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## **International Activities of Cities: Constraints and Opportunities for Development of their Public Diplomacy<sup>2</sup>**

### ABSTRACT

Cities and local communities are becoming more independent from central government authorities in international scene. Decentralization has enabled local communities to act independently on the international scene. This is one of the reasons why local communities have become important partners of central government authorities in international affairs. Many state problems have local origin and local communities are important agents in solving these problems. Sharing experience among cities from different countries has strengthened their position at the national and international level. Local communities have instruments to strengthen their position at the international level. In the cities strategies for acting at the international level, the development of public diplomacy is an important element. The position of public diplomacy in such strategies depends on the state constitutional system and available resources of the cities. Constraints and opportunities for the development of cities' public diplomacy are much determined by their relationship with higher levels of state hierarchy. Mutual interests of different levels of state hierarchy and willingness to join efforts are the key factor that influences the development of cities' public diplomacy. On the other hand, cities have got capital, experience and knowledge which are important for solving global issues. That is why cities are recognized as an important partner at the global level. International organizations are developing partnerships with cities and transnational city-

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networks. These are some of the reasons why central governments are forced to include cities in foreign policy activities. In such circumstances, cities and local communities are very active in the development of their public diplomacy. This is especially important for the cities that generate a large amount of local incomes. Public diplomacy is an instrument that the cities use to promote themselves on the international level and thus generate more income.

*Key words:* cities, local communities, constitutional system, intergovernmental relation, twinning, transnational networks, globalization, diplomacy, foreign policy, public diplomacy, 'diplomacy from below', international relations, international organizations.

## Introduction

Changes in international arena and coming up of new agents has influenced the states and their role in shaping international relations. Economic globalization changes the meaning of borders and flow of capital, goods and people. This circumstances force states to make internal changes related to legal hierarchy and the position of different levels of government. Decentralization is the process of adapting state constitutional system to the new conditions in international politics and economy. Through the process of decentralization local governments, including city governments, get the opportunity to conduct international activities without participation of central governments. These activities slowly enable cities to conduct diplomatic activities which are defined as 'diplomacy from below'. It is one of the main preconditions for the development of city public diplomacy.

Public Diplomacy is in its core associated with state agents with the aim to influence the population of a foreign state, but without making connection to the authorities of that state. States have such possibilities because of their economic strength and the position in international relations as one of the key agents. In the begging of XXI century, the situation is changing because local communities, especially cities, have more and more share in a country's GDP.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, the voice of city becomes stronger in state political system as well as its economic possibilities to independently establish international

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<sup>3</sup> In 2010, the share of Budapest in total national GDP was around 40%; For more details see: "Gross domestic product (GDP) (2007–)", *Hungarian Central Statistical Office*, Internet: [http://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng/xstadat/xstadat\\_annual/i\\_qpt013.html](http://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng/xstadat/xstadat_annual/i_qpt013.html), 17/02/2013; In 2010, Vienna had the Gross Regional Product of more than 75, 5 billion of euros which was 26,4% of total national GDP. Vienna's share was in this year up for 10% higher compared with Upper Austria region, which was second on the list; For more details see: "Gross regional product 2010 by Länder (NUTS 2): overview", *Statistics Austria*, Internet: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/statistics/national\\_accounts/regional\\_accounts/nuts2-regional\\_gdp\\_and\\_main\\_aggregates/index.html#index1](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/national_accounts/regional_accounts/nuts2-regional_gdp_and_main_aggregates/index.html#index1), 17/02/2013.

connections. Still, there are some legal constraints which prevent cities to act alone in international arena. These constraints come from state constitutions and hierarchy between local and central governments. Requests for more political rights and need for better life conditions force states to decentralize their political systems. Regarding requests for more political rights, they are usually related to wider inclusion of citizens in political decision-making processes. Need for better life does not only imply higher living standards but also better quality of services provided to citizens. Complex economic and political situation in the world force central governments to employ all available resources to meet the above mentioned requests. Such resources are very often found on the lower levels of state hierarchy, that is to say local and regional governments, because the requests that we have mentioned before often come from the lower levels of state political system.

Decentralization of political systems often presumes the right of local communities to act independently in international arena, but in accordance with the constitution of their country. Local communities and cities in different countries have the same issues and the best way to solve these issues is mutual cooperation. That is way local communities and cities from different countries use their right to act independently in international arena to establish mutual cooperation. One way to establish connections between cities and different governmental and non-governmental agents from foreign countries is public diplomacy.

### 1. A brief historical review of local communities and cities' international activities

International activities of local communities and cities go back before the First World War. These activities were an attempt of local communities and cities for closer cooperation and more influence on international level. The first step was founding International Union of Local Authorities/Union Internationale des Villes (IULA/UIV) in 1913. IULA/UIV attempted to establish closer cooperation between local communities and cities through inter-municipal network. This network consisted of congresses, conferences and writing. The goal was to make local communities, especially cities, stronger in technical and organizational sense. IULA/UIV had pacifistic character, which was not popular in some states because of the events and circumstances that preceded the First World War. Also, pacifistic character and independent actions in international arena prevented states to have control over actions of this organization and its members. That was one of the key reasons for some states not to support IULA/UIV. After the First World War, pacifism was the biding element that kept members of IULA/UIV together and enabled them to overcome differences resulting from the First World War. Despite the fact that IULA/UIV had no support in most states, the situation was the same on

international level in the interwar period. The League of Nations had big problems when it came to relations between the states and was not interested in local issues and international solidarity on the local level. This had great influence on the legitimacy of IULA/UIV's activities, its strengthening and development. Other organizations like International Labor Organization (ILO) had no interest to support IULA/UIV because ILO was focused on creating strong organization of working class on international level. In that sense, IULA/UIV was an obstacle for ILO in pursuit of their interests. The lack of political interests of IULA/UIV inspired the activities of local communities and cities after the Second World War and was the basis for the development of twinning.<sup>4</sup>

The foundation of IULA/UIV and its activities were an attempt of local communities and cities to establish closer cooperation and make more influence on international level. However, it was only with the begging of the twinning practice that such cooperation made real results. The twinning practice strengthened the position of local communities, especially cities, and enabled them to act more independently.

### Twinning — cooperation of cities on international level

The end of the Second World War made new obstacles to re-establishing solid relations between states that were on the opposite sides in this conflict. This led to the development of mutual relations between the cities from such states through twinning-projects. At the begging, the cities involved in this project were the ones from the Western Europe, Germany, Eastern Europe and United States of America (USA). The states were not active enough in the area of conflict resolution, so the cities undertook this role. Also, interaction between the cities aimed at post-conflict reconstruction.<sup>5</sup>

Twinning started as an attempt to strengthen peace in Europe after the Second World War, especially through connecting local communities from France and Germany. This attempt was primarily aimed at creating links between the cities. It was presumed that the development of cooperation on local level will remove some obstacles in interstate relations. At that time, relations between states were burdened with the events from the previous war. The only way to start reconciliation between the states in Europe was to start with the local level and develop cooperation between cities and other local communities. There was hope

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<sup>4</sup> See: Michael Herbert and Shane Ewen, "European cities in a networked world during the long twentieth century", *Estudio/Working Paper*, 82/2007, Madrid, pp. 9-12.

<sup>5</sup> See: Rogier van der Pluijm, "City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics", *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers No. 10*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael", The Hague, April 2007, p. 20.

that this cooperation will inspire central governments to make more efforts and develop cooperation on the central level as well. Eventually, twinning did make good results and great contribution to removing obstacles that appeared as a result of the Second World War.

The most important characteristic of twinning is that it is a permanent form of cooperation between cities on international level. Twinning can have many forms and contents and it helps create projects which positively influence a city development. Some of the results made by twinning are the exchange of experiences, knowledge and establishment of cooperation. Intensification of integration processes in Europe influenced the development of twinning in a positive way. First, this process has made cities an important partner in economic integration processes. Second, cities got better position in economic development of Europe. Recently, actions within the twinning framework have been focused on better inclusion of citizens in cooperation between cities and local communities.<sup>6</sup>

Twinning brings along valuable benefits to cities and other local communities. Some of them should be mentioned here. *Learning based on practices of twinning partners* is an opportunity to establish international contacts and exchange knowledge. Through these contacts, the representatives can get new ideas and improve services to their own citizens. *Development of human resources* is achieved through contacts with foreign partners. This way local officials gain new knowledge and experiences based on international practice. *Raising awareness of some issues* through international cooperation gives city and other local officials the opportunity to become more familiar with the key problems of cities and local communities at European and international level. *Access to many funds* is the opportunity for cities and local communities to receive funding for important project. In most cases, the term for receiving such funds is cooperation with one or more foreign partners. Twinning is a good way to find foreign partners which are interested in joint projects. Economic and business development is encouraged through the contacts established between the citizens and partner city companies or their local community. Apart from cooperation between cities and local communities, good connections and trust is established between individuals, NGO's and local companies. Such cooperation can develop without the participation of city and local community officials.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the usual activities of the twinning-projects, cities start to engage in solidarity activities with other cities over some time. Twinning-projects are mainly concerned with the economic interests of stakeholders but

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<sup>6</sup> See: *Pojmovnik decentralizacije*, Kancelarija Nacionalnog saveta za decentralizaciju Republike Srbije, Beograd, 2011, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> See: *Bratimljenje opština – put ka bržem razvoju*, Stalna konferencija gradova i opština (SKGO), Beograd, oktobar 2007, p. 8.

there is always some space for ‘idealistic’ goals aiming at global issues. For instance, in reference to apartheid issue in South Africa in the late 80’s, Western Cities engaged in establishing a twinning-project with towns from this African state. They wanted to show their disagreement with the apartheid policy and solidarity with black population.<sup>8</sup>

Besides cultural exchange as the one of its primary elements, twinning-projects now include advisory assistance to the partners who need it. In this sense, cities were especially active after the Cold War and during the 90’s. It is the time period when some of the Central and Eastern European states set the accession to the European Union (EU) as their goal but lacked expertise, knowledge and experience. Twinning-projects include advisory assistance in the forms of city-to-city and person-to-person. This was the case with the above mentioned states and involvement in the process of joining the EU. In that time period, the assistance of colleagues from the Western Europe was crucial. It is the same situation now with the Balkans. The resulted is a more specified model of cooperation within the framework of twinning-projects. Changes refer to joint projects implementations, more professional approach to the establishment of the very process of a twinning-project and more efficient use of resources. Main reasons for such changes are related to unfavorable position of the cities from the Balkans in many aspects. Such position of the Balkan cities is associated with the urgent need for expertise and possibilities of applying for the funds intended for twinning-projects. Many municipalities, towns and NGO’s from the Balkans are engaged in EU-funded projects through official EU agencies. For example, there have been 49 projects implemented in Serbia with the municipality partners from the EU recently. These projects refer to many aspects of local development, ecology, planning and participation of citizens.<sup>9</sup>

In reference to the previous two paragraphs, the conclusion is that twinning has been the foundation of developing international relations and networks between cities. Twinning expands cities’ field of influence and allow them to learn more about acting on international level. Also, this kind of partnership has been successful in solving many local problems. The development of international relations after the Second World War showed that many problems started locally. That is one more reason for cities and local communities to become important partners in solving these problems. The acknowledgement of the importance of local agents has opened the door to their involvement in the activities of public diplomacy.

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<sup>8</sup> See: Rogier van der Pluijm, “City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics”, loc. cit., p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> See: *Bratimljenje opština — put ka bržem razvoju*, loc. cit., pp. 5–6.

## International activities of cities — constraints and opportunities

Cities, as well as governments at the local level, have got specific position in a state political, economic and legal system. On the one hand, they are often in the middle of international activities while on the other hand, their position is constrained by the regional and central authorities. So, the position of cities and possibilities to act independently at the international level depends much on their relations with regional and central authorities. Constraints and partnership between a city and other two levels of government are often mixed and dependent on the interest of all three parties (local (city), regional and central government).

As stated at the begging of this paper, the exclusive participants of international activities are nation-states. Development of contemporary capitalism has made the role of cities in global market more important. Cities are places where much of the world trade is made and economic gain achieved. Also, human activities are mainly concentrated in cities and such urban communities are places where people make connections. This is one of the important reasons why there is inconsistency between practical and legal position of cities and other local communities in the XXI century. The main legal constraint is the legal status of municipalities which are the parts of urban communities (cities). Many legal constraints are imposed on municipalities in view of their acting autonomously on international level and this also goes for cities. Legal constraints are mainly connected with the position of municipalities in state constitutions and their income (transferred or autonomously earned). Still, there are some possibilities for cities and local communities to influence central government authorities. For example, these possibilities are: dual mandate system, importance of political practice at local level for further political career or many opportunities for making contacts between local politicians and the representatives of central government and other higher levels of state hierarchy. In the field of international activities, relations between cities and central authorities can have two patterns. The first pattern presumes joint and complementary diplomatic activities in international arena. The second pattern could have negative influence on the position of central government because international activities of cities can be used to criticize central authorities and place new demands regarding the position of cities in state hierarchy.<sup>10</sup>

So, the first pattern gives better opportunity for local communities and cities to develop their public diplomacy activities. Common interests in international relations would contribute to a greater appreciation of the interests of local authorities in the national constitutional systems. It would be reflected in cities

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<sup>10</sup> See: Daniel Kübler and Jolita Piliutyte, “Intergovernmental relations and international urban strategies: constraints and opportunities in multilevel polities”, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, Vol. 25, p. 357 and pp. 360–62.

being vested with more powers when it comes to their acting autonomously in foreign policy matters. The logical consequence of more independent foreign policy of cities is the development of its public diplomacy. That is why the primary task of local communities and cities is their influence on central authorities to improve their own legal status. It would make balance between political importance and legal status of all local government levels.

Professor Daniel Kübler and Jolita Piliutyte highlight the relationship with regions (middle level of government) as another constraint for cities to act independently at the international level. Over the years, regions have become very strong and today they are important partners of central government in implementing different development strategies and plans, even if such plans directly influence the position of cities. Still, the partnership between regional and local (city) governments is important for economic development of both levels in state hierarchy. Apart from representing markets and places of business linkages, international activities of cities can attract more financial investments which directly influence the economic stability of the whole region. This is the opportunity for cities to get more support for their own public diplomacy activities. It must be emphasized that major international events are organized in the cities, which is important for development of city public diplomacy. A good example of this is Olympic Games since only cities can get opportunity to organize such an event. However, cities do not have enough resources and expertise to organize Olympic Games on their own so the support of the regional authorities is important in such a case and this is the opportunity for establishing closer local-regional relations.<sup>11</sup>

Today, the position of cities in the global market is important for economic development. Strategies of city presentation and networking on the international level can significantly contribute to this effort. This strengthens position of cities in their relations with regional authorities because both sides are forced to make joint strategy regarding international activities. Uncoordinated activities or parallel activities would have no result in contemporary political and economic competition. It is a chance for cities to impose themselves as an equal partner of the regions. It proves that cities are no longer just territorial units integrated into regional or central authorities. In the XXI century metropolitan areas are city-regions economically stronger than most other regions in the country.

Strong constitutional system would not threaten the authority of the central government if the lower levels of government, and especially cities, get more powers to act independently on the international level. Therefore, there is no need for the central government to impose restrictions on the lower levels of government in their international activities. The previous paragraphs give evidence that the central government should provide legal and political opportunities to lower levels

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 362–64.



of government, particularly cities, to be actively involved in the international field. In globalized political and economic relations, the opportunities for the lower levels of government to act internationally given by the central government authorities can result in mutual benefits.

### International activities — grounds for city public diplomacy

A precondition for cities to act internationally is the legal grounds. Decentralization and proper position of cities and other local communities in the state hierarchy is what determines the ability of cities to create strategies for action on the international level. Also, the support of central governments and better inclusion of lower levels of government in some foreign policy activities would give local communities, especially cities, more possibilities to gain experience in international affairs. It would directly improve the quality and efficiency of local and city strategies for acting on the international scene.

Globalization has got crucial influence on the internationalization of political, economic and cultural relationships which in turn have an effect on each agent in the world arena. These agents wish to become entrepreneurs in the world market. Cities and other local communities are no exceptions. The development of economic relations between cities results in establishing political cooperation. The goal of this cooperation is better position of cities and improvement of their competitive advantages. As for local public diplomacy, there are many activities and actions on international level that urban and other local agents could take to improve their political and economic position. Some of them include, as already said, fostering city or local community competitiveness, lobbying at international and supranational levels, showing solidarity with the Global South and standard activities involving ‘bottom-up diplomacy’. The key problem of cities in their attempt to attain better quality public diplomacy is the lack of strategy for acting on international level. Some of the reasons are diversity of agents involved, ability of cities to act autonomously and variety of political sectors. Still, there are two strategies for acting internationally. Which one will be implemented depends on political rights that cities and other local communities have in the constitutional framework of their states. However, these strategies do exist in cities. *The first* strategy can be found in the cities where local political institutions and organizations have got legal capacities and resources to produce such a document. *The second one* can be found in the cities without these characteristics; there are only lists of the most important international activities which include bilateral cooperation, formal involvement in city networks or taking part in major events. These cities also, as a part of their international activities, may have interviews with important persons in international relations, heads of international organizations and can analyze public documents. When it comes to international activities, both strategies have got three

main orientations: economic, political and social. **Economic orientation** implies the elements concentrated on economic growth. The strategy dominated by economic orientation should increase the attractiveness of the city in the global economic and financial areas. Cities can take comprehensive or *ad hoc* actions to fulfill this objective. Some of these actions are: promotion of the new and modern image of city, urban renewal projects or investments in the development of public transportation according to modern standards. Cities are well organized when performing activities to foster economic growth. For this purpose, cities rely on special agencies, especially when trying to host big regional or world events. The best example is bidding for the organization of cultural and sports events, and in this case hosting the Olympic Games is one of the main prizes. Hosting the Olympic Games has a direct effect on the economic growth of the host city through variety of investments, or indirectly by making better reputation of the city and implementation of marketing activities. Partnership between city and other economic agents is the ground for the implementation of economically oriented strategy. Another contribution of such strategy is closer relationship between urban political and economic agents. Using political instruments is common in the orientation towards economic development on the international level. For example, city activities through transnational networks to position themselves better in the region could have indirect economic effects. The reason for this is economically oriented strategy which drives the city to compete with other cities at the regional level. In strategies dominated by **political orientation** the focus is on the position of the city in its political environment. This focus can have general or more specific goal. The general goal presumes an attempt to take the leading position in city networks or coalition of cities, as well as lobbying at higher levels of political decision making. Also, in view with the general goal, the activities of 'bottom-up diplomacy' are very important. As for the more specific goal, it presumes cities' acting as policy makers. In such acting, the city officials wish to take part in European Union (EU) policy making, which would result in better position of cities in legal system of EU member states and in EU bodies. To this end, cities usually make use of the framework of the Eurocities and the Committee of Regions. Their main goals are getting more resources which are not always financial but may be solutions for some of the key urban problems as well. **Social orientation** implies solidarity and cosmopolitanism. It includes many aspects that are connected with individuals and their lives' quality (fight against poverty and social inequality, support to sustainable development, human rights and peace agendas). Cities with such orientation are fighting against social costs of globalization which generates problems that have bad influence on political, economic and social stability all over the world. This kind of city's activities has two directions. One direction is direct influence on international agendas and the other is direct action against inequality in the world. Social orientation directly strengthens human rights and civil society, because this orientation includes non-institutional agents. These agents are groups

and associations of civil society that have an opportunity to contribute mayor's strategies and take part in international activities of cities.<sup>12</sup>

It may be concluded that the choice of strategy is conditioned by the problems that cities face in their economic growth, finances, living standards and social problems. Politically oriented strategy will be inherent to the cities with unsolved problems and position in the state legal system. On the other hand, the cities which have achieved economic stability and high standards of living can afford to join activities in solving global problems.

Cities, as well as other local communities, have become one of the agents on international level. Still, they are not strong enough to take greater part in shaping international agenda. The important thing is that cities have enough abilities to act autonomously on international level. What is more, they are able to take real actions to address real problems around the world. Such actions can result in solving the problems. Resources and positive state legal framework in respect of city powers are preconditions for more effectiveness of city public diplomacy on international level. This is especially true when it comes to socially oriented cities which are willing to take real actions regarding social problems in the world. Such actions are real opportunity for cities to take the independent activities of public diplomacy. If these actions in the framework of public diplomacy give positive results, the importance of cities will be additionally recognized. In that way, cities will get more credibility to make an influence on national, supranational and international agents, which will let them to take part in shaping international agenda.

There is one more argument saying that the partnership between the lower government levels and the EU is important for more autonomy in their international activities, as well as the partnerships and networks of cities and other local communities. The EU already allocates significant funds for functioning and development of city networks. This is the way for the EU to be directly involved in policy making at regional and local level. That is why the EU strongly supports networking and the development of cities and local communities. Establishing cooperation with the EU bodies and lobbying of these bodies are not simple tasks, so networking of cities and local communities can fill in the gap with knowledge and experience of how to do it.<sup>13</sup>

It may be concluded that there is a common interest of the EU and city authorities when it comes to these activities. First, in this way the EU bypasses the central governments and tries to be more of an independent player. Second,

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<sup>12</sup> See: Christian Lefèvre and Ernesto d'Albergo, "Why cities are looking abroad and how they go about it", *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, Vol. 25, pp. 317–22.

<sup>13</sup> See: Nico van der Heiden, "Urban 'Foreign Policy' and Domestic Dilemmas in Swiss and European City Regions", Paper for the ECPR General Conference, Pisa, 2007, pp. 16–7.

city authorities want more rights and opportunities for independent actions, especially on the international scene. There is mutual interest of both parties in getting a better position in their relations with nation state that is with central government authorities.

### What is public diplomacy and how can cities develop it by themselves?

Public diplomacy is one way of state promotion abroad, which is especially well-developed in Western countries. Also, the countries from Eastern Europe and great powers from other parts of the world are slowly developing their public diplomacy activities. The purpose of public diplomacy is to promote and present a country's own values abroad. In this way, the country can become easily recognized in those countries which are far away from it. It opens the door for public diplomacy goals and influences the population of the foreign country. Public diplomacy usually aims for the countries which have negative attitude or are indifferent towards those countries performing such activities. Dušan Vasić believes that public diplomacy involves "organized activities of public sector in a country towards civilian structures of other countries, combined with the involvement and contribution of the various stakeholders".<sup>14</sup>

Further to Dušan Vasić's opinion, it might be concluded that public diplomacy activities bypass the institutions of central government. The only direct contact is the one between the state conducting such activities and the population of the foreign country. Also, it might be concluded that public agents as well as the lower level of state hierarchy can be subject to public diplomacy. It means that cities are no exception to this way of communication on international level.

Globalization significantly changes the role of states and public authorities. It also influences the position of other levels of government in state hierarchy. In order to keep the position and further develop their capacities, cities are connecting through a variety of partnerships and networks on an international scale. It is another process which weakens the authority of central governments. National states are trying to be more competitive on the global market by offering significant economic benefits to multinational companies and other international economic agents. Still, in the era of globalization cities are nodal points because they link domestic economy with the global market. It is one of the main reasons for the improved geoeconomic position of cities on the national and international level. On the national level, one of the aspects of

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<sup>14</sup> See: Dušan N. Vasić, *Preventivna diplomatija — teorijski okvir, normativni okviri i političke kontroverze*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2010, p. 104.

decentralization is gradual orientation towards favouring new sub-national territorial configuration such as cities.<sup>15</sup>

Based on the previous paragraph, the conclusion might be that there are good reasons and opportunities for the development of city public diplomacy. Public diplomacy can increase chances of cities to establish new partnerships and become involved in various networks. From the economic point of view, public diplomacy can indirectly stimulate economic growth by city promotion and connections with international economic agents. This is especially interesting for central governments because they are interested in attracting new investments and businesses.

From the standpoint of a country, it is very important to note the four impacts that public diplomacy can have. These are as follows: people becoming more familiar with one's country, people appreciating one's country, engaging people with one's country and influencing people.<sup>16</sup> All that has been presented in this paper so far leads to conclusion that cities can achieve the same impact. Of course, in relation to the population of other cities.

To understand better the existing forms of city public diplomacy and the ways of its further development it might be useful to analyze dimensions of city diplomacy, or 'top-down diplomacy'. This analysis is also important because the activities of cities in international relations are evolving. International activities of cities have many dimensions but Rogier van der Pluijm distinguishes six most important. **Security** is the first dimension and this is nothing new since it evolved from twinning-projects after the Second World War. It is not one of the crucial tasks of cities but, as we mentioned above, many problems which lead to conflict have their roots at the local level. That is way cities are making more efforts to deal with conflict resolutions. Also, local agents are best familiar with the local problems. There are two important characteristics of cities that can contribute to the efficiency of cities in conflict resolutions. First, they do not have armed forces and their approach to conflict resolution does not contain military point of view. Second, unlike states, cities do not symbolize myths and traumas and their participation in conflict resolution is perceived as more neutral. Security is one of the main preconditions for development and vice versa. In this context, local development depends much on good governance. So, the main foreign policy goal of cities is the development of good governance at the local level in unstable areas. This goal is not economically motivated but more related to the idealistic goals of cities in foreign policy. There are three phases of conflict in which cities take part in finding

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<sup>15</sup> See: Nico van der Heiden, "Urban 'Foreign Policy' and Domestic Dilemmas in Swiss and European City Regions", loc. cit., pp. 2–5.

<sup>16</sup> See: Mark Leonard, Catherine Stead and Conrad Smewing, *Public Diplomacy*, The Foreign Policy Center, London, 2002, pp. 9–10.

resolution: before any violence occurs, during the conflict and when the conflict is over. **Development** is the second dimension and the leading motive behind this engagement of cities on the international level is solidarity. The actual changes are related to the recognition of the fact that the older form of development assistance (top-down assistance) is not always efficient. This change is motivated by two facts. First, local needs are best identified by local agents and, second, development starts at local level. That is why cities and local governments are getting more significant role in development assistance on the global level. There are some differences in the participation of cities in development assistance. In some cases mayors of the cities involved establish and maintain direct contact while in other cases the main agents of the contacts are civil servants or citizen's associations. In the latter case, international contacts are coordinated by city governments. Still, cities can only set short-term tasks because they lack bureaucracy. This is the point where cooperation between cities and central governments must take place. The cooperation with central government would give cities the necessary logistics support to set long-term objectives in development assistance. Also, this kind of cooperation would contribute to joint activities of the two levels of government become stronger. **Economic dimension** is oriented towards self-interest which is motivated by economic gain. Cities have two ways to achieve economic gain from diplomatic activities. The first way is to attract tourists, foreign companies and international organizations, as well as to host international events. The second way is to use the experience and develop by exporting services and knowledge and establishing partnerships with other interested cities. Partnerships are usually established between the cities with common businesses interests. The cities that are considered economically powerful can gain more economic benefits. This is why some of the big cities have their offices abroad to attract more capital, businesses, international organizations and tourists. The organization of big events like Olympic Games also attracts capital. Organization of such big events is not only prestigious but also implies financing mayor construction projects. This makes a better position of city-organizers in inter-urban competition. **Cultural dimension** is an important element of city diplomacy in the same way as it is the case with states. For example, this dimension involves interactions between young people from different cities in various forms, official visits of other cities' representatives with cultural themes and creating strategies of cultural promotion. Cities undertake cultural diplomacy not only in the framework of twinning-project, but also through individual contacts with other cities. Cultural dimension in many ways influence the functioning and development of cities according to modern changes at the global level. It means that the development of cultural dimension has an effect on the cities which adjust to adopt modern political, economic, social and technological standards of living in urban areas and beyond. The culture is one of the most important cornerstones of the creation and implementation of cities foreign policy strategies. Still, this

dimension is not yet fully developed and used in cities foreign activities. **Networking** is the fifth and the most important dimension of cities activities on the international level. It is also called cooperative dimension. This is usually practiced by the cities in international cooperation to achieve higher goals related to security and economy. Networking of cities often takes place within a country and serves to protect the interest of cities. Like in some other cases, joint activities of cities on the international level which are oriented towards protection of their own interests go beyond the classic twinning-projects framework. Nowadays, there are specific projects of linking big cities on the global level (Mega-Cities Project) as well as the meetings of official representatives of such cities (M4). This is especially common for the world's largest metropolitan areas. These kinds of networking and cooperation have the same goals: ideas and technology exchange, finding solutions for common problems, etc. Similar networking and cooperation exist on regional levels as well (Eurocities, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Merco-Cities Network). The main goal of such networks and cooperation forms is to protect the legal status, influence and interests of cities and municipalities in the respective regions. Also, it is good for sharing information and experiences on specific issues. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the meeting point for international cooperation between the cities. This global association of municipalities supports local interests on the global scale and promotes values of local self-government. Expertise and moral positions were the basic elements for strengthening and firm position of transnational networks on the global scale. The same elements are the pillars of power of these networks today. Transnational networks of cities are important agents on the international level and could represent the starting point for further involvement of cities in the foreign policy of the countries. Networking is the first step towards the development of international cooperation between cities and proper way for establishment of strong structures of transnational networks of cities. This will influence the recognition and appreciation of some international organization of cities. **Representative dimension** supports cities' efforts to take part in the decision-making processes on supra-national level. All the activities of cities aim for representation in international organizations and this dimension joins them in a single and organized course of action. Representative dimension of city diplomacy is highly visible in cases of the EU and the Council of Europe. It should be pointed out that there are two kinds of city representation — within and outside political structures. The main goal of cities in both cases is to influence decision-making processes, but there is a difference in how to achieve this. Committee of Regions (CoR) is the case where the cities have their own role in decision-making processes. Lobbying is an instrument used by cities outside a political institution to influence decision-making processes. For example, cities use this instrument individually or through association such as UCLG to make a dialogue with the United Nations (UN) and many agencies of this international

organization. Such global scale activities of cities will have positive effects on the relationship and cooperation development between state and non-state agents.<sup>17</sup>

We have already mentioned the constraints that cities and local communities have in international activities and development of their public diplomacy. If they cannot influence central and regional authorities, cities can bypass them by joining the processes in upper-state level. The EU is the great chance for that. It has been already stated that cities and local communities could use the influence of the EU to better position themselves in the legal system of their countries. The best way to do that is by establishing close contact and lobbying the European Commission for two reasons. First, this body has the most important role in shaping legislation on the EU level. Second, European Commission often use external expertise in the processes of shaping legislative proposals. Cities have resources such as expertise, information or strategies and could offer them to European Commission. This is the opportunity for cities to better position themselves in the EU programmes. In other words, by providing expertise to European Commission cities can create conditions to include some of their goals in the programmes and policy objectives of this body.<sup>18</sup>

Some of this goals could refer to international activities of cities regarding more legal opportunities for wider development of their public diplomacy. In any case, cooperation between cities and the European Commission may bring cities better position and more respect for their interests. Support from upper-state level such is the EU would contribute to cities' efforts to develop further their public diplomacy activities.

To support the previous statement, we can point out the opinion of Nico van der Heiden who believes that the development of supranational and sub-national levels of statehood is the result of the fact that national states are losing their decision-making capacities. This is influenced by the geo-economic logics. In this situation national states have two choices. First, they can shift decision-making processes towards supranational level (upwards). The examples of this trend are the process of European integration and stronger role of international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO). Second, they can strengthen the decision-making capacities and capabilities of the lower sub-national levels of state (downscaling). The focus of the latter option is on the city-regions.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See: Rogier van der Pluijm, "City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics", loc. cit., pp. 19–31.

<sup>18</sup> See: Daniel Kübler and Jolita Piliuteyte, "Intergovernmental relations and international urban strategies: constraints and opportunities in multilevel polities", loc. cit., pp. 368–69.

<sup>19</sup> See: Nico van der Heiden, *Urban Foreign Policy and Domestic Dilemmas — Insight from Swiss and EU City-regions*, ECPR Press, Colchester, 2010, pp. 11–2.



We can presume that central governments would be more interested in supporting the development of decision-making capacities of sub-national levels. There are two reasons for this standpoint. First, stronger capacities of sub-national levels at the international level would have positive effects on economic growth at the national level and internal economic stability. Second, shifting decision-making processes towards supranational level could in the future affect the political and legal independence of states. In the case of shifting decision-making processes towards subnational levels political and legal independence would not be eroded.

### Key reasons for international activities of cities and attempt to develop their public diplomacy

Predrag Dimitrijević and Dejan Vučetić believe that „big cities have the leading role in social, economic and political life of their states. The importance of this role is likely to get even bigger in a highly integrated European economic environment. For this reason, larger cities are adapting to the increasing need for change in order to meet the demands of rapid economic development”.<sup>20</sup> The same authors emphasize that this is nothing new, but it is intensified because of high population mobility. The mobility of population is motivated by better job opportunities and living standards. We can add that the intensification of such phenomenon is influenced by the better mobility of companies and businesses as well. Rapid urbanization and uncontrolled population growth are the consequences of all the above mentioned phenomena. It can be concluded that the main reason for the growing importance of big cities and the phenomena associated with this process is globalization.

Globalization is the result of technological development and the process which removes all obstacles to the free flow of people, capital and ideas. This has led to liberalization of global financial markets, production and investments. The new economic environment enables international companies to move their capital, infrastructure and products to places with cheaper workforce and raw materials. Cross-border financial and other transactions in goods and services are more frequent. Globalization is not strictly defragmentation process. It also encourages solidarity in some areas where the agents have the same interests in this process. Globalization and its influence result in the changed position of states and their diminished role in international arena.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Predrag Dimitrijević and Dejan Vučetić, *Sistem lokalne samouprave*, Službeni glasnik i Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu, Beograd, 2011, pp. 137–8.

<sup>21</sup> See: Ivona Lađevac and Žaklina Novičić, “Globalization and Border Security”, in: Duško Dimitrijević, Dragana Mitrović and Ivona Lađevac (eds.), *The Meaning of Borders and Border Issues in the Age of Globalization: Europe and Asia*, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 2012, pp. 129–33.

It is obvious that national states do not have the control over the global processes as they used to have. That is why city-regions and local communities are forced to bypass the central state authorities in their quest for better position in the globalized world. This is specific for economic and financial area. Cities use the international arena for bypassing the national state and connecting with global markets. They try to stay competitive in globalized world since although there is the free flow of capital, international companies still need a place for their infrastructure. Production is still static and this leads to the concentration of capital in some places. Urban areas are usually the right places for such processes and national states are no more capable of regulating the flow of capital in their territory. That is why central government authorities are becoming more and more interested in supporting cities in their attempts to become more attractive for multinational companies and their investments. On the other hand, economic situation and the position of cities is no more determined by the position in the state hierarchy but has to do more with their competition with other cities for better position on the global market. Therefore, the economic behavior of cities is slowly changing in relation to the economic behavior of their nation-states. It is another reason for the lesser importance of the state in hierarchy.<sup>22</sup>

It might be concluded from the previous parts of the article that globalization influences the most a nation state. This is especially distinctive in international relations since the new agents influencing the global scene have appeared. Still, states are the key subjects in international relations but their position is not as strong as it used to be. Today, states are interested in border-security because they are becoming porous with respect to the free flow of capital, ideas and culture. On the other hand, states must allow the free flow of capital and ideas in order to stay competitive on global market. Globalization is a challenge to states' territorial security and therefore they need to find new ways to secure their borders. That is why states need to consider their territory from different points of view, which means that the old approach to border-security must be revised according to modern standards and changes in the globalized world. Modern technology eliminates spatial limitation which results in diminishing central government authority. From this point of view, states need to find a partner in order to keep their position in international relations.<sup>23</sup>

States can make partnerships with other states, international organizations and transnational non-governmental organizations in international arena. Also, because of the international activities of cities and local communities that are

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<sup>22</sup> See: Nico van der Heiden, *Urban Foreign Policy and Domestic Dilemmas — Insight from Swiss and EU City-regions*, loc. cit., pp. 10–1.

<sup>23</sup> See: Ivona Lađevac and Žaklina Novičić, “Globalization and Border Security”, loc. cit., pp. 133–6.

spreading their transnational networks perhaps the states could find partners in international arena in these networks of local governments. In this article we are more interested in central-local partnership in international relations than for other forms of partnerships.

It is obvious that nation-states can only indirectly control international activities of their lower level of government because central government authorities are losing their steering capacity in this politic area. Also, it has already been mentioned that although globalization makes it easier for big companies to transfer their capital and resources their production infrastructure is still not so mobile. However, companies are much more flexible in the globalized world when it comes to choosing the place of their economic activity and some local agents are limited in their attempts to become attractive for international companies. This could lead to unfavorable position of some urban and local areas in global economy. Cities' response to these changes in global economy is more dynamic activity on the international level and making transnational connections with other cities and local communities in Europe and all over the World. This will result in the following. First, it will speed up the downscaling of decision-making and local governments will get more political steering capacities. Second, it will accelerate the making of cross-border relationships by cities in order to stay more competitive in the globalized world. That is why cities are forced to act independently from the national foreign policy. The goal of their political activities is to link and make partnerships. This is the opportunity for cities to accelerate the process and put more efforts in the development of their public diplomacy. However, one more thing is important for the development of city public diplomacy. Competitiveness among cities in the globalized world may result in a better position of some cities and the difficult economic situation of others. Public diplomacy could be an instrument for cooperation to prevail over competition. Urban networking is one way to use public diplomacy to stop competition and start cooperation between cities and local governments. Public diplomacy is important as the first step to establishing contacts between cities and local governments. Establishing contacts by public diplomacy could be the starting point for partnership between these subjects. Transnational city and local community networks are good platforms for developing local public diplomacy because these kind of networks offer opportunity for promotion on global scale. Still, acting on global market must follow the logic of economic competition. That is why marketing activities will be important part of cities' participation on global market. This is one more reason for public diplomacy to be further developed by cities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See: Nico van der Heiden, *Urban Foreign Policy and Domestic Dilemmas — Insight from Swiss and EU City-regions*, loc. cit., pp. 13–6.

It has been already mentioned that cities have got three orientations in their international relations strategies: economic, political and social. That also applies to their activities in the international economic sphere. Cities that have better economic situation will have social orientation. On the other hand, cities that still struggle with the transition and severe economic problems will be competitively oriented and economic or political orientation will dominate their strategies.

### Conclusion

In the future, cities will certainly put more effort to develop their public diplomacy. Development of cities networks is a great opportunity to do that. Still, some constraints regarding state legal systems remain. Overcoming such constraints will be especially difficult in Eastern Europe since these states are still developing their legal and political systems. On the other hand, globalization will bring more challenges to cities and their international activities. Overcoming constraints and challenges will require strong relationships and efficient cooperation of local, regional and central authorities. Central government authorities are especially forced to create favorable conditions for this kind of partnership because it is now obvious that states are slowly losing their privileged position in international relations. Otherwise, states will be forced to join supranational organizations which could undermine their absolute independence in the future. It is much better for the states to make legal and political opportunities for their cities to take part in international relations. This way, the states could keep their independence intact and the cities would contribute to the development and better international position of their states. Nowadays, two things are clear. First, cities are initiators of regional development. Second, there is a common interest in the relationship between states and cities. The first step in better positioning of the cities in international relations is the development of autonomous public diplomacy or their more significant role in the public diplomacy of the states. The states can offer support by including city officials in some aspects of foreign policy. This is important for more active role and better position of cities in international relations. The more active role of cities in solving global problems would make them more recognizable in international affairs. Of course, the cities themselves must put more effort in an attempt to become more recognizable and acknowledged globally. Further development of city public diplomacy is the best starting point for that. As the result of city public diplomacy activities, there will be some economic growth and social problems which are present in every city could be solved.

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