	MAJOR POWER	SMALL STATE
mission	explaining	capturing attention
	advocacy	
	re-branding	
volume/breadth of	broad impact	niche areas
messages/images	large reservoir	
outset legitimacy	hard power resources	attractive causes*

*peacemaking, development assistance, human security, etc

Economically, Slovakia has an advantage compared to the neighbouring new EU member states (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary) in having EURO currency which is a very important incentive for attracting FDI. Today, with production of some models of Peugeot-Citroen, Volkswagen and Kia Slovakia is a bit surprisingly the biggest car manufacturer/ per capita in the world. In electronics, Samsung and Sony chose Slovakia as their European manufacturing base. Still, for the promotion of country's culture, touristic attractions, education system, politics or governance there is yet a lot to improve.

Perception of Slovakia abroad is characterized by a lack of information (or suffering a "syndrome of being an unknown entity" outside European borders) with the concept of PD for the country being a new one with specifics of a small state. During the past two decades PD was not considered as priority of previous governments. Recently, in 2008, the department of PD was created at the MFA that has resulted in the first coordinated PD activities.

4.2. Positioning

According to the East West Nation Brand Perception Index Slovakia has the 91st position (compared to 63rd in 2008) out of 200 countries (anon, 2010a)

In the IMD's World Competitiveness Yearbook Slovakia worsened from 30th position in 2008 up to 33rd position in 2009 (International Institute for Management Development, 2010).

In GCI Slovakia keeps the 46th position in 2008-2009 (it was 47th in 2007-2008). It is getting high scores for innovation factors and scores less for basic requirements and efficiency (World Economic Forum, 2009).

In the Economist Intelligence Unit's business environment ranking Slovakia improved its 35th place in 2004-2008 to the 31st place in 2009-2013 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009).

4.3. PD Structures

There were a number of efforts to manage the image of Slovakia in the past. Some of them were costly trials and the changes of governments usually resulted in discontinuing the country promotion activities.

Today, the PD activities in Slovakia are fragmented and they don't have a unifying vision. Many actors carry out stand-alone and partial PD activities; however, they are not coordinated.

- The *Ministry of Economy* organizes activities aimed at the export promotion, attraction of FDI and tourism development. It supports the presentation of Slovak companies abroad, the national export infrastructure and business environment,

with special focus on small and middle enterprises. It established the Agency for Investment and Trade Development and Agency for Tourism with an annual budget of €2,5 million.

- *The Ministry of Education* provides scholarships for foreign students at Slovak universities and for Slovak students studying abroad. Foreign students after finishing their studies are supposed to have strong and positive ties to Slovakia that can “open further doors” in their homelands. In the academic year 2009/2010 there were 76 scholarships awarded to foreign students, from that 28 for Slovaks living abroad and 48 for students from developing countries. Surprisingly, only 50% of the total amount of scholarships is distributed. The Ministry also sends Slovak teachers, professors, and lecturers abroad. The Slovak PM came with interesting initiative to send 1000 students of secondary schools for a one-year stay at schools in selected countries in order to learn foreign languages – English, German, Russian, Spanish and French. This program is dedicated for children from socially disadvantaged families.
- *The Ministry of Culture* promotes the presence of Slovak culture abroad. The main drawback is the low use of cultural diplomacy as one of the instruments of foreign policy. Eight Slovak Cultural Institutes abroad are established by the MFA and their budgets are administered by the Ministry of Culture.
- *The Ministry of Defence* is responsible for sending military and civil troops to international operations. In this way it helps to create a positive image of Slovakia as a country contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security. These activities are not communicated properly to the wider public in Slovakia.
- *Non-State Institutions*

- *Private Sector* is not directly involved in PD. A big room for improvement is present here as there are already some good company brands in the country existing.
- *NGOs* – there is a positive ad hoc experience in cooperation of the MFA with NGOs. Example: Slovak diplomats, activists, and policymakers cooperated jointly with the Serbian opposition against Milosevic’s repressive regime. NGOs are also active in development and humanitarian aid provided by Slovakia to the developing countries. In this cooperation more systematic approach would be desirable.
- *Academic Institutions* are active in teaching Slovak language abroad, publishing documents about Slovak science, culture, and arts. Methodical centre “Studia Academica Slovaca” promotes Slovak language and culture abroad. “Slovak Academy of Science” is a member of many international associations and institutions.
- *Sports/Athletes* – by the Slovaks widely considered the best Slovak brand-makers/PD missionaries abroad.

The MFA is naturally interested in coherent and coordinated PD, since diplomats abroad are confronted daily with its absence. The MFA works to encourage domestic actors to become involved in debates and to reach a consensus about the shared values, priorities, platform, and operating system of PD. This effort had been inhibited by the Ministry of Culture that believed it was the best leader of the process, however, ended up doing nothing.

4.4. Current Development

Finally, in February 2009, the Slovak Government approved the “Strategy of Joint Presentation of Slovakia Abroad” prepared by the MFA. The first meeting of the

Council of Government for Joint Presentation (Council) composed of relevant ministries, NGOs, private sector and local authorities took place in May 2009. The Council was not allocated an extra budget. In contrary, it should be able to indentify the financial means that individual actors have already available in their respective budgets and use them in a coordinated way. Neither foreign PD professionals, nor external companies were invited to assist the process. Since May 2009, there have been 4 meetings of the Council. They proved the necessity of creating such an institution. Beyond short-term objectives, such as the Olympic Games in Vancouver (February 2010), EXPO Shanghai (May 2010), the Ice Hockey World Championship (May, 2010) and the 2010 FIFA World Cup (June 2010) it pays attention to long-term objectives, such as influencing perceptions of country abroad, learning and understanding values honoured by its own citizens and their transformation into the presentation of the real country picture abroad as well as developing relations with the foreign general public and civil society. A clear statement of values, aims and targets of country's presentation at this stage would be appropriate.

4.5. Conclusion

History of the country promotion described in this Chapter shows that it has always been present in one or other form. The country, whether part of Czechoslovakia or as an independent Slovakia, always tried to attract tourists, investors and business or to pursue specific interests – from independence through ethnic problems or communist propaganda to the EU accession. However, the approach has never been holistic, comprehensive and well managed. Even today we face difficulties in creating synergy and cooperation of all ministries, agencies, regions, civil society and businesses. Active participation and strategic coordination of all elements of reputation management is of paramount importance and remains a huge challenge.

Slovakia as a small country must strive to capture attention as a democratic, politically stable country with promising market economy and as a reliable member of the EU and the international community. At the same time it must highlight its clear distinction from the neighbouring countries. It has to be focused on niche areas and defining its national interest through an “attractive cause” – e.g. transferring its know-how from the transition and transformation period – since Slovakia has a full legitimacy for doing so thanks to its past development.

Slovakia, with its currently established Council is a “newcomer” in the area of implementation of contemporary PD and has still a long way to go. The first steps towards a coherent PD approach have been undertaken and the right structures put in place. If commitment of government sustains, it will be necessary to involve all PD stakeholders in the country and continue this long-term process of relation-building activities.

Since image management is a core activity of PD, first of all a discussion about the new national identity and national values must be undertaken. Identity gives us answers to the following question “Who are you Mr. / Mrs. Slovakia?” and “How do you want to be seen by others?” We simply cannot go out and build the image of Slovakia abroad until our own citizens answer these questions.

5. Building the Slovak nation brand

5.1. Introduction

Despite the strengthening effort of Slovakia to present itself abroad, the country is perceived by citizens in or outside the European Union as one of the small East-European countries. As Batora wrote (Batora, 2005, p. 6): “A major challenge for small and medium-sized states is receiving recognition by the rest of the world for who they claim to be”. Similarly as all small countries, Slovakia is considered by only a small fraction of foreign population as a clearly identified entity with well-marked geo-political framework and lucid cultural, social and economic potential.

Presentation of the country is not managed well and individual steps often lead to the creation of heterogeneous picture. Individual forms of presentation highlight just some aspects of contemporary Slovakia and sometimes we even face contradictory messages. Some institutions present a country with virgin nature and others as an industrial paradise. It is obvious that a presentation must be tailor-made to the target selected groups; however, its coordination is crucial.

At the same time the country and nation picture presented should be in harmony with the mental picture that is held by its own citizens – a foreign presentation should not be a “surprise” for them. They have to be convinced to buy the idea. It means that a country’s presentation with all related communication activities must be structured and carried out based on existing “nation identity” and must reflect the real, core “national values” that underpin it.

The definition of national identity is a crucial initial step for the creation of presentation strategy not only abroad but also at home. Anholt (Anholt, 2007) describes how, after 10 years of theoretical research and practical experience, he has started to call the idea of nation branding as competitive identity instead. He (Anholt, 2007, p. xi) is claiming that “it has more to do with national identity and the politics and economics of competitiveness than with branding as it is usually understood”. Based on this statement the definition of the Slovak national identity and of the Slovak nation values should be our very first and the most important step.

5.2. The Slovak National Identity and Nation Values

The Slovak government is well aware of this unsatisfactory situation. Therefore, as stated earlier, the Council for Joint Presentation of Slovakia abroad (The Council) has been established in May 2009. Its main task in the short-term horizon is the coordination of individual actors conducting PD on the specific occasions and in the long-term period to define and communicate the national identity and national values.

The national identity and unequivocally articulated real values of society endorsed and desired by citizens are forming the only possible avenue of creating the country brand. The national identity and nation values should provide answers to many important questions, e.g. how important is Slovakia for its citizens? What emotions do they attach to it? In what regard do they positively discriminate their country? What values do they honour? What symbols do they associate with Slovakia? What attributes do they attach to Slovakia? How do they imagine the ideal leader of the country? What issues do they consider the most burning? Exactly answers to these questions are important for the formulation of communication strategy towards own citizens and outside. It is of course always possible to embellish the picture of a

country that is attractive but differs from reality. Today, in the world of the “global village”, it could however bounce back and hit the country negatively.

We should start to analyze the preference of individual values of Slovak citizens from the point of view of:

- Importance of values for their private life
- Characteristics of values of the present country life
- Importance of values for the future of the country

There is no universally right value orientation that would guarantee the success of the nation. A value orientation depends in many respects on historical, cultural or geo-political conditions in which the nation exists. Therefore individual nations have their unique mixtures of their value orientations. Knowledge of own nation values helps the communication experts in their presentation campaigns and provides them with variety of impulses and plenty of inspiration in the selection of concrete presentation forms. Close knowledge of nation values assists them in using the list of specific words without the danger that they will not be understood by their own nation.

In the period of 2006-2009 the Slovak company Corporate Consulting Group, s.r.o. conducted four representative researches focused on selected aspects of value orientation in Slovakia. Their results have significant importance and relevance from the point of view of the concept of the presentation of Slovakia. With their kind permission I will use some of their research results. (Corporate Consulting Group, s.r.o., 2009). The research was carried out on the sample of carefully selected 1261 respondents.

From the *Figure 4* we can see that the index of citizens' total identification with the state is only 8.73 (the range from -100 to +100). We can also see an information deficit about the life in the country, perceived missing behaviour consistency of the state and a minimal readiness to do anything for the country. Remarkable passivity leads not only to the loss of interest in politics but people also tend to solve their dissatisfaction more radically – by leaving their region or even country rather than personally becoming part of the solution.

A more detailed picture is depicted in the *Figure 5*. Here we can see the most “radicalized” respondents, i.e. 15% of the highest and 15% of the lowest scores. The highest negative scores are awarded for the readiness to performance, the information deficit and to the behaviour consistency.

A big difference in opinions is a remarkable result of this research. It could be explained by extreme reshufflings in the society over the last 20 years that have formed the national identity of the Slovaks. We are talking not only about a change of the country's political, social and economic regime but also about the globalization and the European influence and about a whole-of-Slovakia shift resulting in the marginalization of traditional values and in the growth of uncertainty. All these changes caused that Slovak citizens are not able to perceive their own country as one compact entity with a clearly defined value system that is internally consistent. The existing national identity has been shattered under the vast changes in the country and a new one has not been offered to the population thus resulting in a “value vacuum” today.

According to the *Figure 6* the most important personal values for the Slovak population today are: health, family, financial security and living standard,

employment and social security. The respect of these “traditional values” can be interpreted as a desire for safety.

Self-realization, education, professional career and mental hygiene appear not to be of high importance for them. Could one of the interpretations be that Slovaks prefer to receive and not to make any effort to give at the same time?

Table 5 shows what the desired typical values for Slovakia are in the future: safety, justice, mutual respect, perseverance and tolerance.

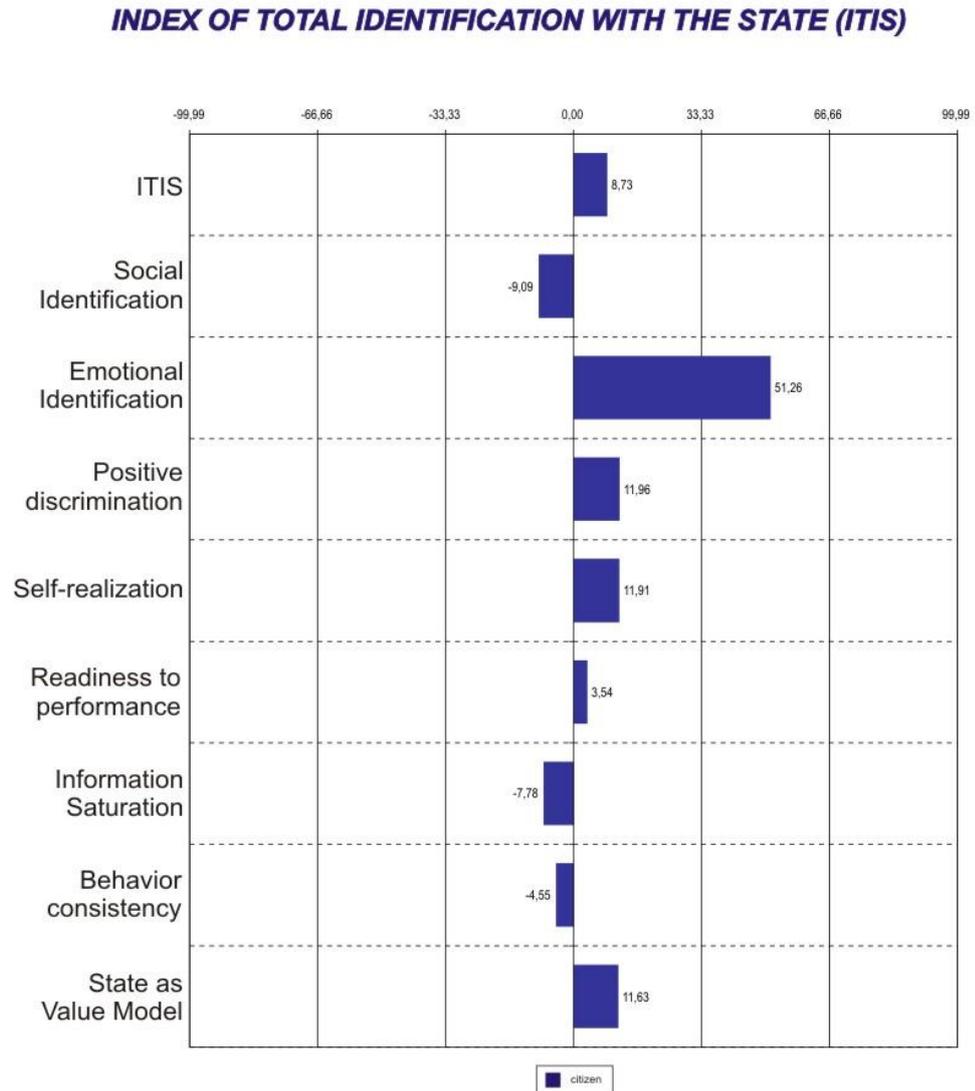
From the *Figure 7* we can see that areas influencing the relationship of Slovaks to their country most positively are: nature, culture and history of Slovakia

and *Table 6* shows the areas influencing it most negatively: corruption, criminality, slow economic progress and health care.

Figure 8 demonstrates that Slovaks view their country as an obedient, scared, cooperative and open for communication entity that desires a change. They consider Slovakia also as a passive person that declares a desire for change, however in practice “he” strives to preserve status quo ante not diverting from the average and not resorting to the extremes.

Overall, they characterize Slovakia as a phlegmatic with typical features of passivity, prudence and readiness to cooperate and with a tendency to resist change – see *Figure 9*.

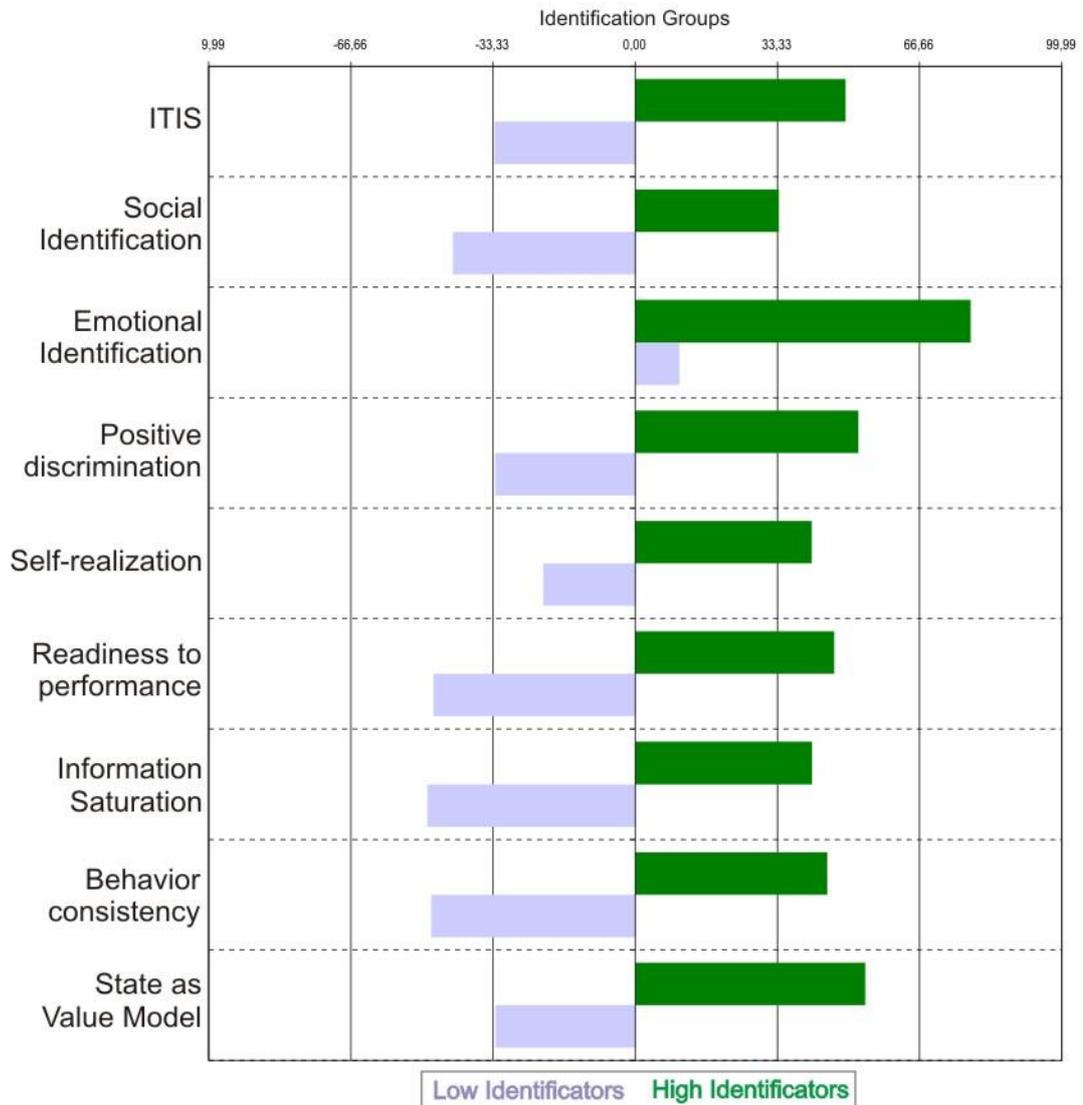
Figure 4: Identification with the state



Summary	Citizen
ITIS	8,73
Social Identification	-9,09
Emotional Identification	51,26
Positive discrimination	11,96
Self-realization	11,91
Readiness to performance	3,54
Information Saturation	-7,78
Behavior consistency	-4,55
State as Value Model	11,63

Figure 5: Identification - detail

INDEX OF TOTAL IDENTIFICATION WITH THE STATE (ITIS)



Citizen	High Identificators	Low Identificators	Difference HI and LI
% of HI and LI	15,0%	15,0%	
ITIS	49,26	-32,96	82,21
Social Identification	33,60	-42,72	76,32
Emotional Identification	78,55	10,26	68,29
Positive discrimination	52,26	-32,84	85,10
Self-realization	41,33	-21,58	62,91
Readiness to performance	46,55	-47,29	93,84
Information Saturation	41,34	-48,76	90,09
Behavior consistency	44,97	-47,80	92,78
State as Value Model	53,85	-32,77	86,62

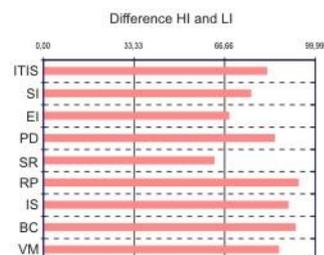
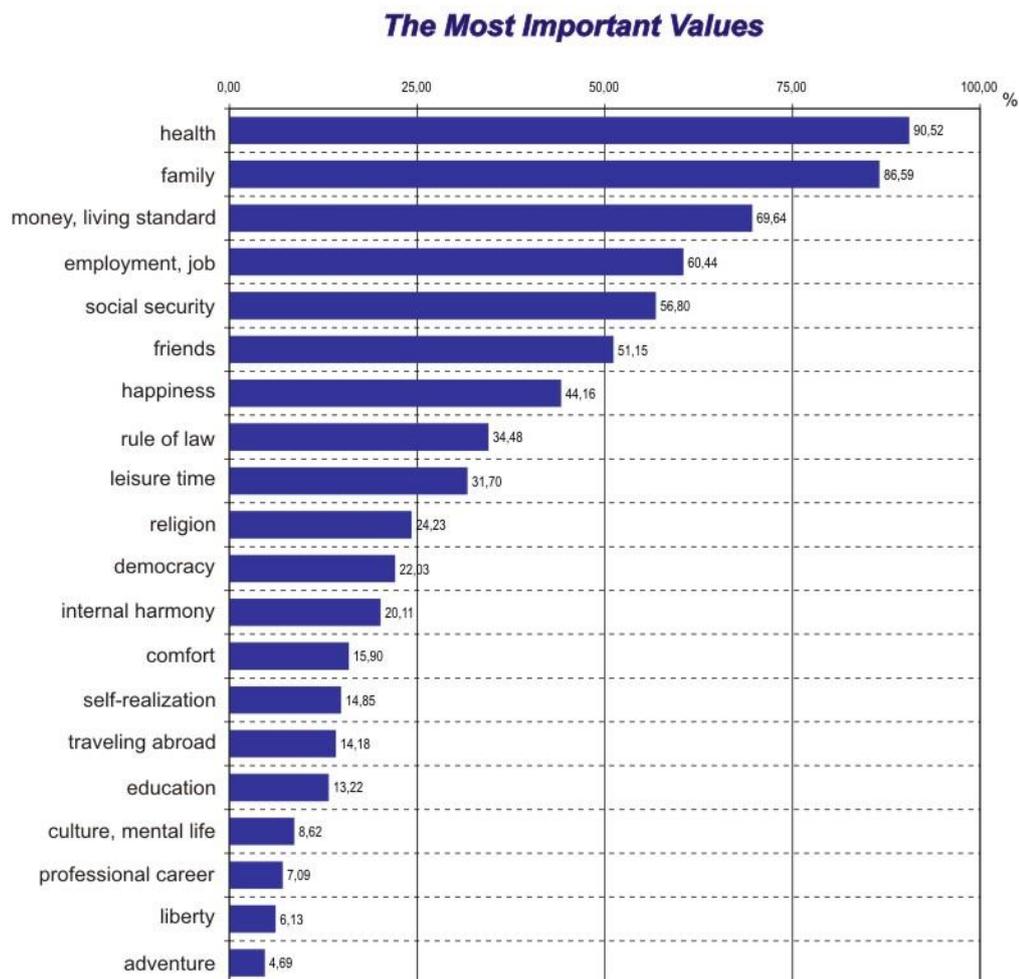


Figure 6: Most important values

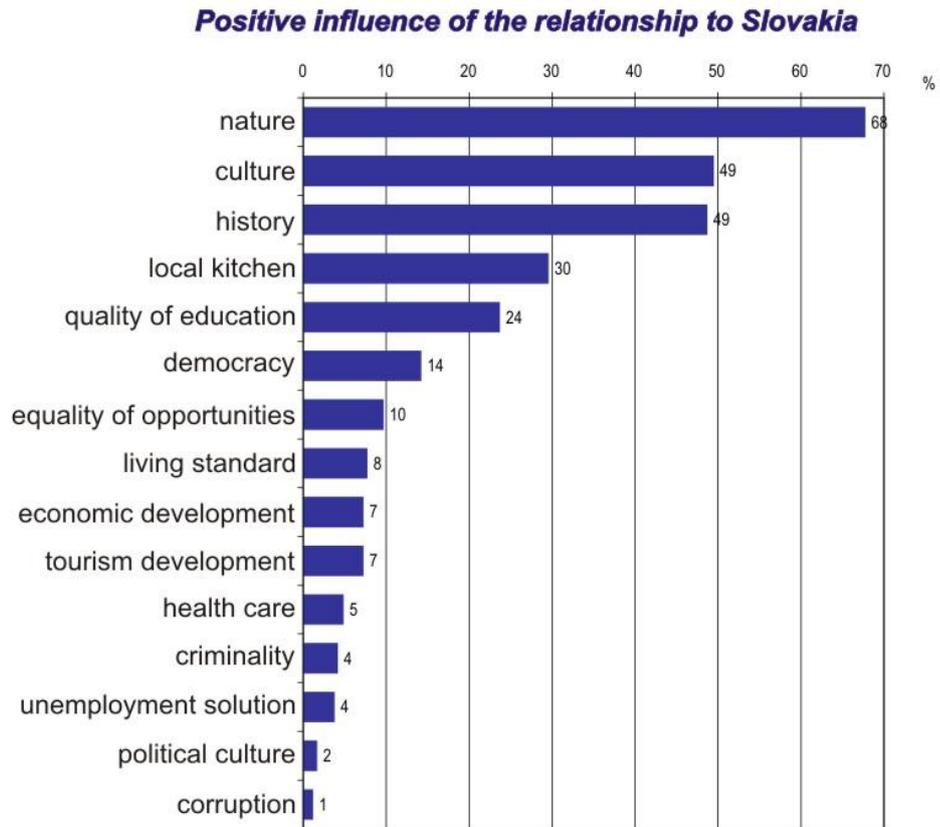


The most important values	citizen %
health	90,52
family	86,59
money, living standard	69,64
employment, job	60,44
social security	56,80
friends	51,15
happiness	44,16
rule of law	34,48
leisure time	31,70
religion	24,23
democracy	22,03
internal harmony	20,11
comfort	15,90
self-realization	14,85
traveling abroad	14,18
education	13,22
culture, mental life	8,62
professional career	7,09
liberty	6,13
adventure	4,69

Table 5: Wished values

Wished values for Slovakia in the future	%
Safety	60,91
Justice	57,66
Considerateness	44,66
Strenuousness	37,42
Tolerance	36,77
Success	36,68
Cooperation	33,43
Help to weaker	25,35
Results	25,07
New Experiences	24,88
Creativity	23,03
Tradition	16,81
Loyalty	15,88
Learning	11,51
Change	8,54
Influence	8,54

Figure 7: Positive influence



Totally	citizen
nature	68
culture	49
history	49
local kitchen	30
quality of education	24
democracy	14
equality of opportunities	10
living standard	8
economic development	7
tourism development	7
health care	5
criminality	4
unemployment solution	4
political culture	2
corruption	1

Table 6: Negative influence

Negative influence of the relationship	%
Corruption	50
Criminality	36
Economic Development	34
Health Care	34
Unemployment approach	33
Living Standard	29
Equality of opportunities	23
Political Culture	23
Democracy	14
Quality of Education	6
Tourism	5
Culture	2
Nature	2
History	2
Local Kitchen	1

Figure 8: Perception of Slovakia

Bi-polar profile
Perception of Slovakia as a person

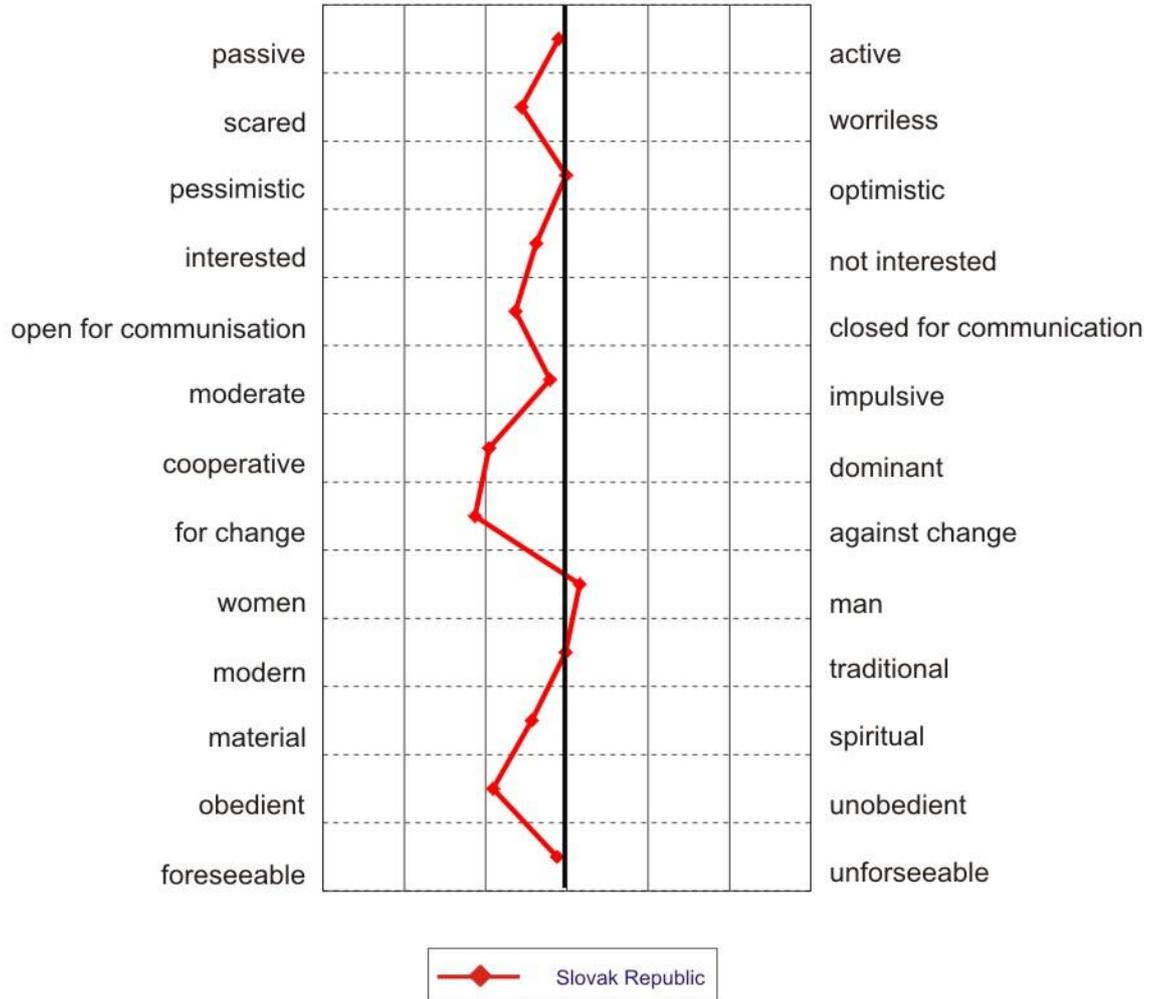
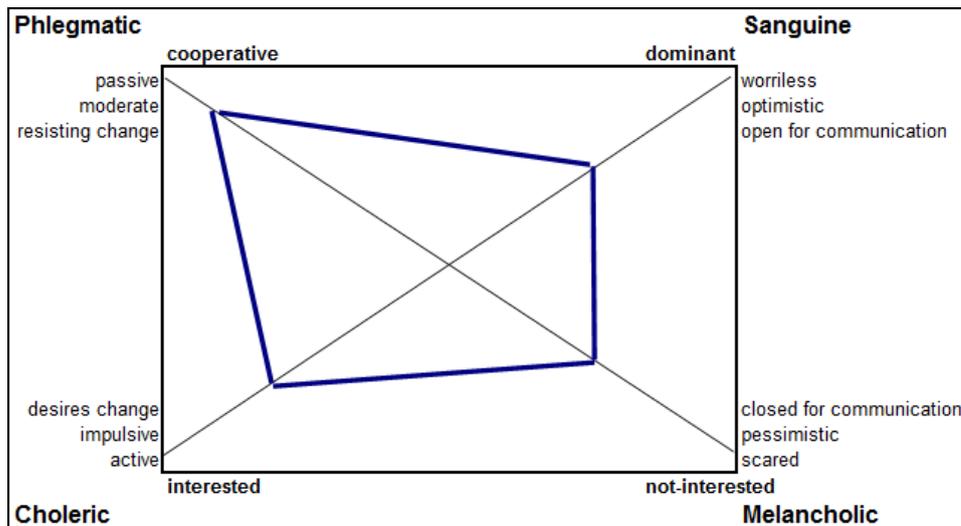


Figure 9: Character of Slovakia



Based on the knowledge of current value orientation we can now derive the desired value orientation for the future. If we are able to correctly formulate and communicate the desired values of the Slovaks we will create with-state-identified citizens that are proud to live in their homeland and ready to do more for owning their country's attractive brand.

Dinnie discussing branding's differentiating power states that:

Governments around the world are taking an increasingly active approach to managing their nation-brands, so that what resides in the minds of consumers is a more favourable set of perceptions than would be the case if governments left national reputation to stereotype and cliché. (Dinnie, 2008, p. 139)

5.3. Perceptions of Slovakia and Values of Citizens Abroad

It is also crucial to have information about the values and attitudes of citizens in recipient countries. These attitudes are a variable component that will be adjusted

after the selection of target groups and after the main target countries of presentation of Slovakia are specified.

5.3.1. Target Countries and Groups

The Council has not yet identified the target countries and groups. In my opinion there should be at least three categories of target countries:

- First, the countries from which we try to attract foreign-direct investment. The list of prioritized countries must be agreed in the cooperation with the Ministry of Economy in accordance with their Strategy of Future Development of Slovakia. Since this document is attaching high significance to the innovation, R&D and new technologies, I assume that countries like the USA, Japan or Germany should not be missing from such file.
- Second, the countries from which we want to attract more tourists and visitors. Traditionally, the majority of tourists in Slovakia come from the Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Austria, Russia and Hungary (Slovak Agency for Tourism, 2009).
- Third, our traditional and biggest business partners – Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Russia and Ukraine - should be targeted primarily in order to expand our export. At the same time the recent effort of our private sector to penetrate markets in China, India, Vietnam and Mexico must be taken into consideration.

Special attention should be paid to Slovak – Hungarian relationship. Our two neighbouring countries, both EU and NATO member states, have historically been struggling with the nationalistic tendencies and aspirations of some political parties on both sides that had rather negative implication on the image of both countries in

the international community. An individual chapter of this paper is dedicated to this topic.

The target groups in these target countries are to be selected logically based on the suggestion above, i.e. for innovation we have to target research centres and academies, for FDI financial groups and the private sector, for tourism travel agencies and the wide public and for export the business communities. Of course, the selection of the proposed countries and groups should be the subject of a broader discussion involving all interested parties. It must be elaborated in more detail.

5.3.2. Perceptions in the Target Countries

For a successful presentation abroad it is equally important to know what the perception of Slovakia in the target countries is. It has been already mentioned that the image of Slovakia in many countries is fuzzy and not clear enough; based on pre-existing prejudices or lack of information for that matter. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to know what we can build on and what information is already available abroad. It will help us not to waste the financial resources and at the same time increase the efficiency of the promotion.

If we want to have a successful presentation of Slovakia abroad it is vital to understand:

- WHAT we want to say? - i.e. national identity
- To WHOM we want to present it? – i.e. values and attitudes of the target groups
- What is already KNOWN in target countries?

Based on this information we should be focused in our presentation either on broadening the information base or on dispelling of existing myths and

misconceptions, prejudices and half-truths or on the reinforcement of positive aspects of the existing perceptions. With this aim the MFA approached the network of our 82 representation offices – embassies, general consulates, cultural institutes, Slovaks living abroad and 148 Slovak honorary consuls.

The network of honorary consuls seems to be very large and there are different views in this regard. Some officials argue that we should limit the number of opening new honorary consulates in the future to a maximum of two per year. I think there should be no limitations in this regards. Honorary consuls are, in general, persons with a very high social, political or financial status in their countries. Majority of them is well established in the business environment and they are usually ready to pursue all Slovak interests. Our overall experience with Slovak honorary consuls is very good (what is not always the case with foreign honorary consuls in Slovakia) and they are a valuable contact point for country presentation in remote areas that are either covered by our embassy from different country or the destination country is too large. Of course, there are few exceptions where an individual obtaining the status of Honorary Consul is underperforming in his/her function. In any case, we have to learn to better use their capacity and to work more actively and effectively with them. Compared with the Czech Republic that is double the size and has 274 honorary consuls (MFA of Czech Republic, 2010), the number of the Slovak honorary consuls doesn't seem to be overstretched. Activities of the Slovak honorary consuls abroad form one of the most important parts of Slovakia's image creation.

Through the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad the government also contacted their organizations and institutions abroad. Slovakia is supporting its diaspora living abroad to help them retain their national identity. In fact, their support and development is one of the foreign-policy priorities of the Slovak Republic. The

opinions of both, the Slovaks living abroad and also of our honorary consuls, on perception and presentation of Slovakia abroad are a useful input for the future orientation of presentation in the given country. By means of a questionnaire information was collected on the level of knowledge in the respective country about Slovakia, the intensity and the valence of the foreign citizens' emotional relation towards Slovakia and the factors influencing negatively the image of Slovakia abroad.

Herewith the set of questions that were put forward to the Slovak honorary consuls and to the associations of the Slovaks living abroad:

- How and whether at all is Slovakia perceived and known at the territory of your assignment; what is the general dimension of its perception?
- In what area (tourism, investment opportunities, etc.) should Slovakia be presented in your country and what is necessary to do for that.
- How do you perceive the current image of Slovakia in the country you live in?
- What are in your opinion the main shortcomings in the presentation of Slovakia?
- What could the Slovak communities, associations and media abroad do for a more robust visibility of Slovakia in the country they live in?
- What forms of presentation do you think are the most efficient in your country?
- What should be "Slovakia's brand" you would envisage to be presented abroad?

Carried out for the first time in an informal way, the opinions of associations of Slovaks living abroad and of Slovak honorary consuls happen to be similar in many respects.

The summarization of the research result is as follows:

Positive aspects:

- A dynamic, well established country integrated in the European structures and the Euro zone, with an intensive relationship with the Slovaks living abroad.
- The inputs of both Slovaks living abroad and honorary consuls for the improvement of presentation did not automatically give rise to any extensive, i.e. financial requirements; but they have offered solutions to the improvement of existing status.
- A positive reaction to the establishment of the Council together with the activities leading to the improvement of presentation and to the creating Slovakia's brand.

Negative aspects:

- In many countries of Slovakia's foreign policy and economic interest we can still face mixing up Slovakia with Slovenia or the Czech Republic or even Czechoslovakia, which eventually indicates a total ignorance about the existence of Slovakia.
- Inconsistency and heterogeneity in presentation activities
- Absence of a broader presentation of Slovakia in leading printed and electronic media.

In order to select proper forms and content of the presentation we have to know first what Slovakia perceptions abroad are. The aim is not to address the groups that have a real and positive perception. Our focus should be the groups that have no information, do not know or can't distinguish the country or their picture is distorted.

Based on the results above our priority is to select presentation forms that:

- are based on highlighting Slovakia's individuality and enable recipients to differentiate it clearly from other countries of Central and Eastern Europe
- actively work to remove existing prejudices
- sometimes also base on the prejudices to some extent, since the incorrect myths are often the only information about Slovakia available.
- make Slovakia visible as a successfully transformed democratic country with the economic and political stability belonging to the EU area and behaving as a full-fledged and responsible member of the international community
- support the establishment of target groups' positive emotional relationship towards Slovakia

5.3.3. Value Orientation in the Target Countries

The research of value orientation in the key target countries and groups is not available yet. It is vital to analyze them on a representative sample of respondents based on a structured inquiry containing similar questions:

- Importance of values for their private life
- Characteristics of values of the present country life
- Importance of values for the future of the country

The value orientations in Slovakia and in the target countries should be compared. The results will serve as presentation messages conveyed through values that are close to both, Slovakia as well as the target country. If we succeed to address our targets through values they respect and adhere to, there is a stronger likelihood of reaching the requested emotional effect and reaching the goal. It is extremely

important not only for financial resources to be used effectively but also for the communication campaign not to have eventual negative implications. There are many examples in the advertising and marketing world when the marketed content was denied only because the specifics of the recipients' culture were not taken into account – a symbol with a negative connotation in the recipient country; a color that recalls different associations or a slogan not understood by the society. Serious mistakes can also occur when same presentation forms are used for different countries assuming they have similar context.

5.4. The Nation-brand Identity

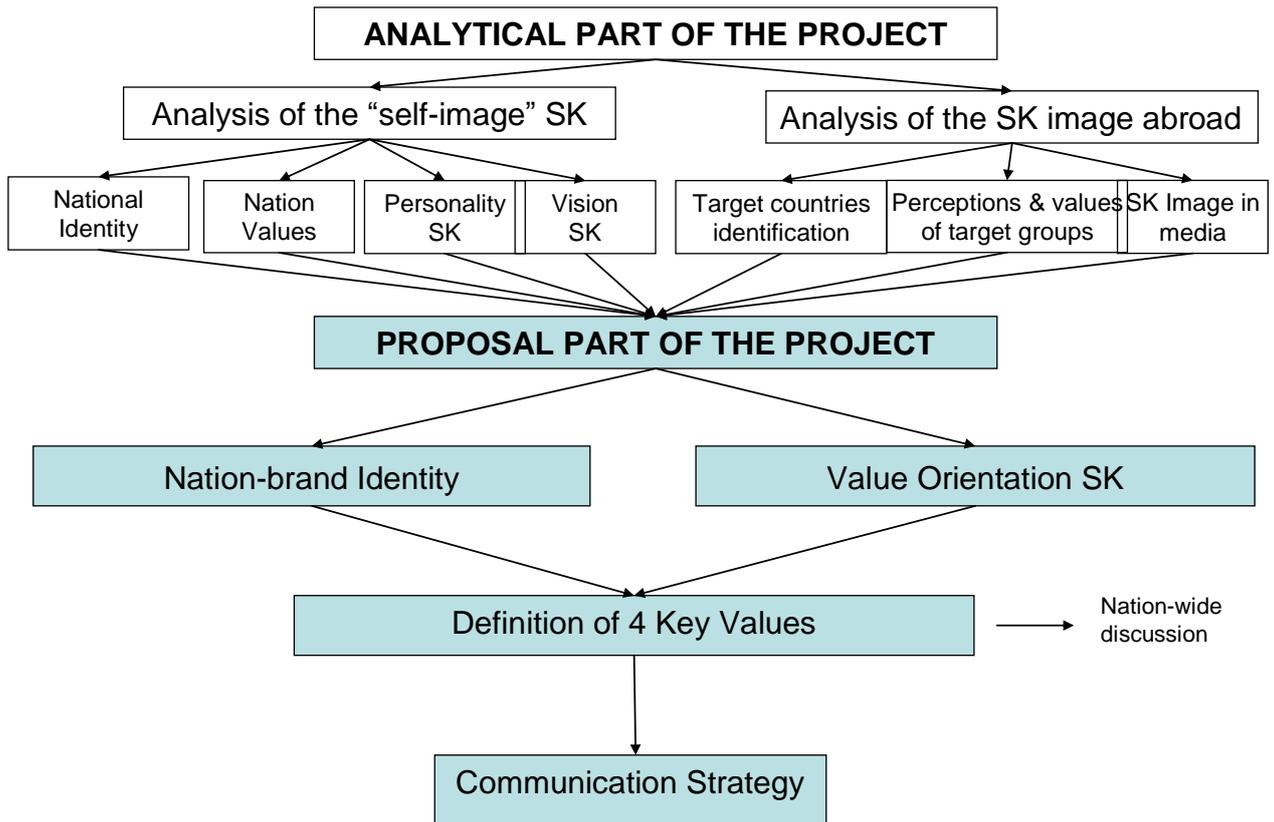
Dinnie describing the construction of nation-brand identity claims that:

...nation-brand identity is built upon a limited range of all the constituent parts of national identity. It would be impossible to effectively develop a nation-brand identity that drew upon every strand of a country's national identity. External audiences - potential tourists, investors, students, workers, etc. – are not going to be willing to receive gargantuan amounts of information about a country's history, culture and people. Therefore, the key task of those engaged in designing a nation-brand identity is to be selective in identifying which elements of national identity carefully serve the stated objectives of the nation-branding campaign.

5.4.1. The Nation-brand Project Architecture

Having analyzed the Slovak national identity with the Slovak nation values and perceptions of Slovakia abroad with the target groups' values in the target countries we can move to form the proposal part for the project. The individual steps are illustrated in the Figure 10.

Figure 10: Analytical part of the project



5.4.2. Future Value Orientation of Slovakia

Although today, Slovakia is viewed as a traditional and passive country. The answers of respondents indicate that even though they seek change simultaneously they are afraid of it. In order to accept the change without considering it a threat to the national identity it has to be concurrent with citizens' traditions and with Slovak specifics. At the same time the change has to offer a goal as well as the way to reach it.

Therefore it is being proposed here that the core value of Slovakia should be

PROSPERITY

based on the following four key values:

SAFETY, DIGNITY, EDUCATION and EXCEPTIONALITY.

Prosperity

The word “prosperity” comes from the Latin word “prosperitas” and its translation is success, achievement, welfare or happiness. The semantics of this word indicate the process and development related not only to the satisfaction from the achievement of the set targets but particularly from the process of achieving these targets. It is a highly dynamic value that is open and not finished. The value of prosperity is activating in its effects as it requires the engagement of the whole society. It means that prosperity cannot be safeguarded by one institution – be it government, president, company or school - it requires an active participation of all actors in the society.

Prosperity is not just an elitist concept. Achievement of prosperity implies a satisfaction of the needs of different social groups. On the other hand, prosperity doesn't mean the egalitarianism and unification of the society. Different social groups have different goals and different criteria to achieve the desired status. Therefore this value is supportive of the society diversification.

Prosperity involves a very strong emotional context with a positive valence that is extremely important from the point of view of the activation of citizens. Generally, this word is linked to economic indicators and material wealth, however, it is necessary to stress again that it also involves such aspects as achievement, success or happiness. It means that prosperity is not to be reached only by increasing the economic standard of citizens and that the perception of citizens that they live in a prosperous country is not derived exclusively from their economic situation. The relationship of the Slovaks towards their country is influenced besides their living

standard also by culture, protection of traditions, healthy environment and perspectives of better life or inter-personal relationships.

I suggest to base prosperity on four following values: safety, dignity, education and exceptionality.

Safety

Safety is one of the basic human needs. It embodies a human desire to know his/her environment, to have ability to anticipate the future and to have at least a feeling that we can influence and control the events.

The word safety contains a broad semantic space where we can see different denotations. For instance safety from the point of view of the Ministry of Interior means to safeguard better the lives and property of Slovak citizens, from the point of view of the Ministry of Social Issues it represents social security, for the Ministry of Health it is health protection or for the Ministry of Finance it is to administer effectively the finances of the Slovak state.

Safety, similarly to prosperity, extends through all areas of the society's life. About safety we can speak in numerous contexts: foreign policy, military, economic, transport, education, health or R&D.

Besides macro-social aspects security relates also to intra-social environment, i.e. security that enjoy different social groups in Slovakia, e.g. foreigners, ethnic groups, handicapped, unemployed, children, etc. Safety is also individual emotion dependent on personal characteristic, temperament, ability and competence. Safety stems from childhood and evokes positive emotional reactions coupled with sense of warmth, natural colours, tradition or events from the past.

The word safety shouldn't be described as a permanent situation but as a goal that has to be achieved daily in all spheres of our life. No authority can provide safety without our own involvement – the strongest effort of police to lower the accident rate is not successful without responsible behaviour of all traffic participants; or the highest standard of health services cannot guarantee our health without our own contribution by leading healthy life style. This value should provoke the pro-activity. We should also communicate safety together with a change - a change is adding dynamics to the safety while safety is reducing anxiety from a change.

Dignity

Slovak citizens openly call for this meaningful value, meaning, they want to be proud of their country. They wish Slovakia was a meaningful player in the region and in the international context. At the same time they need to feel dignity within their own state, they need to feel a partnership between them and the state based on mutual respect, trust and esteem. This requires from the Slovak government not only commitment, self-confidence, leadership, consistency and decisiveness but also tolerance, altruism and openness.

I perceive two dimensions of dignity: self-confidence and humility and we should strive for the right balance between them. While self-confident Slovaks are proud of their history, their VIPs and their achievements, the humble Slovakia will be able to recognize its own mistakes and failures; will be sensitive to the socially weaker groups and will be able to protect its environment.

This leads us to three dimensions of dignity: social, ethical and environmental.

Social dimension presents the responsibility and readiness of the stronger to help the weaker; ethical dimension includes justice, transparency, respect of rules and a will

to forgive; environmental dimension refers to the need to protect the fragile balance of Slovak natural environment. Dignity is a solid value since it accentuates a permanent process, acts and a responsibility for already gained dignity.

(The Act on Patriotism, recently approved by the Slovak Parliament is not, in my opinion, a right avenue to promote dignity. E.g. it prescribes the obligation to sing the Slovak anthem every morning at all schools in Slovakia.)

Education

Education here expresses a love to the process of learning, not to the degrees earned. Education leads to higher self-confidence, to better protection of own identity and finally, to the development of the society as a whole. We can frequently find education in various strategic documents of Slovakia and of the EU aiming towards a “knowledge based society”.

Today, we have about 7000 tons of brain in Slovakia. Compared with the countries with bigger population this number doesn't seem too big, however it is crucial how much of this brain potential we are really using. Education that is high in academic quality is exactly the avenue for Slovakia to use as much as possible of it.

As we can see from Figure 6 the Slovaks don't attach too high importance to education and they don't see a direct link between the education and their increased standard of living. However, if the Slovak state wants to have citizens that know to be humble and that are ready to participate in achievement of safety and prosperity, the education is the best way to get it. People cannot feel safe if they are dependent on the help from the state regarding their employment and financing their families.

Including the education into our four values demonstrates also that innovation and R&D in Slovakia are respected and appreciated. This value is prominent from the point of view of the image of Slovakia.

Exceptionality

As Figures 8 and 9 demonstrate, the exceptionality is not very appreciated in Slovakia today. Slovaks don't acknowledge the exceptionality of their country, neither people abroad perceive Slovakia as a distinctive entity with a clear image.

According to Simon Anholt (Anholt, 2007): "Countries with strong and distinctive reputations stand out from the crowd, retain their national identity and prosper as a result of being a distinctive part of the whole."

Slovak traditions and our original culture were able to preserve their own character; similarly Slovak society shouldn't take over ready-made solutions despite globalization and influence of other stronger cultures. We have to maintain our distinctiveness and build our national identity on it.

Exceptionality needs an active support in the society. Today, we can feel a strong atmosphere of conformism and mediocrity. Extraordinary people more often than not face obstacles when pursuing their ideas.

Semantics of the word "exceptional" includes, in my opinion, also the ability of critical analysis of our own acts. To know and accept our past is an essential precondition of self-identification. Without recognition of what was good, beneficial as well as problematic, bad foul for our country and our region in the past it is impossible to build up exceptionality. The discussions embracing the whole society about the gloomy part of our history usually end up with conclusions that it is not our fault

(reinforcing the sense of powerlessness of a small country/ small nation) or that is fault of others (conspiracy theories) or that we all are guilty (collective guilt where no one is responsible).

There are only a handful of persons who have been legally sentenced for their deeds during either the First Slovak Republic (1939-1945) or communist Slovakia. All supporters of those regimes were silently forgiven for their involvement. Accumulated dissatisfaction in the collective awareness might hinder the feeling of exceptionality. An absence of a critical analysis of successes and failures might be fatal.

Exceptionality doesn't mean to be different at any cost. It recognizes a big responsibility for the consequences of our own exceptionality. It includes very strong moral, social and economic principles. Exceptionality must be an engine of prosperity.

5.4.3. Communication Strategy

Prosperity as a core value for Slovakia encompasses the emotion of the happiness and is not linked exclusive to economic or financial welfare. A nice visual symbol of prosperity would be a four-leaf-clover that is considered to be a universal symbol of happiness.

We have to hunt high and low in order to find a four-leaf-clover (...and happiness).

Therefore a good slogan for Slovakia would alternatively be:

“SLOVAKIA – A LAND OF JOY”,

“SLOVAKIA - A COVETED COUNTRY” or

“SLOVAKIA – BEST BET FOR YOU”, eventually

“THE SLOVAKS – HAPPY NATION”.

Rituals and symbols are the best way how to affect a target group. These rituals have to express the core value as well as the key message. The proposal for Slovak ritual is to present on different occasions a four-leaf-clover from glass where each leaf represents one of the key values and the act of presentation is accompanied by a story based on these values.

All the representatives of state, institutions, agencies and organizations, whether public or private, have to use an underlying brand, symbol and ritual and a common national strategy for country presentation.

Using the words of Simon Anholt (Anholt, 2007, p.26-27):

Every act of promotion, exchange or representation needs to be seen not as an end in itself but as an opportunity to build the country's overall reputation; and all the bodies ...have to work together, meet together and align their behaviour to a common national strategy. Then... the country can escape from the stereotype it has earned by default, and work towards an identity that is inherently competitive.

We can conclude that building and promoting the nation brand can never be considered a work in vain. It is an essential need of each country, including Slovakia. To find out and to understand how the public in Slovakia as well as people abroad perceive the country today and to outline how people would need to perceive the country in the future while implementing all necessary internal improvements - it is the only correct direction for successful PD. Then, only then, it would be possible to project the nation brand for tourism, culture, sports and export promotion or

investments attraction, eventually for nations' rapprochement. Slovakia has to tell the word the attractive, harmonious and unified message of respecting reality in order to harvest the benefits of its positive international image.

6. PD as facilitator of Slovak-Hungarian relationships

6.1. Historical context

Slovakia and Hungary are neighbouring countries, both members of the EU, NATO, OECD and other important multilateral organizations. Mutual diplomatic relations have been established in 1993 when Czechoslovakia split in two independent states – Slovakia and the Czech Republic. There are about 500.000 citizens of Hungarian nationality in Slovakia (aprox. 10% of the population) and about 17.000 citizens of Slovak nationality in Hungary (aprox. 0,17% of the population). Unfortunately, the interstate and interethnic relationships face serious communication obstacles bearing the brunt of the historical memory of national grievances. (Similar tensions exist between Hungary and Romania, where 1.5 million ethnic Hungarians live and to a lesser extent in Serbia and Ukraine where also scores of ethnic Hungarians live).

The Slovak history is more or less a subset of Hungarian history for a period of 1000 years. While evaluating our common history, some historians go back to the 9th century when the Hungarians occupied the Carpathian Basin – a part of Great Moravia where the Slavs lived. The main cause of these tensions is the Peace Treaty of Trianon, signed in 1920 that re-drew the borders after World War I and left millions of ethnic Hungarians living outside the new Hungarian state. Another sensitive aspect in our common history are the President's Benes Decrees that had provided the legal basis for the dispossession of property and expulsion of the German and Hungarian minorities from Czechoslovakia immediately after World War II. Tensions

have been recently exacerbated by the Gabčíkovo – Nagymaros Project case; very recently the case of a Slovak student of the Hungarian nationality against Slovak officials taken to the European Court of Human Rights; passing in the Slovak Parliament the Slovak language law; incident when Slovak government issued a travel ban to the Hungarian president; the attack on the Slovak embassy in Budapest and very seriously by the frequent anti-Hungarian rhetoric of the right-wing Slovak National Party (SNS) that forms part of the current government. On the Hungarian part it is the current growth in influence of Jobbik, the nation's third largest party, known for its strongly nationalistic and extremist (sometimes accused of fascistic and anti-Semitic) positions and of Hungarian guards (dissolved by Hungarian High Court due to their illegal status) raise fears of further tensions.

6.2. Political context

The SNS has been known for its strong anti-Hungarian sentiment. The opinion polls show that a big majority of the Slovaks prefer the current coalition and that the voters of SNS are very tolerant of the Chairman Jan Slota actions and undue excesses. A big part of the society takes Slota's views as justified to a certain degree in spite of vulgarity, primitivism and political illiteracy in many of his statements and pronouncements. One of the explanations of this situation is that Hungary's official national policy after gaining independence of the Slovak Republic has given rise to strong fears among a large number of the Slovaks. We should particularly mention the concept of unifying the Hungarian nation over the borders by creating legal and institutional bonds between the Republic of Hungary and the citizens of neighboring countries claiming the Hungarian nationality. The concept of great-Hungarian nationalism whose author and executor is the EPP (European People's Party) Vice-President and the former Hungarian Prime Minister (who again came into power in

recent elections), actually leads in the view of many Slovaks to revisionism and irredentism. He wants to reunite the Hungarian nation over the borders proclaiming: "...the process will be over when each Hungarian living in the Carpathian Basin obtains the Hungarian citizenship and the voting right."

Slovak politics is thus confronted with great-Hungarian nationalism on a permanent basis, as well – the kind of nationalism present in the official state policy of the Republic of Hungary, which originates in the inability deal with the Trianon trauma and the loss of the Hungarian greatness from the period of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, veiled in sophisticated rhetoric and referring to the European values, which it sharply contradicts.

In the context of the Slovak-Hungarian relations, it should be also noted that Slovakia, with its economic growth and stability and foreign investments influx, has become Hungary's efficient competitor primarily within Central Europe but also in the EU. On the contrary, Hungary has a high inflation rate and high public deficit, and cannot even think of entering the Euro zone for the moment being. Jan Slota's presence in the government coalition can be seen also as a good pretext for disputing the development of Slovakia and as an opportunity to actually weaken Slovakia's position in the EU.

6.3. The role of PD

Without this deeper explanation it is not possible to understand the extremely positive role that PD could play in Slovak-Hungarian relationships. The image (unfortunately, partly created by Jan Slota's vulgar rhetoric) of malign Slovak nationalism harming members of the Hungarian national minority, who as a result have to constantly defend themselves at European forums, is false. There are 13 national minorities

living in Slovakia and there are no problems whatsoever with 12 of them. The broken relationship with the Hungarian one is traumatizing neighbourly relations and upsetting mutual trust between the two neighbours.

The way out of this unpleasant historical and political situation is to set up an atmosphere of mutual trust between both populations. If dialogue and communication are the main tools of PD for the building of good neighbourly relations, trust is the cement that binds them together. In the present complicated economic situation, and in a period of seeking solutions to a number of internal issues including EU functioning, the word trust has a special significance. If neighbours have different approaches to some issues, both from the past and the present, it is of utmost importance that the citizens of region enjoy the confidence of their partners in seeking solutions, with mutual respect, in a civilized manner, through dialogue, empathy, and realizing and preferring common interests while looking to the future, not the past. We have to continuously demonstrate our willingness to seek solutions to any dispute with our neighbour through dialogue in good faith.

Speaking about trust in relation between neighbours, we cannot ignore the role that national minorities play in it. I firmly believe that the national minorities in Slovakia are perceived as full-fledged members of our society rather than a political tool for the enforcement of political ambitions of their mother country, which creates a solid basis for neighbourly trust.

Trust is reinforced through mutual understanding. The better we know each other, the stronger trust is. The less we know each other, the weaker trust is; it may even turn to mistrust. The ancient atavistic fear of the unknown plays its role in this respect. Mistrust also originates in the fear of the unknown; people are usually afraid of what they do not know. We are usually less frightened of the things we know.

Mistrust between neighbours is a specific issue. Neighbours usually know each other very well; the fear of the unknown should not play any role between Slovakia and Hungary. However, we are witnessing a paradox: mistrust between us is caused by the fear based on knowing our neighbours and the policies they pursued in the past, i.e. the fear of a neighbour using past practices even today. That is why I believe that reinforcing mutual trust must start with reviewing our common past. It is necessary to arrive at a common interpretation of history, and consistently respect this interpretation and teach it at schools.

Tolerance, an ability to understand and respect partner's interests, is another category that strengthens trust. Dialogue should be held in a way where we defend our interests but at the same time we also show our understanding for interests of others. The art of compromise is probably the greatest of political skills, the one we still need to pick up.

6.4. The Practical Implications

Both countries are currently facing the parliamentary elections – Hungary in April and Slovakia in June 2010. It is generally expected that the ethnic and nationalistic tensions will run high due to various benefits in internal politics of both political elites up until the very end of election campaigns (what is very dangerous and irresponsible). The culture of our relations should require that top politicians on both sides meet after they are sworn into office, which is a usual standard practice in relations between two neighbours and partners in the EU and allies in NATO. This should be the right moment for giving a signal to the non-governmental sector, which has a huge potential for mutual trust building, to start with a variety of communication activities involving a broad spectrum of - NGOs, academic sector, cultural and arts

institutions, sport clubs, women's unions, think-tanks or research centres and, of course, private businesses.

Presenting Hungarian tourists with a small four-leaf clover during their visits to Slovakia and explaining them what value each leaf represents could serve as an example of building mutual trust (safety, dignity, education and exceptionality- see Chapter 5).

Another example could be to create a partnership-schools and by inviting a young generation to see the life in the other country through their own eyes.

Let us not forget various campaigns to celebrate the contribution to the Slovak life by ethnic communities and regard them as a form of internal nation branding, based on an inclusive approach. Let us show to the outside world that life in Slovakia is safe for everybody and the Slovaks are dignified, educated and proud of exceptional achievements of their country.

We can list many other examples starting with invitations of Hungarian journalists to joint Slovak-Hungarian projects in the official development assistance in the third countries. The main goal is to move the communication and a trust-building dialogue from the political and inter-governmental level to lower ones. Citizens of both countries have many common interests - we both have been confronted with cuts in the vital energy supplies from Russia and with the consequences of the financial and economic crisis, we both have legitimate interests in the Balkans and in areas to the east of our borders.

In conclusion, let us establish and develop an intensive dialogue between all possible groups of our nations. Not because we like the government in the neighboring country or because it fulfils our expectations, but because it is our duty and because

it is in the vital interest of our citizens. Today, since we are EU members, it is our duty vis-à-vis our EU partners as well. This is not only government's responsibility; it is an individual responsibility of each citizen in both countries

7. Internet as an innovative tool in Slovakia's PD

7.1. Introduction

Internet is generally a very powerful tool. During few several decades it turned into a mass communication medium within all segments of society – business corporations, educational institutions, political organizations, researchers, NGOs, governments as well as households account internet as an integral part of their lives. Internet has already outrun newspapers and radio in popularity as a news source and ranks behind TV only. Especially young internet generation skyrockets and its opinion is heavily formed by messages received via internet. Although power and influence of internet is still evolving already today it is a prominent tool for global outreach. It plays not only an informative (one-way) but also a communication (two-way) role. Through internet numerous virtual online communities are created where they discuss and exchange their experiences and opinions on variety of issues – from children games to domestic or foreign policies – and learn from each other. The information flow has come to be extremely fast and only countries and nations that are able to make the best use of information technology advances can attract attention needed in the keen competitive global environment.

Governments, when shaping their policies, use internet increasingly for reaching out to their home and foreign audiences in order to gain a favourable public opinion. The level and quality of internet use at MFAs differs country by country. Majority of MFAs post on their website loaded the most important foreign policy events or news and

their participation in them; you can find here presentation of their countries and regions, list of embassies and consulates or consular information for citizens that travel or reside abroad. Some MFAs established a public blog to exchange view on foreign policy issues not only to inform but at the same time to invite visitors to be part of the foreign-policy creation.

Many MFAs, e.g. in Canada, the UK or China could serve as an excellent examples of building an interesting and inter-active website.

The purpose of this Chapter is not to highlight the overall advantages of the internet use in PD, but rather introduce the invention that was proposed for the Slovak Foreign Service in order to better promote Slovakia abroad.

7.2. Innovative internet use in Slovakia's PD

One could claim that just putting the information on the website is rather passive way of outreach. Today, there is a mass of information available for those who are keen on having them. The question is, what shall we do to stimulate their interest in getting the information about Slovakia? We have been testing for more than two years equipment that allows a more active approach, i.e. to reach out proactively the target audience with a tailor-made message. Ambassadors equipped with it can go out to the public and provide them with accurate and timely information of all arts in attractive format.

We are using a working name "fluidbox" for this equipment. The fluidbox is, in fact, a special, pocket-sized PC, a small metallic box to be connected with internet. Through a mother server installed either at the Office of the Government or say the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regularly updated, with content available in many language versions, could cover all possible areas of social, cultural, sport, economic, and political life in

Slovakia. In other words, each single institution or body in this country willing (hopefully, in a near future, obligatory) to present what they are responsible for, would get their access to the server keeping their eyes on their portion of content and feed in the newest information available. Technically, it could be a TV spot or PowerPoint presentation or whatever else according to their liking and ability to produce. The fluidbox, small and practical to be carried wherever you wish, would provide owners with all relevant and highly updated data transmitted from the server through a fluidbox to a screen for an audience in whatever country and at whatever facility.

Thus, the idea is to buy one fluidbox at cost of mere EUR 1500 for eventually every single Slovak embassy in the world. As result, selected content depending on type of social event, can be screened either directly at Slovak embassy facilities (or even honorary consulate ones) or say conference, business or tourism presentation, trade fairs, celebrations etc.

There will be just one single server at the MFA's headquarters (cost of ca EUR 60.000) where various TV spots about all possible Slovakia's sectors and topics would be stored – be it history, natural beauty, economy, touristic attractions, cities, regions, arts, culture, sports, foreign-policy issues, FDI or latest achievements. However, these spots have to be permanently updated so that the embassies could always work with new information. There should be at least three language mutations of the spots available. Any embassy, preparing its country presentation, could get the required information on-line at any time and have it customized for the target auditorium – be it eventual investors, business people, tourists or foreign department partners. It is possible to set up different levels of information access – from standard up to confidential or restricted.

I consider fluidbox to be a very creative tool; one can use it on-line during conferences, bilateral meetings or multilateral events, or it can simply run in prepared and desired flow every day in a specially designed facility/room/corridor or at a specific event, e.g. a reception or cultural presentation organized by Slovak embassies

It is not easy to estimate the cost of the spot production and the up-date of available data. Another setback is “Whether the hen or the egg should come first” – the embassies are not willing to invest into fluidboxes unless there are spots on server available and the institutions are not willing to invest into spots unless embassies have fluidboxes in place.

Facing this kind of dilemma, where we still have neither the content nor fluidboxes available, a solution would be to kick off with a limited number of fluidboxes to be purchased by some of our key Embassies and an equally limited number of spots to be produced by respective governmental institutions, i.e. a step-by-step incremental approach based on operational experience. So, if we succeed and those involved in the preliminary phase of the project recommend it, we will get more fluidboxes for more Embassies with more content counting on dispersing peoples’ reluctance and doubts.

In addition, in order to make it attractive and financially sustainable from a long-term perspective, offering a promotional space to the private sector could help twofold: bring on board important Slovak companies or multinational corporations operating on our territory and, in my opinion, even more importantly, raise the awareness of Slovak business community and thus lure them in PR activities conducted by the Slovak Embassies abroad. Sharing the financial burden and responsibilities and helping out with content through fluidboxes, would undoubtedly help forge “brand

Slovakia” together, especially if several companies have already expressed their interest in being involved in the project.

Despite the lack of the conditions for their participation as of yet, they quite enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to be present through this serious modern technology, taking into account their potential to expand into markets, find new business partners or investors abroad. Having at their disposal our network of 68 embassies and 148 honorary consulates, the expected price to be paid for their global exposure (including costs of such spot production about their company) will be a symbolic rather than a real financial burden.

It looks like the project has met with the understanding and even enthusiasm of all officials responsible for its consideration. When it was presented to the Slovak diplomatic community it has literally stirred hopes and expectations awaiting early implementation. Unfortunately, internal splits caused substantial backlog in spots production, despite the willingness of some ambassadors to invest into this project immediately. As a result, the potential of fluidboxes remains yet to be fully realized as a state-of-the-art possibility of presenting the country abroad. But unless those responsible (ministries, institutions, municipalities) focus their attention and sharpen their understanding in terms of content that is so badly needed, we will be stuck in mutual mistrust and complacency. Isolated and mostly amateur style presentations will further confuse our foreign partners and might blow our chances away in the harsh world competition.

8. Conclusion

The premise of this essay is that all states, including small ones, have in hands a full array of public diplomacy options. They can freely use them to attract proper attention of investors, businesses, tourists or other important and influential groups and gain world-wide recognition by creating an attractive and distinguishable image by showcasing its values, culture, history, development, human capital, intellectual property and other unique resources. In today's globalized and competitive world PD seems to be an imperative for achieving this goal. The paper argues that countries not pursuing PD are lagging behind in foreign trade, cultural exchanges, inflow of tourists, students or investors and finally, in achieving respect and understanding.

Slovakia has some PD experience from the EU pre-accession period. However, the country should not stop there. Even today, in some far-away regions we are occasionally faced with the perception of Slovakia being seen a small, unattractive and unknown country. This picture doesn't correspond with the reality of being a modern, democratic, economically developed and successful EU member state in the heart of Europe. Therefore, we have to diligently and relentlessly build "new" PD under current Slovakia's conditions and in specific world circumstances. There is no other viable option save intensify our PD efforts and activities in order to change this negative and unjustified misperception. Fragmented, individual and not coordinated activities of governmental institutions are definitively not the way how to change this unpleasant and unwanted situation.

The Slovak government should be responsible primarily for creating and stimulating a conceptual unified framework, in which PD can be implemented and flourish. Moreover, engaging civil society, the private sector, personalities from all walks of life such as sport, culture, arts, science, academia or research can lend more credibility to PD activities.

This paper suggests that each country must establish its own definition of PD reflecting its own specific circumstances. In Slovakia's context PD is here defined as an ability to create its image in ways that attract foreign investors, businesses, tourists, students or other foreign citizens in target countries together with forging the positive image of Slovak citizens about their own country and its policies. For PD, foreign and domestic publics are as two interconnected units – influencing attitudes of each other and complementing each other. In other words, once the Slovaks choose the values they believe in and determine as those to be presented abroad, respective state authorities must respect it and act accordingly so that their own citizens are not caught by surprise. Respect for the national values enhances credibility and sustainability of the whole process and helps citizens identify themselves with it.

As elsewhere, communication lies at the core of PD – informing and influencing audiences and sending true and positive messages wouldn't be possible without proper communication. As this paper underlines, a two-way communication model is the only avenue considered as correct. Receiving necessary feedback on policies improvement and strengthening the overall positive image of the country is an inseparable part of such endeavour. The Slovak government has to respect and accept such “market feedback” and take due action. Closer cooperation with foreign

media, both home and abroad, is critical in order to raise international profile of Slovakia.

Since Slovakia has no significant military or economic hard power, using persuasive soft power should be the weapon of choice for the Slovak PD. In the specific case of Slovak - Hungarian relations a smart combination of carefully measured hard and soft powers is recommended by this paper. Since the financial resources for PD activities are limited, especially in the current period of the economic crisis, Slovakia has to work in a strictly selective way and focus predominantly on countries and target groups that are most relevant to its interests. Relationship-building supported by long-term (several decades) PD activities seems to be the correct instrument leading to the ultimate Slovak goal of being projected there as a close friend of Hungary with no hidden agenda. Once set up, the mutually reinforcing effect of PD and nation brand promotion should secure sustainability of this process despite natural changes of governments.

As noted in this paper, there is a deficit of skilled diplomats for an effective PD to be applied in Slovakia. A requirement to educate a new generation of multi-skilled diplomats in area of marketing, branding or strategic communication should not be underestimated. Thus, it is highly recommended to bring on board external lecturers with professional qualities and extensive PD experience to teach at Slovak Diplomatic Academy established under the auspices of the Slovak Foreign Affairs Ministry.

The paper further argues that before creating and implementing our own Slovak PD strategies it was advisable to analyze best practices of some successful or Slovakia-like countries.

Canada is considered to be one of the pioneers in PD. A lesson to be learned from Canada is high continuity of PD strategies and activities resulting in an impressive cumulative effect and long-lasting superior international ranking of Canada's brand. Anholt rates Canada's brand at USD 1,1 trillion what represents 111 % of Canada's GDP. As he states: "protecting and enhancing the nation brand, this most valuable of assets, is surely one of the responsibilities of governments in the 21st century" (Anholt, 2007, p. 45).

Finland is another country analyzed in this paper. One can just admire how tremendously the image of Finland benefits from matching Nokia and country/nation brand together. Slovakia is also home of some well-established "multinational" or regional brands (e.g. Matador – tyres, Topvar – beer, Poltar – crystal glass). These corporate brands can well support the country brand - Slovakia. In addition, a strict focus of PD on the limited number of countries, as in the case in Finland, together with carefully prepared action plans should be emulated by Slovakia.

The Czech Republic has historically many similarities with Slovakia and is often considered to be more advanced in many respects. In the area of PD, the Czech PD Concept approved by the Czech government as so-called "Czech Idea" can be generally viewed as successful. Slovakia, in preparation of its PD strategy can make use of the Czech approach as a valuable source of ideas and guidance. Czech brand is valued at USD 55 billion what represents 51% of their GDP (Anholt, 2007, p. 45).

It is also recommended to include Slovakia into the Anholt's Nation Brand Index which would help determine drawbacks and areas for improvement in PD and nation branding activities together with identifying nation brand value, all to be compared directly on a yearly basis. As of yet, Slovak brand has not been analyzed and thus we don't know its value.

The idea of establishing a new and effective PD in Slovakia offered by this paper is based on generation of national identity through public debates and consensus. The answers to the questions “Who are you Mr. / Mrs. Slovakia?” and “How do you want to be seen by others?” have to define our own national values. The Government Council for Joint Presentation of Slovakia has carefully researched the attitudes and values of Slovak population so that the picture projected abroad is a consensual one representing the majority of citizens and not bringing about any surprises for them as to their identity.

This paper also stakes out a selection of appropriate target countries and groups for the Slovak PD corresponding to our economic, cultural or political orientation. Our contact points – embassies, honorary consulates, cultural institutes, expatriates and countrymen – had been approached in order to help describe the existing picture of Slovakia abroad. Based on all these findings it has been finally possible to compile the desired future value orientation, the four key values and the communication strategy of the new Slovak PD. As a result the core value presented by this paper is prosperity and the four key values are safety, dignity, education and exceptionality. Since these values had been generated by the public and got later validated abroad, they form a solid basis for the successful Slovak PD.

This paper also looks at practical ways how to overcome or at least alleviate existing political tensions in Slovak-Hungarian neighbouring relations using PD tools. It highlights a vital role that PD can play in the present sensitive atmosphere. A full range of PD measures suitable for mutual trust-building has been described. PD with its helpful tools of communication and dialogue can play a significant role here. Mutual communication of all society groups, open dialogue, common activities and other trust building measures might shape positively our partnership. While one can

find plenty of literature about PD role in investment, tourist or business attraction, the paper argues that there is a lack of relevant information about the use of PD in situations of ethnic tensions. This paper suggests it would be very helpful to research this area in future PD studies and works from the particular perspective of neighbourly relations or national minorities' stance. A contribution of PD to the friendly co-existence of nations could be a remarkable finding. Focused engagement of NGOs, the private sector, academics or artists who enjoy higher credibility than governments in cooling down the nationalistic passions might present a new expanded role of PD.

The role of the internet is described to occupy a prominent place in PD architecture and activities. A two-way communication is a key component of PD. Today, the entire communication spectrum would be difficult to approach without including the use of the internet, which is undoubtedly so vital for governments, NGOs, private sector, universities, researchers, artists or individuals. This paper describes a unique equipment – fluidbox – by means of which relevant information about Slovakia can be put on-line and managed from one place to numerous presentation points abroad so that the mass of information available can be easily structured in a way suited for the final auditorium. It is indispensable for the Slovak government to establish the technical base for such information dissemination. Since fluidboxes are a result of Slovak innovators' know-how, they are available immediately and at affordable price. Thanks to their amazingly high practicality we should start using them in PD activities as soon as possible.

Slovakia is a small, yet advanced country. In recent years it has become known for its dynamic economic growth and successful Euro-Atlantic integration. It was the first country in the region to adopt the EURO currency. It is also renowned for its natural

beauty, historical monuments and folk traditions. Anholt is reported to state: „Slovakia is not a hidden treasure – many other countries have what it has. Its brand can be built on what it is becoming, rather than on what it is like“ (Bur, 2010). As a result of that, public diplomacy in Slovakia faces a series of challenges as a multi-dimensional activity that requires setting a strategic direction, agreeing common objectives, devising its own system of communication, framing messages for politically and culturally diverse audiences, and retooling the diplomatic machine. Keeping these points in mind, the paper allows the following conclusions and recommendations to be made:

- be coordinated – have your institutions, NGOs and the private sector send unified messages about Slovakia and don't confuse your audience with different signals;
- have an overall strategic vision for public diplomacy and promote your national values and identity as a unique distinguishing element from other countries
- share and believe in what is being promoted
- involve a variety of actors: NGOs, the private sector, scholars, research, culture, arts, tourist agencies, cities, regions, etc.
- be honest – if you try to attract tourists advertising quality of Slovak services, you have to have good services (also have the toilets clean);
- communicate – the right messages at the right place and bear in mind that communication is a two-way street, try to listen as well;
- whole-of–nation approach – try to win support and consensus of your population;
- attach your unique Slovak corporate brands to the Slovakia brand;
- be sustainable and diligent in PD activities, don't interrupt the work with the government's changes;
- be focused and don't waste your resources;
- be fast and use adequately new technologies in spreading messages effectively;

- build trust with your neighbours;
- be proactive and work on long-term relationships;

I started my work with a story of an official visit of Slovak dignitaries in a hypothetical country X, and let me finish it with another one. Guided by the recommendations of this paper, the journey into future will take us to a completely different place:

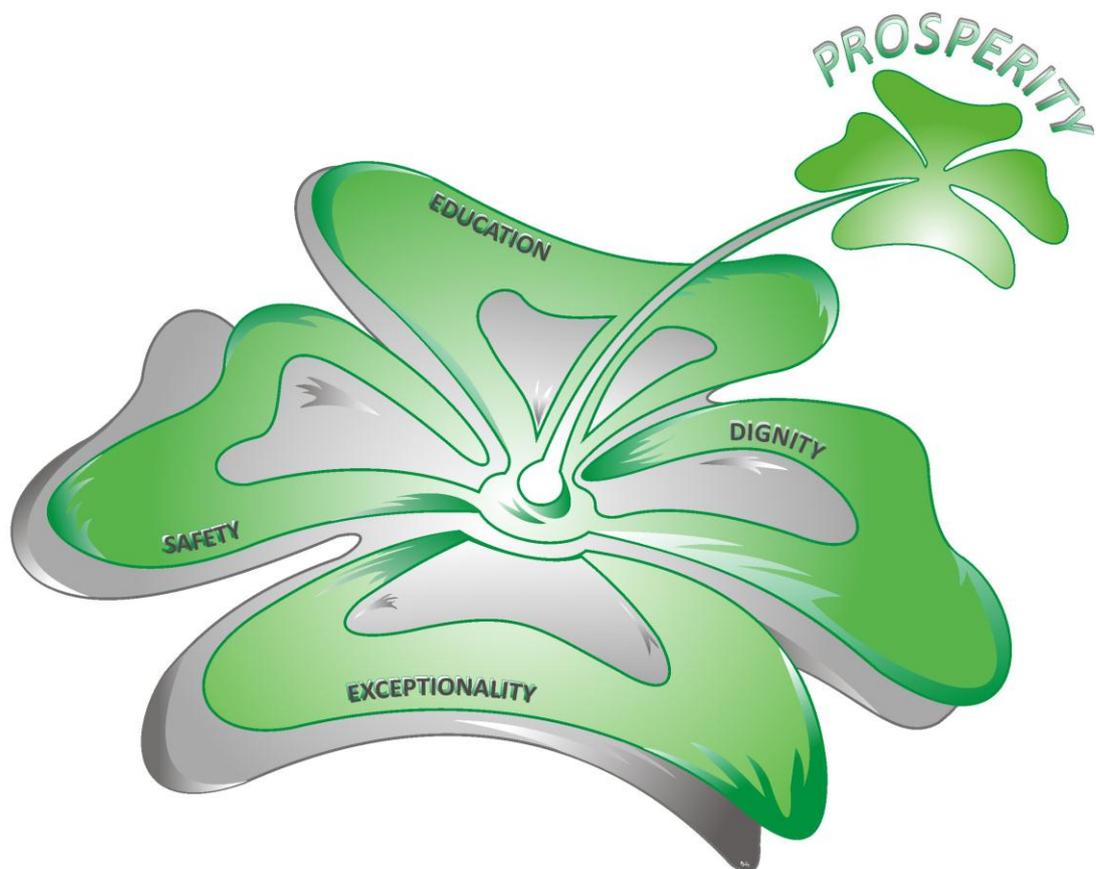
A new day one: The Slovak President presents in his speech a prosperous country with people rallying around the four key values they have chosen themselves: safety, education, dignity and exceptionality. After finishing his speech he presents his host, a President of the country X, with a four-leaf-clover from crystal glass (made in Poltar, Slovakia) where each leaf represents one of the key values and replicas are handed over to all other participants. The President is followed by the Slovak Minister of Economy who speaks about safety for investors and business-people when investing and doing business in Slovakia with lots of educated labour force to be found here. The Minister of Education speaks about the system of education that prepares next generations of professionals for the 21st century. The Minister of Transportation speaks about the safety of Slovak roads and the Minister of Interior about decreasing criminality. The four values are woven as a red ribbon into each message. They all speak as one government in one voice for one country, ultimately communicating one unified message.

The message in foreign media from the visit has effected the public perception in a clear and positive way promoting the national interest of Slovakia, both in a short and long-term perspective. Even more importantly, many days after the visit is over, people in the country X will remember the Slovak values. The visit will thus have its share on increased tourism, investment, trade or cultural exchange.

My intention in this paper was to push toward an integrated strategy for the Slovak PD which should be organized in harmony around the four values represented by this clover leaf. What is necessary, our PD must become as strong and unified as the bundle of twigs in the demonstration made by the great king Svatopluk.

All stakeholders in Slovak PD must commit themselves to pursue PD activities diligently and in long-term in order to be successful in hard competition with other countries as the turtle had won its contest with the rabbit. This is an important task and mission to be carried out and accomplished decisively by all of us.

Figure 11: Four-leaf-clover



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