



European Union Public Diplomacy Case Study - the Intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Submitted: 2017-05-19 · Accepted: 2019-11-28 · Published: 2019-12-28

DOI: 10.26417/em600ng4

Abstract

This paper describes public diplomacy (PD) of European Union (EU) through European External Action Service (EEAS). As PD has its aim influencing the public, EU makes PD through its missions and delegations trying to prove to the whole world that it is an important actor in international arena. Since EU is a unique international organization with elements of a state, we will try to describe that even EU has difficulties using PD to build a positive image in front of public considering the fact that each member state has its own voice in the path of representing the EU through EEAS as one voice. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the EU's foreign policy with particular focus on the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that in our case analyzing it in the context of the PD specifically creating a positive image, has shown weakness and incapacity to intervene and play its role as an important actor to resolve a conflict and bring peace. Samples were taken from the international literature, scientific researches and official documents taken from EU official website. We used descriptive and analytical method to arrive at the conclusion of this topic, proving theoretically and practically that EU diplomacy as part of foreign policy has failed in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: European Union, European External Action Service, foreign policy, public diplomacy, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Introduction

Writing about Public Diplomacy is not easy and requires a big engagement to present a clear and exact opinion about how Public Diplomacy functions. The

hardest part is to make a clear difference between the Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding, because the aim of both of them is promotion. In this paper will be discussed about European Union Public Diplomacy as not so much discussed topic, and quite often is complicated and is mixed with other field activities such as media affect and public relations.

The first part of this paper attempts to explain what Public Diplomacy is, not how it functions promoting a nation of a state, but how it functions promoting many nations of countries governing under one umbrella, such as EU. The rest part of the paper explains the case study: the Role of EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina war and its impact on EU Public Diplomacy.

The aim of all what is analyzed in this paper is how to learn from failures, being sure on what you promote and realize it, basing on circumstances and capabilities. This is the reason that this paper analyzes the case of Bosnia war.

European Union Public Diplomacy

The origin of Public Diplomacy is not just an official communication between the states, but also, presents all relationships between states and private actors communicating with the people of other nations. Explaining the notion of public diplomacy is sometimes difficult, since it is very close to the cultural diplomacy, communication, propaganda, media, public relation, etc. According to Sharp's definition public diplomacy is "the process by which direct relations with the people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented" (Sharp, 2005:106).

Describing how public diplomacy functions in a state is easy, but when it comes to EU public diplomacy is quite complicated, because of the nature of EU as a sui generis international organization with elements of a state and non-state or as a quasi-federal entity. Elaborating the issue of how public diplomacy works, taking in consideration the multilevel function of EU (national, subnational, transnational and supranational) is a specific topic of discussion. This paper will discuss the impact of practical challenges in the image of EU that EU faced and is facing now as an important actor in international politics.

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of EU, European Commission throw numerous activities promoted EU as a model for regional cooperation, respecting national diversity and committed to democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance (European Commission, 2007:5), and described EU public diplomacy as:

"Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes. It seeks to promote EU interests by understanding, informing and influencing. It means clearly explaining the EU's goals, policies and activities and fostering understanding of these goals through dialogue with individual citizens, groups, institutions and the media" (European Commission, 2007:5).

This definition helps us to understand two aspects of EU public diplomacy, internal and external one.

The internal one is very important, taking in consideration the harmony between the Member States toward each other and their own public diplomacy as nations, and also Member States public diplomacy toward third parties.

The external one can be described in two periods, before and after Lisbon Treaty. The period before Lisbon Treaty shows a public diplomacy functioning through complex structure of the EU external relations (split between three pillars), as well as the persistent Westphalian nature of diplomacy, and the period after Lisbon Treaty shows EU public diplomacy through European External Action Service (EEAS), which posits an end to the formal split of EU's external relations by bringing together in an innovative manner officials from the Commission, the Council General Secretariat and diplomats from the Member States, presents an opportunity to develop genuine external public diplomacy (Duke & Courtier, 2011).

All external relations actors, such as the DGs of the Commission, a small number of EU delegations, or the Council General Secretariat and the EEAS at present have developed web-based portals onto which a plethora of news, videos, narrative leaflets, official speeches, facts and figures, statements or declarations are made available. More recently the EEAS has even ventured into social media (now on Facebook and Twitter) (Duke & Courtier, 2011).

In both periods and in the whole time of the EU existence, EU promoted itself as an important international actor for peacekeeping and fighting the abuse of human rights and also preventing conflicts that could cause war between nations or states, example the diffraction of ex-Yugoslavia by war and genocide.

EU Image in Front of the World In 90'

The main goal of public diplomacy as a part of foreign policy is to build a strong and positive image in front of the public. Based on the practices of public diplomacy, it is very hard to build a positive image but is harder to maintain it, but the hardest part is to get it back if you lose it. In these terms staying focused in our topic, the hardest part of EU public diplomacy is to maintain the strong and positive image that has built through all difficulties, especially in front of crisis like Yugoslavian wars, specifically Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To analyze the role of EU in Bosnian war, we should go back to the history because the EU in itself was not the same as it is now. It was the period between 1990 and 1999 that EU was known as Europe without frontiers, the decade of two treaties: the 'Maastricht' Treaty on European Union in 1993 and the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, with a Single Market and the 'Schengen' agreement, but in 1991 is the period when in the Balkans, Yugoslavia begins to break apart. Fighting erupts, first in

Croatia, then in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Serbs, Croats and Muslims fight in a bloody civil war. (Official website of the European Union).

EU, starting from the renews and decisions of the Maastricht Treaty, especially the establishment of the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), has created big expectations for something concrete, but in fact the member states did not engage enough for the success of the CFSP. It was not everything to be considered as fail or without results, because there have been approved Common Actions and Common Statements.

June 1992 The Foreign and Defense Ministers met in Bonn and issued the Petersburg Declaration on these three issues:

on WEU (Western European Union) and European security Developments in the security situation in Europe, disarmament and arms control on strengthening WEU's operational role on relations between WEU and the other European member states of the European union or the Atlantic alliance (Western European Union, 1992).

Between November 1993 and May 1995, eight joint actions were pursued. These actions included observing elections in Russia and South Africa, supporting measures to enhance stability and peace in the central and eastern European countries (CEECs) and the Middle East, providing humanitarian aid to Bosnia, promoting the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), controlling the export of dual-use (civil and military) goods, and strengthening the review process of the anti-personnel landmines (Bindi, 2010:28). But Yugoslavian separation in 1991 has shown a real leak of unity of European Community and a concrete fail of CFSP.

What Happened in Bosnia?

The population of Bosnia-Herzegovina was comprised of three ethnic groups: Serbian 30 percent, Croatian 18 percent, and Muslim 42 percent, but despite this percentage Croats and Serbs expanded their territorial control at the expense of the Bosnian state, with the Serbs, supported by Serbia and the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), eventually controlling about 70% of Bosnia-Herzegovina territory (United State of America, Department State, Office of the historian).

Yugoslavia's breakup began in May 1991, when Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence from the Serbian-dominated central government in Belgrade (CNN Interactive). In Feb 29-March 1 1992 Bosnia's Muslims and Croats vote for independence in referendum boycotted by Serbs, and On March 3 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina was proclaimed an independent republic. (Reuters, 2008) April 6 - European Union recognizes Bosnia's independence. Regarding Bosnia, Bosnian Serbs did not accept that so they started an armed conflict justifying it with the reason that Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic wanted to turn Bosnia into a fundamentalist Islamic nation. (He is considered a religious moderate by Western diplomats) (CNN

Interactive). The armed conflict was in fact an ethnic cleansing to expel Bosnian Muslims from their homes, but not just pushing them out of their country, thus unfortunately subjecting them to mass rape, massacre and genocide. The war breaks out and Serbs, under the leadership of Radovan Karadzic, lay siege to capital Sarajevo occupying 70 percent of the country, killing and persecuting Muslims and Croats to carve out a Serb Republic (Reuters, 2008).

In the other side remains the question "What did EU (European Community then) do in front of that genocide? European leaders from the beginning introduced the idea that the European Community should deal with the crisis in Yugoslavia, to prove that European Community has the capacity to intervene as an international actor of solving conflict and building peace.

On 29 July 1991, after attempting to secure a ceasefire and the suspension of declarations of independence, the Twelve declared the inviolability of the Federation's internal frontiers, a declaration that was rejected by Slobodan Milošević and the Croatian Serbs, who refused to be involved in an independent Croatia (CVCE, 2016). The next attempt was a peace conference in The Hague which began on 7 September 1991 in an attempt to halt the fighting, the Netherlands Presidency of the European Community, supported by France and Germany, proposed sending a Western European Union (WEU) intervention force to the region, but the United Kingdom, backed by Denmark and Portugal, was opposed to any commitment of troops. Two months later, since EEC Member States did not agree to intervene by force troops, France initiated United Nations Emergency Force to intervene in November 1991, but unfortunately Security Council did no more than impose an embargo on the supply of arms to Yugoslavia.

On 15 December 1991 the UNSC adopted the Resolution 724 where it was stated that: 'all States and parties to refrain from any action which might contribute to increasing tension...or delaying a peaceful and negotiated outcome to the conflict in Yugoslavia' (De Cuéllar, 2016:497).

While the ethnic cleansing was being done by Bosnian Serbs to Bosnian Muslims, UN and EEC were trying to find a peaceful solution that did not end to any positive result. So finally, on 21 February 1992, was created United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) with some 15 000 members initially only deployed in Croatia and then only in October 1992 6 000- strong UNPROFOR II was sent to Bosnia (CVCE, 2016).

Other significant step was the Carrington-Cutileiro Plan, as a result of the Hague peace conference, submitted in February 1992, which Carrington jointly crafted with Portuguese ambassador Jorge Cutileiro (Kumar & Pacheco). According to this plan the country would have been governed as district by the three groups Muslim, Serbian or Croatian, but both parties Serbians and Bosnian Muslims refused it. At this time European Community took in consideration the desire of independence of Slovenia and Croatia and then also Macedonia, but Member States in this stage were

not able to speak with one voice because of their own interests. Example, Germany because of the affinity between these countries was moving positively toward the recognition of their independence, while France, being afraid from the influence of Germany extension, preferred to still support the Yugoslav unity, and its path was accompanied by Spain because of its issues with Basque and Catalan demands and also Britain because of Northern Ireland. This was the period when the Treaty of Maastricht¹ was nearly being signed by Member States, so they decided to express solidarity to the countries that were seeking their independence based in the conditions of respecting human and minority's rights, which also were and are principles of the existence of European Union itself. So concrete steps were taken, when on 23 December 1991, Germany unilaterally recognized Slovenia and Croatia, followed on 15 January 1992, by its partner countries after the conference's Arbitration Commission where was decided that these two Republics satisfied the requisite condition, but in the case of Bosnia, the Commission suggested a referendum (CVCE, 2016).

As a result, Bosnia & Herzegovina declared its independence beyond the boycott organized by Serbians toward the Bosnian referendum, so in April 1992 the European Community recognized its independence. As a consequence of these steps taken by Bosnia and European Community, Serbians respond was brutal offensive and intensifying the war.

The conflict was getting more intense and as a case for European Community, this was a complicated issue and it can be said that European Community was not enough able to manage a strong policy of intervention because of divergences of opinion of Member States. This inability to act for preventing the genocide or at least to agree on a common opinion during the first stages of the conflict, has shown a leak and incapacity to act of the newly created CFSP. So in this situation, the European Community was progressively marginalized by the intervention of other international actors, primarily the UN, except the other side of the medal that European Community continued to play an important role in diplomatic efforts, by implementing sanctions and providing humanitarian aid, but all the activities were carried out within the framework of the UN. A new International Conference on the former Yugoslavia was launched in Geneva under the auspices of the UN (represented by Cyrus Vance) and the EC (represented by Dave Owen) (Ramcharan, 2011:242).

As the war intensified through early 1993, the two mediators who had taken over from Lord Carrington, Cyrus Vance and David Owen, presented a new plan moving from decentralization (Carrington-Cutileiro Plan) at the level of districts to larger provincial units, intended to forestall partition by scattering the provinces so that Bosnia & Herzegovina could not be divided into three ethnic territories (Kumar & Pacheco).

Vance, who resigned from his post in April, was replaced on 1 May by the Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg. The two mediators acted under United Nations mandate. From that point on, the European Community was excluded from the core of the negotiations. It was on the initiative of the Owen-Stoltenberg duo that UNPROFOR's mandate was extended to include Bosnia. The number of UN peacekeepers (or 'blue berets') was subsequently increased. However, the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan was rejected on 29 August 1993 by the Bosniaks (CVCE, 2016).

According to what Owen said, the failure to enforce the blockade was a critical missed opportunity. Had it been done, Owen said, *"we would have brought peace to Bosnia two years earlier with massive saving of life and much reduced ethnic cleansing"*, but when the Bosnian Serb Assembly rejected the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, Owen believed that this was due to Milošević's failure to flex his political muscle. "It was a massive mistake by President Milošević not to use his undoubted power to impose on his fellow Serbs in Bosnia those same settlements, and had he done so it would have been in the best interests of the Serbian people as a whole." (Lord David Owen, 2003).

Finally, in November 1993, the European Union regained some sort of cohesion by adopting, on the initiative of France and Germany, an action plan for the former Yugoslavia (the Juppé-Kinkel Plan) which would underpin European diplomacy until the peace accords of 1995: territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and territorial concessions between the communities (CVCE, 2016). In this stage European Union was present with most of the humanitarian aid but not with military capacity, because the Member States were acting individually with their own contingents with the request of UN. In these circumstances, it was created a contact group by United States, Germany, France, Italy, Britain and Russian Federation, which initiated negotiations for peace, that of course in October 1994 were refused by Bosnian Serbs.

With the creation of the Contact Group (1994), the role of the EU was greatly diminished, if not completely absent from negotiations. Even though, some argued that the Contact Group was a way to give a voice to the EU in combination with other international powers, the reality showed that it was an initiative of and for its five participating states, and the voice of the EU as a body was barely heard (Juncos, 2005).

Finally it was again America with the Dayton Conference that ended this war crime. The Dayton General Framework Peace Agreement was initialed in Dayton, Ohio on November 21 and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995 by Heads of State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Zupcevic & Causevic, 2009).

The Dayton Agreement (United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council, 1995) was a peace agreement that preserved the entity of the Bosnian state within its

international recognized frontiers, with a reunified Sarajevo as its capital and 4/4 comprising two entities: one Muslim-Croat (51 % of the territory), the other Serb (49 % of the territory) and President Clinton, in order to ensure compliance with this agreement, secured the Senate's backing to send 20 000 American soldiers to Bosnia (Camisar et. al., 2005).

On 20 December 1995, UNPROFOR was replaced by IFOR (Implementation Force), a 63 000-strong multilateral force under the command of NATO, which included 20 000 US soldiers and was responsible for keeping peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (CVCE, 2016). The western Balkans would nevertheless continue to be a powder keg, but the presence of a multilateral Stabilization Force (SFOR, which replaced IFOR) under US command, which was set up in November 1996 and renewed in July 1998, brought peace to Bosnia.

EU Role in Bosnia and the Impact to Its Public Diplomacy

The EU was ineffective in the Bosnian war, where its most important contribution was to administer the divided city of Mostar, although its success in joining Muslims and Croat communities was limited. In the first year of the conflict, the EU made efforts to negotiate an agreement that ended the war only with US intervention; this was the 1995 Dayton agreement.

EU data on other crises, in the mid-1990s, were even less admirable because EU, like the rest of the community, stood and watched the genocide that took place in Rwanda and in Albania, the EU failed to take measures (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008: 175). Even though EU was and is still present in Bosnia, from the beginning of the war and of course also in the post conflict period, the case of Bosnia has shown that EU had a secondary role because the intervention of UN by NATO has shown that UN reinforced its role as the major actor for security, while EU role stood just as an important actor for civilian (economic) assistance. The disgrace contributed to a more fundamental revision of the provisions of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Security, and this was done in the Treaty of Amsterdam, which we can say that filled some of the gaps left by the Treaty of Maastricht. To this end, Spanish Minister of European Affairs Carlos Westendorp was asked to lead a reflection group that concluded that the main objectives of the treaty review should be:

(A) to make Europe the most important in the eyes of its citizens;

(B) to make the EU more efficient decision-making; and **(C)** to provide the EU with greater responsibility and power in dealing with foreign affairs. The Intergovernmental Conference began in Turin on 29 March 1996 to continue with the Treaty of Amsterdam (Bindi, 2010:28).

All this analyze affects directly EU CFSP and Public Diplomacy as a part of CFSP. And if we ask Why, the answer is "All about image". Because a strong and powerful image is the most important arm to be strong represented to public, and to win public's

confidence, and obviously this is what EU was and is still doing, promotes itself as a powerful actor in the world and of course this is why foreign policy and public diplomacy is for. About the experience in Balkans Javier Solana as a High Representative for CFSP has stated:

"The experience of the Balkans has been a sobering one for the European Union. But it has I believe also provided us with an opportunity. It is a test of our commitment to the region, to a wider Europe, and to a mature common foreign and security policy. The Balkans has shown that the European Union can no longer remain a force for peace simply through example. It has also to be forthright in defending the basic values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law on which it is founded" (Solana 2000a), and regarding foreign policy he stated:

"Our common foreign policy cannot just be interests-based. Protecting and promoting values, which are part of our history and very dear to the hearts of our citizens, must continue to be a priority. The values of solidarity, of tolerance, of inclusiveness, of compassion are integral part of European integration. We cannot give up on them" (2002, 2)

Based on what Solana stated, representing EU and all its Member States, and all the facts written in the text above, we conclude that this is the point where EU public diplomacy is effected, specially the effect of media and their way of describing the whole story and the incapacity of EU for intervention in Bosnia, to stop the genocide and to prevent the death of a thousand people, in fact Muslim people, while in the other side EU was promoting its values as an important actor to prevent and solve conflict and build peace.

Conclusion

Based in the wording "Public Diplomacy", it is very easy to understand that it is all about the public. This paper tries to identify the impact of the EU intervention in Bosnia with civilian assistance under the umbrella of UN, as a key actor that ended the war. In the conclusion here are two main points to be emphasized:

The EU, from the beginning of its creation, promoted itself as a strong actor which is fighting for the good, (rule of law, democracy, human rights, etc). This is Public Diplomacy, more exactly, to increase its image in front of its citizens and beyond it, also citizens of other countries. Taking in consideration that the number of Member States was growing up in 90', this was a sign that EU reached its objective, to be important that even other countries wanted to join European Community, in order to establish a unique organization, compared with UN, as it is now nowadays. Citizens of all these countries have expressed publicly that they want to be part of EU, that they believe in the principles of EU and feel more secure and protected as an EU citizen (of course, always protecting their ethnic belongings). This was the effect of EU Public Diplomacy, building confidence to the public and creating the image as an important factor that people could blindly believe in it.

The 90' was a concrete and big challenge for EU, proving all what was said above. Bosnia and Herzegovina war, with hundred thousand people killed, was the challenge that EU did not pass, and of course was an example of learning from failure. All the time of the Bosnia war, the role of EU was under the shadow of UN, proving that was not enough capable to be the main actor of solving the conflict that ended with genocide to innocent people. This was the fact that fluctuated the people's confidence to feel protected by EU and to believe that EU, promoting itself as security provider for peace, would be there in case it happens something like in Bosnia. But EU failed in this case, and its image as a peace provider was damaged. The case of Bosnia was EU failure, that in the aspect of Public Diplomacy means to damage its image, which is the most difficult and most important of the Public Diplomacy existence.

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Notes

1. The Treaty on European Union (TEU) represents a new stage in European integration since it opens the way to political integration. It creates a European Union consisting of three pillars: the European Communities, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters (JHA). The Treaty introduces the concept of European citizenship, reinforces the powers of the European Parliament and launches economic and monetary union (EMU). Besides, the EEC becomes the European Community (EC). For more information visit <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3Axy0026>