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**Original scientific article**

**ASPECTS OF GERMAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN  
MONTENEGRO: A FOCUS ON EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Cultural diplomacy is a key component of international relations, engaging in cooperation and dialogue between nations through the exchange of ideas and values. This paper discusses the dynamics of German cultural diplomacy in Montenegro, with a focus on Germany's educational support. It first provides a theoretical background explaining the origins and definitions of the concepts of cultural diplomacy, followed by a brief historical overview of Germany's approach to this field. The main section explores the historical ties and current collaborations between Germany and Montenegro, emphasizing the impact of educational and cultural initiatives in shaping these diplomatic relations and their contribution to the development of the Montenegrin society. This research adds to our understanding of how cultural diplomacy shapes international relations, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing soft power, particularly in the context of bilateral cooperation between Germany and Montenegro.

**KEY WORDS:**

Cultural diplomacy; Educational support; Soft power; International relations; Germany; Montenegro;

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## **SAŽETAK:**

Kulturna diplomatija je ključna komponenta međunarodnih odnosa, podstičući saradnju i dijalog među nacijama kroz razmjenu ideja i vrijednosti. Ovaj rad ispituje dinamiku njemačke kulturne diplomatije u Crnoj Gori, sa fokusom na obrazovnu podršku Njemačke. Rad započinje teorijskim okvirom koji objašnjava porijeklo i definicije koncepta kulturne diplomatije, nakon čega slijedi kratak historijski pregled njemačkog pristupa ovoj oblasti. Glavna analiza istražuje historijske veze i trenutnu saradnju između Njemačke i Crne Gore, ističući uticaj obrazovnih i kulturnih inicijativa na oblikovanje ovih diplomatskih odnosa i njihov doprinos razvoju crnogorskog društva. Ovo istraživanje doprinosi boljem razumijevanju uloge kulturne diplomatije u oblikovanju međunarodnih odnosa, pružajući uvid u izazove i mogućnosti primjene "meke moći", naročito u kontekstu bilateralne saradnje između Njemačke i Crne Gore.

## **KLJUČNE RIJEČI:**

Kulturna diplomatija; Obrazovna podrška; Meka moć; Međunarodni odnosi; Njemačka; Crna Gora

## **Definition and concepts of cultural diplomacy**

Cultural diplomacy, or forms of it, has existed throughout history, with explorers, travelers, traders, teachers, and artists acting as early "cultural diplomats"<sup>1</sup>. The Silk Road is often taken as one of the best historical examples, where, alongside trade opportunities, travelers and merchants encountered cultural diversity and actively fostered interactions among them<sup>2</sup>. Although they might not have used the term "cultural diplomacy," their actions clearly reflected its principles by facilitating cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

The terms "cultural diplomacy," "public diplomacy," "cultural relations" and "soft power" all aim to connect with audiences beyond traditional diplomatic channels and have become standard in the discourse of foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> Edmund Gullion introduced the term "public diplomacy" in 1965 as an alternative to the term "propaganda" to avoid negative connotations<sup>4</sup>.

While diplomatic activities date back to ancient times, public diplomacy gained significant visibility after the First World War, particularly during the Cold War. The rivalry between the West and the East and their attempts to influence public opinion laid the foundation for modern public diplomacy. While traditional diplomacy relies on military and economic strength, known as hard power, operating mainly through threats, soft power is the ability to attract and persuade or simply said: "getting others to want the same outcomes you want"<sup>5</sup>. The term "soft power" was introduced in 1990 by Harvard political scientist and former Pentagon official Joseph Nye, who argued that the United States should apply soft power in tandem with hard power. When a country gains admiration for its values, democratic principles, commitment to human rights, prosperity, and openness, other nations are more likely to aspire to follow its example. Thus, persuasion often proves more effective than force, as people are more inclined to cooperate willingly rather than under compulsion. In essence, Nye argues: "Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many values like democracy, human

rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive".<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Joseph Nye argues that soft power is a more challenging tool for governments to use compared to hard power for two main reasons. First, many key resources of soft power are beyond the control of governments. Second, soft power tends to operate indirectly by influencing the policymaking environment, and it can take years to achieve the desired results.<sup>7</sup>

Cultural diplomacy is often viewed as a subset of public diplomacy<sup>8</sup>. However, scholars argue that there remains considerable ambiguity about what cultural diplomacy specifically entails, why it is important, and how it operates<sup>9</sup>. This raises the question: what is the relationship between cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy?

In the Western context, the concept of "cultural diplomacy" became integrated into U.S. policy by the late 1950s, beginning with the establishment of the International Educational Exchange Service in 1959. By the 1970s, cultural diplomacy had gained enough recognition to warrant detailed discussion in reports such as *Cultural Diplomacy in Europe* by the Council for Cultural Cooperation within the Council of Europe, prepared by Anthony Haigh in 1974<sup>10</sup>. Despite its growing relevance, the term "cultural diplomacy" is not easily defined and has expanded over time to include nearly any intentional cultural collaboration between nations or groups. Scholars often have differing perspectives on its scope and purpose<sup>11</sup>.

One of the most frequently cited definitions comes from Milton C. Cummings, a political science professor at Johns Hopkins University, who defines cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding"<sup>12</sup>.

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy describes cultural diplomacy as "a course of actions based on and utilizing the exchange of ideas, values, traditions, and other aspects of culture or identity to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural

cooperation, promote national interests, and beyond. Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by the public sector, private sector, or civil society"<sup>13</sup>. However, for the U.S. Department of State (2005), it represents "the linchpin of public diplomacy, helping to create a 'foundation of trust' with other peoples"<sup>14</sup>.

Patricia Goff, an expert on cultural diplomacy, argues that cultural diplomacy is instrumental in bridging differences, fostering communication, and facilitating mutual understanding.<sup>15</sup> It provides alternative narratives about nations, counters negative stereotypes, and reaches new audiences that might otherwise be inaccessible. In this way, cultural diplomacy complements traditional diplomacy by creating a supportive environment for diplomatic efforts; however, it is limited in its ability to change outcomes where policies are entrenched<sup>16</sup>. Former U.S. ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider provides a more diplomatic definition, stating that cultural diplomacy is "hard to define, but you would recognize it if you saw it." Former U.S. ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider offers a more diplomatic definition, stating that cultural diplomacy is "hard to define, but you'd know it if you saw it"<sup>17</sup>.

### **Cultural Diplomacy- principles, tools, application, and limitations**

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy identifies five core principles of cultural diplomacy: respect and recognition of cultural diversity and heritage, ongoing global intercultural dialogue, the promotion of justice, equality, and interdependence, the protection of global human rights, and the pursuit of global peace and stability<sup>18</sup>. John Lenczowski, founder of the Institute for World Politics, defines cultural diplomacy as "the use of various elements of culture to influence foreign publics, opinion makers, and even foreign leaders"<sup>19</sup>. He lists several tools of cultural diplomacy, "including the arts, education, ideas, history, science, medicine, technology, religion, customs, manners, commerce, philanthropy,

sports, language, professional vocations, hobbies, etc., and the various media by which these elements may be communicated”<sup>20</sup>. Listening is considered particularly effective for practicing cultural diplomacy: “[...] we must first listen to our counterparts in other lands, seeking common ground with curators and writers, filmmakers and theater directors, choreographers and educators—that is, with those who are engaged in exploring the universal values of truth and freedom”<sup>21</sup>.

The practice of cultural diplomacy can vary greatly depending on the cultural resources available and the specific objectives in a given context. Goff distinguishes between official cultural diplomacy initiatives driven by central government policies and those carried out by consulate or embassy staff.<sup>22</sup> The former tends to be more stable and consistent across time and space, evolving with changes in government, but often requiring substantial investment to sustain. In contrast, the efforts of consulate or embassy staff are more spontaneous and adaptable, shaped by individual creativity and responsiveness to local circumstances. Although these initiatives may have limited resources, they can still effectively achieve their goals<sup>23</sup>. Additionally, cultural diplomacy involves a diverse range of non-governmental actors, including artists, curators, journalists, teachers, lecturers, and students.

Cultural diplomacy is often mobilized during times of crisis as illustrated by Goff and the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, with various historical examples as the following: During the Cold War, for instance, American jazz musicians traveled to the Soviet Union to promote goodwill and cultural exchange. In 2010, the Vatican loaned 16th-century tapestries to the Victoria and Albert Museum during Pope Benedict XVI's UK visit, offering a less controversial narrative of the Catholic Church. Similarly, in 2008, the New York Philharmonic performed in Pyongyang amid U.S.-North Korea tensions, concluding with a moving rendition of a Korean folk song.<sup>24</sup> Other examples include Louis Armstrong's final "Jazz Diplomacy"

tour in Africa in 1961 and Vedran Smailović's poignant cello performances during the Sarajevo siege in the 1990s.<sup>25</sup> Educational programs like Fulbright and Erasmus also foster intercultural dialogue and understanding among youth across Europe and beyond.

While cultural diplomacy can achieve many objectives, it also has limitations. As Goff notes, cultural diplomacy requires a long-term commitment, with its benefits potentially taking decades to materialize.<sup>26</sup> Although participation in cultural events such as music performances or student exchanges can be measured, assessing their true impact on participants remains challenging<sup>27</sup>. The reception of artistic works or the quality of human interactions cannot be fully controlled or predicted. Moreover, cultural diplomacy cannot be expected to produce immediate changes in policy outcomes or mitigate their negative effects. Nonetheless, it remains a vital tool for diplomats, helping to bridge the gap between the home and host country and fostering closer relations between their societies<sup>28</sup>.

### **Historical Overview of Cultural Diplomacy in Europe: Focus on Germany's approach**

Cultural diplomacy has long been an essential strategy for European countries seeking to extend their influence and build relationships beyond traditional political and economic channels. France was among the first modern nations to recognize the strategic benefits of cultural diplomacy, and by the 18th century, the French language had become the "lingua franca" of international diplomacy.<sup>29</sup> In the late 19th century, France also pioneered the establishment of schools and universities abroad, setting an example later followed by Germany, Italy, and Britain.<sup>30</sup>

Heigh notes that Germany's approach to cultural diplomacy initially focused on maintaining a sense of "Deutschtum" (Germanism) among expatriates and German-speaking communities abroad.<sup>31</sup> This approach shifted significantly after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which resulted in a larger number of Germans living outside the country's borders. To address this, Germany began formalizing its cultural diplomacy efforts.<sup>32</sup> In 1920, the "Directorate for Germanism Abroad and Cultural Relations" was created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, marking a more organized effort to promote German culture and language internationally<sup>33</sup>. By 1925, the establishment of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), or German Academic Exchange Service, indicated a shift towards genuine international cultural exchange, particularly in academia.<sup>34</sup> This initiative was further supported by the creation of the Deutsche Pädagogische Austauschstelle in 1929, which focused on student and school-level exchanges.<sup>35</sup> In 1932 the Goethe Institute was established to promote the German language and culture globally.<sup>36</sup> During the early 20th century, as fascist regimes gained power, nations increasingly employed cultural tools to influence international relations. In response, democracies like Great Britain established institutions such as the British Council in 1934 to counteract the spread of fascism and disinformation in Europe especially in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>37</sup>.

Following the devastation of two world wars and the destructive cultural policies of the Nazi regime, Germany's approach to foreign cultural policy became more defensive. The country relied heavily on intermediary organizations, or Mittlerorganisationen, which acted as effective tools of soft power, rebuilding trust and repairing diplomatic relationships damaged by the wars.<sup>38</sup> From the mid-20th century, German foreign policy increasingly integrated cultural initiatives, drawing inspiration from British and French models. By the 1960s and 1970s, cultural diplomacy accounted for nearly a third of the German Foreign



Office's budget, reflecting its importance in fostering international cooperation and understanding.<sup>39</sup>

Germany nowadays refers to this effort as "Die Auswärtige Kultur und Bildungspolitik" AKBP ("cultural and educational foreign policy") and it is considered as the "dritte Säule" third pillar, alongside security and trade policy, for maintaining stable international relations.<sup>40</sup> This approach aims to balance promoting Germany's national image with encouraging intercultural dialogue.

Intermediary organizations, political foundations, and partners play a crucial role in Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy. Among them, the Goethe Institute stands out as a major player. Reestablished in 1951, this global network encompasses 151 institutes in 98 countries and works with a diverse range of partner institutions, such as schools, universities, film and music academies, museums, theaters, and literary and concert venues.<sup>41</sup>

Another key organization in Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy is the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), which is dedicated to promoting international academic cooperation, is active in over 70 countries and supports 400 lecturers at higher education institutions globally.<sup>42</sup> Other organizations, such as the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, ifa), the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen), and the German UNESCO Commission (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission), collaborate with the Federal Foreign Office to advance Germany's cultural diplomacy objectives.<sup>43</sup> But also, the political foundations play an important role.

German cultural diplomacy is rooted in a "strong" notion of culture that is deeply connected to the country's history, language, and identity. In comparison, British cultural diplomacy is shaped by a "tradition of liberal individualism and empiricism".<sup>44</sup>

These diverse models of cultural diplomacy reflect varying levels of government involvement worldwide and continue to shape debates on the effectiveness and independence of cultural diplomacy efforts.

Germany remains a significant player in the field of cultural diplomacy, despite some recent challenges. For example, in 2024, Germany ranked fifth in Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index, a decline from its first-place position in 2021 and third place in 2022 and 2023<sup>45</sup>. This decline coincides with a reduction in the budget for foreign cultural and educational policy, which now represents only about one-seventh of the total budget of the Federal Foreign Office<sup>46</sup>

### **German-Montenegrin Bilateral Relations**

On its official website, the German Embassy to Montenegro describes bilateral relations between Germany and Montenegro as "good and friendly."<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, it is stated that Germany plays an advisory role and actively supports Montenegro on its path toward European Union membership. This relationship dates back to the 19th century, and it was established through a complex diplomatic history.

### **Historical Context - The Establishment of German Diplomatic Relations with Montenegro: 1878-1914**

Montenegro's independence from the Ottoman Empire was officially recognized at the Congress of Berlin on July 13, 1878. Following this recognition, major European powers such as France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, and Austria-Hungary established diplomatic missions in the Montenegrin capital of Cetinje. However, Germany did not initially appoint a diplomatic representative to Montenegro. Instead, German interests were managed by Freiherr Friedrich von Lichtenberg, the German consul based in Dubrovnik<sup>48</sup>.

In July 1883, Konrad von Saldern succeeded Lichtenberg and traveled to Cetinje to meet with Prince Nikola<sup>49</sup>. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck appointed Saldern as consul to Cetinje that same year. Saldern experienced a "cold" reception in Cetinje, and he reported his dissatisfaction to the officials in Germany. He expressed his frustration in a letter from Dubrovnik, stating, "It is no longer a challenge for me to expose myself to the cold politeness of the hill dwellers."<sup>50</sup> Due to this strained interaction, Bismarck instructed Saldern not to return to Cetinje.

From 1878 to 1905, Germany remained reluctant to establish a permanent diplomatic mission in Montenegro, despite Prince Nikola's persistent efforts. Meanwhile, Nikola sought to enhance Montenegro's international standing by arranging marriages between his children and members of European royal families. This included his son, Prince Danilo, marrying Countess Jutta of Mecklenburg in 1899, which strengthened Montenegro's ties to Germany<sup>51</sup>.

The breakthrough in diplomatic relations came in 1905, when Prince Nikola met with Kaiser Wilhelm II and successfully convinced him of the importance of establishing a German diplomatic presence in Montenegro.<sup>52</sup> As a result, the 1906 German state budget allocated funds to set up a diplomatic mission in Cetinje. Given that other European powers, such as Britain, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, already had missions in Montenegro, the German representation was designated as a "ministerial residency."<sup>53</sup>

On June 28, 1906, Gisbert von Pilgrim-Baltazzi, who had previously served as the minister-resident in Caracas, was appointed as the head of the new German representative office in Cetinje. However, in 1910, Pilgrim-Baltazzi requested to step down due to a kidney condition that required medical treatment not available in Cetinje.<sup>54</sup> Heinrich von Eckardt, who had been the minister-resident in Havana, succeeded Pilgrim-Baltazzi and was granted the title of extraordinary envoy and minister plenipotentiary<sup>55</sup>. The German permanent diplomatic mission was housed in a private residence owned by Jovan Milunović-Piper<sup>56</sup>, located on what

is now Njegoševa (Katunska) Street, and it served as the embassy until 1914; the house is now a residential building. Soon after Ekhardt's departure on June 12, 1914, the diplomatic landscape changed dramatically on August 7, 1914, when Montenegro declared war on Austria-Hungary<sup>57</sup>. This event abruptly ended the period of German diplomatic representation in Montenegro.

### **Reestablishment of the diplomatic relations between Germany and Montenegro**

Diplomatic relations between Germany and Montenegro were officially reestablished on June 14, 2006, following Montenegro's declaration of independence, which was confirmed by the independence referendum on May 21, 2006. Since the resumption of diplomatic relations in 2006, Germany has maintained a continuous diplomatic presence in Montenegro by appointing a series of ambassadors to its embassy in Podgorica. Thomas Schmitt served as the first German ambassador to Montenegro from 2006 to 2008. He was succeeded by Peter Platte, who held the position from 2008 to 2011, followed by Pius Fischer from 2011 to 2014. Gudrun Steinacker served as ambassador from 2014 to 2016, after which Hans Günther Matern took over from 2016 to 2018. Robert Weber was in office from 2018 to 2022. The current ambassador, Peter Felten, has been serving since 2022.<sup>58</sup>

The succession of ambassadors over the years reflects Germany's commitment to reinforcing its diplomatic engagement with Montenegro, contributing to the development of a strong partnership based on mutual interests and cooperation across a range of areas, including political dialogue, economic development, cultural exchange, and regional stability.

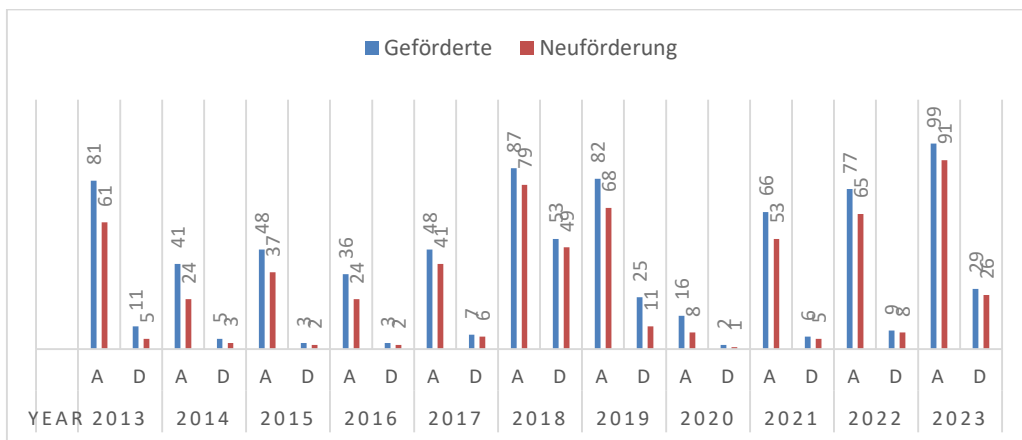
## **Germany's Support for Montenegro: Strengthening Democracy, Administration, and Bilateral Cooperation**

Germany is a key partner in Montenegro's efforts to promote democratic governance and enhance administrative capacities. The support provided by Germany focuses on implementing legal and administrative reforms, strengthening civil society, and promoting a free and independent media environment in Montenegro<sup>59</sup>. As Montenegro's largest bilateral donor, Germany primarily channels its development assistance through two institutions: the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)<sup>60</sup>. GIZ opened its office in Podgorica in 2007<sup>61</sup>. Although new bilateral development aid from Germany has been phased out due to Montenegro's ongoing EU accession negotiations, current projects will continue until their conclusion<sup>62</sup>. Several important German institutions are active in Montenegro, among them is The Deutsch-Montenegrinischer Wirtschaftsclub<sup>63</sup>, supports German businesses in establishing and expanding their operations in Montenegro. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)<sup>64</sup> and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung<sup>65</sup> coordinate their activities in Montenegro through their offices in Belgrade.<sup>66</sup>

## **Germany's Support for Montenegro: Education**

Since 2007, a strong cooperative partnership has existed between the German Department at the University of Montenegro and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)<sup>67</sup>. As part of this collaboration, a DAAD academic teacher is employed at the German Department of the Faculty of Philology, fostering

academic exchange and cooperation<sup>68</sup>. The partnership has been instrumental in promoting German scholarship and exchange programs, which are highly popular among Montenegrin students, illustrated by the statistics provided by the DAAD Office in Bonn for the period 2013-2023:

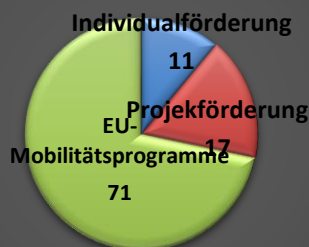


**Table 1:** The chart illustrates the number of funding for the period 2013-2023. “Geförderte” represents sponsored or supported individuals who received financial assistance for educational programs. “Neuförderung” indicates new entries or individuals who are receiving sponsorship/support for the first time. “A” represents the Members of foreign universities who come from Montenegro to Germany whereas “D” stands for Members of universities who travel from Germany to Montenegro.<sup>69</sup>

For the period 2013-2023 the overall number of the participants who were funded to visit German institutions is 571 whereas the number of Germans to Montenegrin institutions is 124.

The data on Table 1 reveals fluctuations over the years, with a drop in 2020, related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a direct effect on funding opportunities. Following 2020, there has been a steady increase in the number of recipients, peaking in 2023 with 99 funded individuals from Montenegro to German institutions.

## LÄNDERSTATISTIK 2023 Montenegro

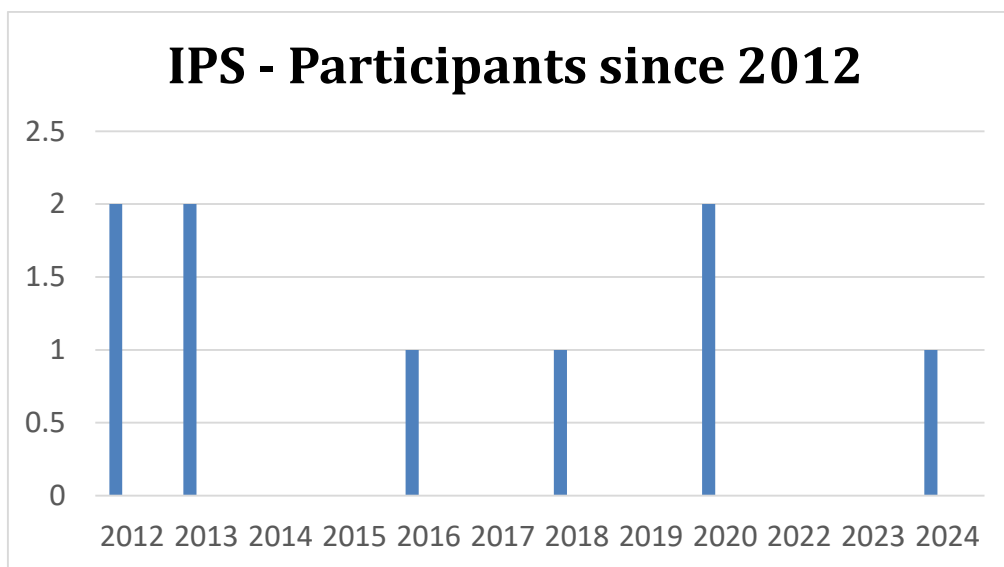


■ Individualförderung 11   ■ Projektförderung 17   ■ EU-Mobilitätsprogramme 71

Table 2: The statistics for the year 2023 DAAD funding<sup>70</sup>.

According to the DAAD report, three categories of funding can be distinguished: EU-Mobilitätsprogramme (EU mobility programs), Projektförderung (project funding), and Individualförderung (individual funding). For the year 2023, there is a strong emphasis on EU mobility programs, represented by the largest portion of the funding, with 71 recipients. Project funding, supports 17 recipients, while individual funding, is the smallest category, with 11 recipients.

In addition to DAAD programs, the prestigious German Bundestag's International Parliamentary Scholarship (IPS) is another opportunity for young university graduates to gain firsthand experience of parliamentary work in Germany, including a three-month internship in the office of a Member of the Bundestag.<sup>71</sup> The program is under the patronage of the President of the Bundestag and is granted annually. It allows participants not only deepen the participants' understanding of German politics and governance but also strengthens bilateral ties between Germany and Montenegro by nurturing the next generation of leaders.<sup>72</sup> Montenegro has been a participant in the program since 2012 and has had 9 participants so far. Below is the distribution of the participants over the years.



Number of participants from Montenegro in the IPS Program since 2012<sup>73</sup>

The Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA), a program ongoing since 2008 also plays a key role in supporting German language education in Montenegro enabling students in Montenegro to earn the German Language Certificate, a qualification that enhances language proficiency and is recognized internationally. This effort is critical in fostering language skills and cultural understanding among young Montenegrins. At Gymnasium Ulcinj, a German teacher supports the DSD (German Language Diploma, levels 1 and 2). A teacher was previously assigned to the Maršal Tito School in Ulcinj, but in 2018, the responsibility was transferred to the Goethe Institute. The ZfA continues to support Gymnasium Berane; however, there has been no German teacher on-site since 2018. The last DSD2 exam was conducted in 2022, and since then, DSD1 has not been offered. As of August 2024, a German teacher has been assigned to Gymnasium Nikšić, where DSD1 will be offered, with a potential option for DSD2.<sup>74</sup>

However, not all initiatives have achieved sustained success. For example, the Deutsches Haus project, launched in Montenegro in 2019 as a cultural and informational hub<sup>75</sup>, was discontinued shortly after its inception. The closure of Deutsches Haus reflects the challenges faced in establishing and maintaining a



permanent German cultural institution in Montenegro, highlighting the need for adaptable and context-sensitive approaches in bilateral cultural initiatives.

The Goethe-Institut, while not physically present in Montenegro, promotes cultural programs and German language learning from its regional office in Belgrade. The lack of a permanent physical presence of the Goethe Institute has its disadvantages since it limits the frequency and immediacy of cultural engagements and language programs that could otherwise be more integrated into the local community.

## **Conclusion**

The historical overview of Germany's approach to cultural diplomacy shows a process that has been shaped by internal political circumstances in Europe and the wider political context. Germany's cultural diplomacy model, which predominantly relies on intermediary organizations, has been effective in the course of the years in striking a balance between the appropriate promotion of national interests and enhancing intercultural interactions. However, challenges remain, such as the fluctuating position in the rankings of global soft power as well as the budget allocation constraints, influenced by the broader prospect of economic and geopolitical factors. This requires careful reevaluating of the cultural diplomacy strategies and their adaptation to current global challenges, which will lead to building stronger relations.<sup>76</sup>

In the case of Montenegro, Germany's diplomatic and cultural relations illustrate both the success and challenges of such engagement on a wider level. Germany has put significant efforts in supporting Montenegro's progress toward democratic governance, administrative reforms, as well as educational and cultural exchange, especially through the DAAD and other similar programs. However, there are still challenges in sustaining long-term initiatives as in the case of the closing of the Deutsches Haus in Podgorica. Additionally, due to the lack of a permanent Goethe

Institute Office in Montenegro, the offer of cultural activities and language educational programs is limited. These constraints suggest that a more delicate approach is needed to harmonize German strategic interests within Montenegrin unique cultural landscape to have a more stable and effective cultural presence.

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