



## RUSKÁ MAKKÁ MOC V BALTSKÝCH KRAJINÁCH

### RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER IN THE BALTIC STATES

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Predkladaný článok sa zameriava na súčasný výskum, ktorý poukazuje na fakt, že Rusko okrem tradičných nástrojov hospodárskeho a vojenského nátlaku na Baltské štáty, rozšírilo svoje pôsobenie o nástroje mäkkej moci za účelom legitimizovania svojich záujmov v post – sovietskom priestore ako výsledok existencie veľkej rusko-jazyčnej minority.

Cieľom state je predstaviť nástroje mäkkej moci na základe výskumu Joseph-a Nye-a. Článok je informatívny a predkladá finančnú, organizačnú, diplomatickú, ideologickú, legislatívnu a hospodársku analýzu, ponúkajúc tak náhľad do podstaty ruskej mäkkej moci a snažiac sa zároveň analyzovať skutočné záujmy Ruskej federácie v post – sovietskom priestore. Poukazuje na jej obmedzenosť v dôsledku jej zamerania takmer výhradne na rusko-jazyčnú menšinu. Jej pozitívom však môže byť konštruktívna kritika USA.

**Kľúčové slová:** mäkká moc, vplyv, Rusko, baltské štáty

This paper focuses on the latest researches that show apart from traditional economic pressure and military policy, Russia has extended tools of influence in the Baltic States by soft power instruments to legitimate interests in the post-Soviet space as a result of the presence of large Russian-speaking minorities.

The aim of the paper is to present the soft power sources and instruments of

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influence with factual backup from Joseph Nye. The paper is informative and provides financial, organisational, diplomatic, ideological, legal policy and economic analysis; providing an indication into the nature of Russia's soft power and to transpose what Russia's real intentions are to advance pressure on the post-Soviet space. The result of which; Russia's soft power is regarded as weak due to Russia's influence directed to a particular audience of Russian-speaking citizens only. The advantage of this influence maybe, leading the constructive opposition to the United States, amongst authoritarian regimes.

Key words: soft power, influence, Russia, Baltic States

JEL: F52; F54

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

It is said that Russia is a classic realist power, using hard power rather than relying on its power of attraction which was seen in Ukraine. Latest research shows that apart from traditional economic pressure and military policy, Russia has extended tools of influence in the Baltic States. It has been enabled by means of soft power instruments in legitimate interests in the post-Soviet space as a result of the presence of large Russian-speaking diaspora.

The current situation of the Russian-speaking in the Baltic States has been formed by cultural, historical and political factors. The most important ones are associated with the Soviet period and the Baltic States' policy of neutralisation. Russia has influenced political, lingual, educational and social committees of Baltic Russians by discriminating and humiliating them. Russia has not accepted the loss the Baltic region's independence. Russia has formulated a new foreign policy towards the compatriots.

Only in the early eighties of the Twentieth Century the issue of compatriots appeared in Russia's political discourse. The so-called 'Russian card' was to prevent the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The protection of Russian diaspora after the collapse of the USSR was significant for Gorbachev, the compatriot issue was less important for Yeltsin, in the initial period of his presidential office. At that time, Gorbachev only signed bilateral agreements, including protection of Russian diaspora rights and freedoms in post-Soviet space. The situation changed after the civil war in the Republic of Moldova and the naturalization policy in the Baltic States. This was a result of Yeltsin engaging in support of Russian diaspora to protect their rights (Horska 2009). One of the first documents concerning the compatriot issue was Yeltsin's decree of 1994 (Diaspora Act 1994). Russia expressed support for compatriots returning to Motherland Russia. On returning to Russia they would be granted Russian citizenship their national identity would be protected by legal, political, informative, diplomatic,

economic and cultural instruments. In 1995, Yeltsin founded Council of Compatriots however, the idea of Russia's Compatriot Policy as constructive action for Russian-speaking diaspora appeared only in Vladimir Putin's presidential period. According to the CIS and the Baltic States, Putin managed to join hard and soft powers with the elements of Soviet style propaganda (Conley, Gerber 2011). The diaspora has become a convenient tool for policy implementation in the area of Russia's historic interests. Promoting a positive image of the State and articulating its interests in the International environment.

According to Joseph Nye (2004), soft power is about making people want what we want, by attracting people as opposed to forcing them. It is an ability to shape the preferences of others, persuade them and co-operate with them. This is a capacity to make the state's culture and ideology attractive to follow. Soft power allows shaping of international rules in accordance with state's interests and values. When state's actions can be supported by the international community, its soft power is growing. In democratic countries, politicians have to rely more heavily on the attractiveness and incentives. They depend on attractive personality, culture, political values, institutions and domestic and foreign policy regarded as legally valid and credible. In authoritarian states in contrast to the above, politicians may use coercion and threat.

There is a connection between hard and soft powers as they are both different aspects of the ability to succeed in influencing other people's behaviour. However, they are autonomous and independent. Paradoxically, the hard power may strengthen the effectiveness of soft power by creating myths of the State's invincibility that may attract others.

## 2 SOFT POWER SOURCES

According to Nye, the culture and political values and foreign policy are the main sources of soft power. For Russia, Russian language is the basic indicator in the Baltic States, where it is the mother tongue for 8% of the residents of Lithuania, 33,8% in Latvia and 29,6% in Estonia (The World Factbook 2015). It is said that Russia is a reminder of the tragic history in the Baltic States. Russian remains the most popular second language in Lithuania. A similar situation concerns Latvia and Estonia even more. Most of the older generations are fluent in it because of its obligation and ubiquity during the Soviet occupation. Nowadays, it is decreasing; many ethnic Lithuanians regard Russian language as a 'colonial relict' and only about 40% of children learn it. Today English, German, French and Spanish are the most popular foreign languages to teach. Table 1 explains this further:

Tab 1: The most popular foreign languages in the Baltic States

<i>Language/state</i>	<i>Lithuania %</i>	<i>Latvia %</i>	<i>Estonia %</i>
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Russian	<b>79</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>
English	26	34	41
Finnish/German	x	x	18
Polish	17	x	x

Source: European Commission, 2012.

In February 2012, a referendum in relation to the Russian language to be recognized as the second official language was held in Latvia. Since then, according to the Latvian Constitution, Latvia was a single language state. The referendum was attended by 70% of the citizens and almost 75% voted against the Russian language. The representatives of the Russian minority in Latvia who attended the referendum confirmed that the outcome didn't reflect the actual situation as more than 300,000 Russian residents (stateless in Latvia) didn't have the right to vote. The Russian Federation's delegation didn't have the observer status at the referendum, which the Russian government qualified as Latvian ignorance of International Law (Economist 2012). Russian's accuse the Baltic governances of anti-minority policy of education where the minorities' languages have been reduced as well. While there were bilingual system at all education levels during the Soviet time, now in almost all public school (similarly in private municipal schools in Estonia as well) subjects are taught in Baltic States' languages (Заренков 2013, Baltic Times 2015).

Private hotels and restaurants still have Russian menus and employed Russian-speakers to cater for numerous Russian tourists. However, statistics show that number of Russian tourists visiting Latvia declines year on year (BNN-news 2015a).

Culture also includes literature, education, academic exchanges, art, popular culture and mass entertainment. In the Baltic States, the Russian high culture (literature, art) and popular culture is well known and widely promoted by the government of the Russian Federation or Russian business subventions. There are Russian culture days, festivals, concerts, sporting events (Russian Language and Culture Festival in Vilnius, Russian Cultural Days in Latvia festival and Russia's best performances at the theatre festival Golden Mask in Latvia). Enjoying Russian music, literature and media, people claim that 'culture and politics should not be mixed'.

Democracy, human rights and peace are the most attractive political values for the international society. However, for Russian soft power the concept of 'русский мир' ('Russkij mir', 'Russian World') including anti-liberalism, an alternative to the Western idea, the idea of a multipolar world (especially in opposition to the USA dominance), tradition and conservatism are the principles of axiology. In recent years, Russia has put forward accusations against Estonia's glorifying Fascism and Nazism. The fight against falsification of the past has become the main postulate of ideology addressed to the Russian-speaking diaspora. The apogee took place in late April and

May 2007 in Tallinn, when the removal of the Bronze Soldier, Soviet WWII memorial, caused Estonian-Russian riots, in which a Russian resident suffered severe injuries and died (Liik 2007). For Estonians the Bronze Soldier was a sign of Soviet occupation and annexation ended only with the collapse of the Soviet Union. But for Russians the monument was a commemoration of the victims of the Red Army fight against fascist ideology. In 2011, the conflict was revived when the Soviet Army soldier monument with the inscription ‘occupying Estonia since 1944’ appeared on a cemetery in Tallinn. Once more the Russian government and the Russian minority in Estonia were ruffled and offended. But it was only a pretext for Russia to present its own vision of history glorifying the victory over Nazi Germany. In fact, Russia wants to prevent and counteract the negative presentation of the Soviet Union. It is a method of putting international pressure on the Baltic States, as well.

Apart from values, the foreign policy is the third most important soft power source. It includes international or regional partnership, mediation, humanitarian aid, promotion of positive values and goods, cooperation with the international institutions in preventing conflicts. Russia initiates and develops cooperation and leads regional organizations. It supports the Russian-speaking minority, stimulates and sustains nostalgia for the Soviet Union past.

### **3 SOFT POWER INSTRUMENTS**

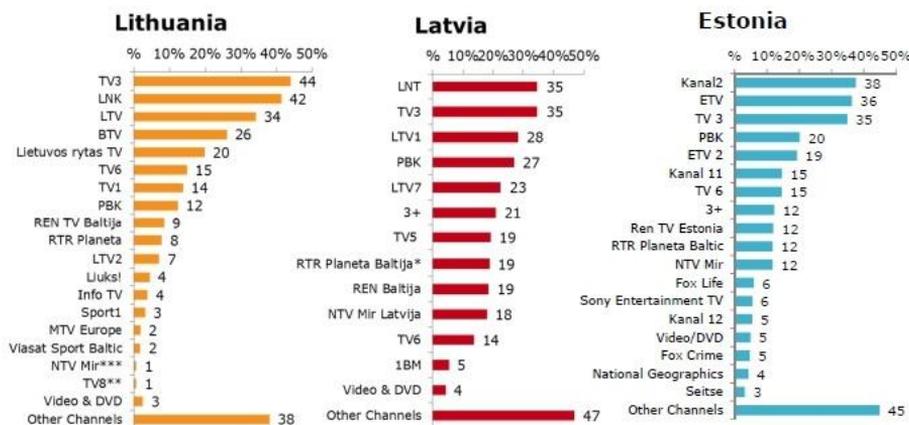
The level of soft power depends on society. That is why it is especially favorable to social purposes. Politicians perform by the public diplomacy, which is a form of government to people communication (Simons 2015). In case of Russia it is a hierarchical model of exchanging of information (Panova 2015). Using its political, cultural and economic agencies, in particular, television, the internet, the radio, language policy, visa and citizenship policy, private entities (companies, foundations, organizations, Orthodox Church) and mass culture Russia sends a message to the Baltic States’ societies about its attractiveness. In that way Russia tries to manage to increase its soft power. I will divide them into 7 groups of instruments:

#### **Informative**

Media is the most influential platform to present the values and interests. It is an instrument which Russia has already included in its foreign policy. Russian speaking media focuses on Russian diaspora which is an independent and isolated segment of the Baltic society. Russia uses the media not only to inform but more often, in negative way, to carry out information and propaganda campaigns against the Baltic States’ governments. It is detrimental to normal democratic development of the countries because it strengthens ethnic divisions of their residents.

In the last few years Russia's methods of influence have expanded. Using new instruments it has tried to attract non-Russian-speaking population. A Russian media channel Sputnik prepared an offer for young people and plans to open an internet portal and radio as well, that would support two languages – Russian and Latvian. It has already entered Latvian media environment by programs on weekends on Autoradio. Sputnik is a part of the Russian state information agency Rossiya Segodnya which is led by journalist Dmitry Kiselev, who was included in the European sanction list for his propaganda activities. It offers media services in fourteen languages in 10 countries, including regions of Russia's special interests. Sputnik expects success as a result of using alternative viewpoints. According to the Baltic Media Overview (Table 2), the percentage of Russian TV channels in the Baltic States has not changed for several years. Russian Pervij Baltiskij Kanal (PBK), which attracted significantly more viewers in Latvia and Estonia, is one of the most willingly viewed channel (Baltic Media Overview 2011, 2012). In Latvia two of the publications in Latvia's top 5 were published in Russian: TV-Programma and MK Latvija (Daveluy 2011). But experts suppose that Russian media has little chance to develop in the Baltic States because they are seen as Kremlin anti-American propaganda tool by the Baltic audience. Experts predict that no Baltic-speaking journalists will want to work for the Russian media as well (BNN-news 2015b).

Table 2: TV Channels Daily Reach, %



Source: Baltic Media Overview 2011.

## Financial

It is an open secret that Russia financially support local NGOs who defend it policies in the Baltic States. According to Jemberga, Salu & Černiauskas (2015) there

are more than 40 organizations in the region that have received at least 1.5 million euros in the last three years (cash transactions and financing through Russia-friendly enterprises and individuals excluded). It is impossible to estimate accurately how much of their income is from Russian government funds because part of their recipients do not declare it in their annual reports. For example, in Lithuania law does not require NGOs to disclose their sponsors. Authors of the article mentioned filmmakers and researchers who supported and promoted Russian version of history or participants Tallinn riot in 2007, financed by Russian NGO in the Baltic States. The compatriot foundations also grant individuals (organizations' experts or protesters against Lithuania's support for Ukraine) and institutions for informational (Russian-speaking media), ideological (*World Without Nazism* for criticizing Nazism ideology in the Baltic States), scientific (conferences, roundtable discussion) or legal (translating the Baltics laws into Russian) activity.

Media investigations indicate that Russian parties in the Baltic States are supported by compatriots' funding. According to *Baltic News Network* Latvian Russians Union headed by MEP Tatyana Zdanok has received nearly 95 thousand euros from Latvian Human Rights Committee led by Zdanok and Compatriot Support and Legal Protection Foundation founded by Russian Foreign Ministry. However Zdanok denounced her party is granted by the Russia fund; she admitted that Latvian Human Rights Committee accepted money from the Russian fund because there is no way to receive money from Latvia's government (BNN-news 2015c). Moreover the mayor of Tallinn, Edgar Savisaar, the head of the Centre Party, second-largest party in Estonia and supported by the Russian-speaking minority was recognized as a Russian agent of influence because of his ties to Putin (Braw 2014, Milne 2015, Bershidsky 2015). There are many other political organizations that speak for the Russian minority, too small and local to achieve electoral gains but with political or financial protection from Russia.

### Organizational

Russian government funded several bodies and agencies to oversee the Compatriot Policy, including the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture. They are 'soft power foundation' (Re.Baltica 2015) like: Rossotrudnichestvo, International Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots, International Congress of Compatriots, Compatriot Support and Legal Protection Foundation and embassies. Public diplomacy includes a system of Russophone centres of which there are more than a hundred in the Baltic States. In 2007 the Foreign Ministry founded a multifunctional institution, the Russkiy Mir Foundation, supported by both public and private funds (Presidential Decree 2007). They work in Šiauliai, Vilnius (Lithuania), Daugavpils, Riga (Latvia) and Tallin (Estonia). They support pro-Russian associations representing Russian-speaking diaspora that act in favour of

preserving and promoting Russian culture, language, values and ethnic identity. But NGO legislation in the Baltic States is a sensitive and a problematic issue. Russia uses its lack of proper regulations to act in a secretive way, not providing information on the origins of financial resources (BNN-news 2014) like Estonian Russian-speaking youth organization *Molodoie slovo*, recognized as GONGO which are government organized NGO. The Baltic governments should engage actively to protect their interests in the area of law.

Using institutions of research, diplomacy or democracy as a platform to articulate Russian foreign interests, is another new phenomenon. In 2004 the Valdai Club was founded and in 2008 the Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation was created (Tafuro 2014). Their goal is to influence the public debate and the society by promoting democracy and human rights protection but in 'Russia's point of view'. According to the Latvian security service Normunds Mezviets they are used as agents of Russia's informational impact (Re.Baltica 2015).

## Diplomatic

Russia repeatedly accuses the Baltic States of human rights violation. In 1999 in according to Zdanok's disqualification from standing for election to the Latvian parliament and to municipal elections Russian State Duma condemned the Latvian Prosecution to human rights violation (GosDuma Act 1999). Russia appealed to international society to criticize the Latvian government for legal abuse (ECHR 2000, Лич 2006, НБ 2008)<sup>2</sup> as well as in the case of a pro-Kremlin Italian journalist and former MEP Giulietto Chiesa arrested in Estonia and ordered to leave the country (Nielsen 2015)<sup>3</sup>. However neither ECHR nor the UN Human Rights Council has found evidence of systematic abuse of human rights or ethnic discrimination (Conley, Gerber 2011). Interestingly though, and successfully for Russia, Amnesty International has criticized discriminatory policy of citizenship in the Baltic States. AI has paid attention to restricted language and education policy for the Russian diaspora. Another problem was the unfavourable economic situation of the Russian diaspora, caused by political (limited political rights) and social (lack of foreign language ability) factors. In 2009 report AI condemned the force use against demonstrations in April 2007 (Amnesty

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<sup>2</sup>Zdanok was ruled ineligible to stand as a candidate in the parliamentary elections. Her exclusion was based on her former membership of the Communist Party of Latvia. She complained that her right to stand for election had been infringed as a result of her disqualification. In the case of *Ždanoka v. Latvia* no. 58278/00 The European Court of Human Rights adjudged that there has been no violation of human rights.

<sup>3</sup>Working as Moscow correspondent for the Italian newspapers for several years Chiesa was famous for justifying Russian activity in Georgia, demanding recognition of the independence of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia and supporting for Russian activity in eastern Ukraine.

International 2006, 2007). Although the statelessness of the Russian minority decreases thanks to effective Estonian government policy of assimilation, in February 2011 Russia criticized Estonian policy of discrimination at a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov described the statelessness among Russian-speaking minority in Estonia as a 'shameful phenomenon' which 'demands greater attention' (News 2011).

In 2015 Lithuania's decision to ban RTR Planeta broadcast, accused of inciting hatred between Russian and Ukrainian nations, making calls for violence and violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity was precedential in UE (Lapėnienė 2015, Reuters 2014). Similarly Gazprom-owned NTV Mir was banned in Lithuania in 2014 for three months for showing false about the Soviet army in 1991. They influenced Russia to put media issue on the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe agenda. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media responded to governmental authorities that have taken measures to stop foreign propaganda, by banning or blocking radio and television signals or imposing other restrictions, such as ban on entry for Russian journalists or their eviction from governmental press centres in Ukraine (Richter 2015). She made it very clear to all OSCE participating states that censoring propaganda is not the way to counter it. Only a well-functioning open, diverse and dynamic media environment can effectively neutralize the effect of propaganda.

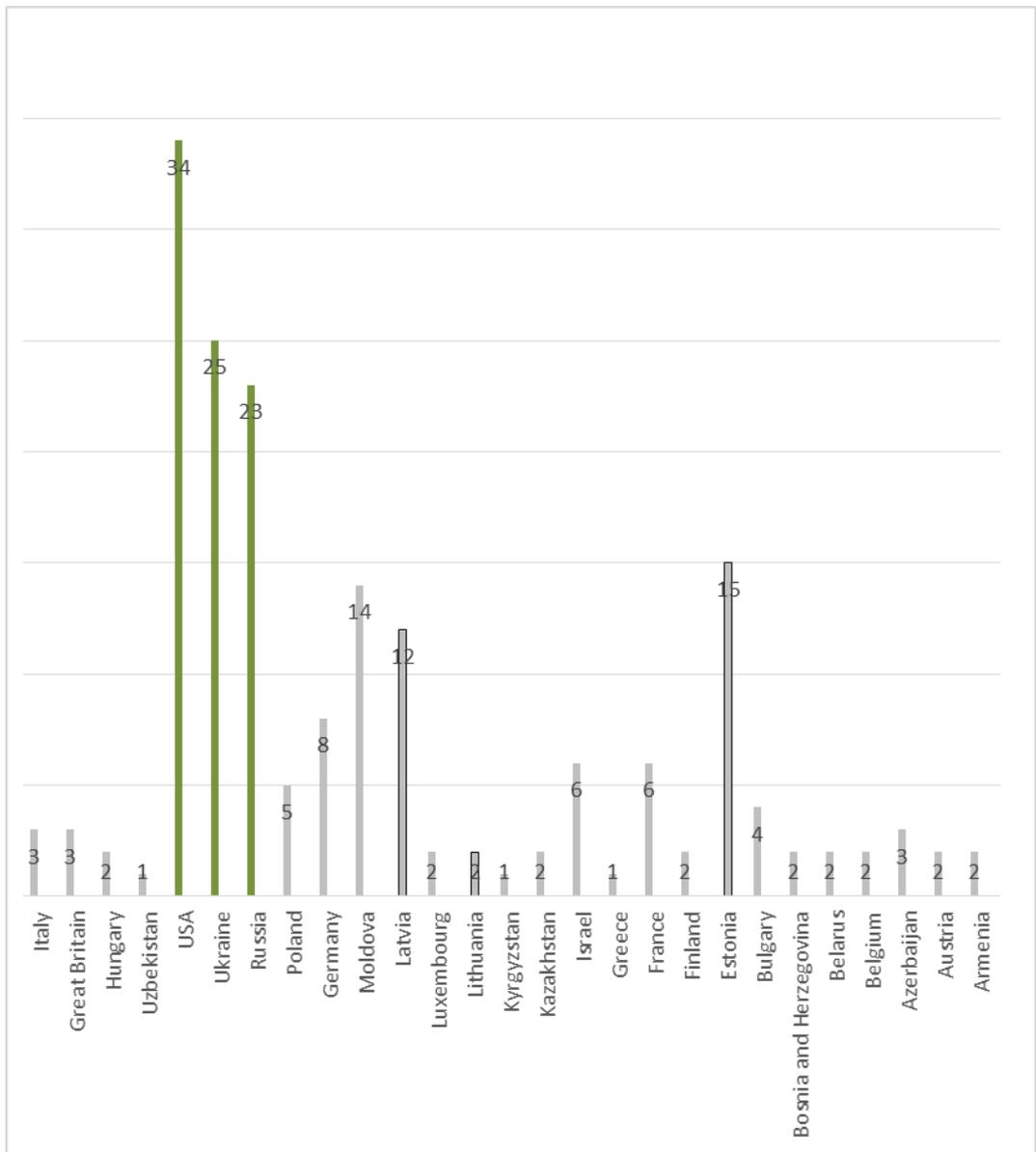
### Ideological

Anti-Nazism is an idea which Russia particularly focuses on. Since 2005, it has been submitting an anti-Nazism resolution against the holding of pro-Nazi demonstrations and the glorification of Nazism before the UN General Assembly. However, the motion did not receive support from the other member states. Lavrov has mentioned that Latvia and Estonia are frequently the site of parades in honour of Waffen-SS veterans, involving veterans from the Latvian Legion and the 20th Estonian SS Division (RT 2012).

Founded in 2010 International Human Rights Protection Movement, World without Nazism (*Международное правозащитное движение Мир без нацизма*) is another way to present Russian values and interests on the international forum. Starting as a number of international conferences (2009 in Berlin, 2010 in Riga), which the members of veteran organizations as well as youth and regional associations, including several dozen from the Baltic States took part in, the event was attended by over 360 members from 136 organizations of 28 countries from around the world (Table 3). The motto 'World without Nazism' refers to 'false assessment' of WWII heroic ideology of Nazism and the national minorities' cultural and religious rights and freedom restrictions. The idea of preventing the danger of ideological emptiness after the Soviet Union collapsed and protection from the harmful liberal policy of the West

countries was supported by the Russian minorities, extreme leftist and communist groups, youth and veteran organizations. On the one hand, the WWN principle is to prevent new threat of Nazi and fascist forces in Central and Eastern Europe, supported by the governments of the countries in the region. There is no doubt the WWN foundation was motivated by the Russian vision of the past, including the Third Reich responsibility for the WWII outbreak and the wrong accusation of the Soviet Union collaboration. The symbolic date of WWN establishment – June 22 is recognized by Russian government as the anniversary of the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War. On the other hand, for Russia, it is important to draw attention of the international community and institutions, including the Council of Europe and the UN, to the discrimination of national minorities especially in the Baltic States. Generally speaking it is one of the instruments of disinformation, propaganda and falsification of history. In the West it is seen as the espionage and sabotage organisation (Braw 2014). According to James Kirchick (2015), the pseudo-independent institution of WWN leads Russia to pursue its own policy to influence other countries. The idea of ‘World without Nazism’, like the ‘war against terrorism’ as the example of Russia's actions in Chechnya, is a way of convincing international public opinion to take radical action to protect the security, stability and peace in Europe.

Table 3: Members of International Human Rights Protection Movement, ‘World without Nazism’



Source: the Author, based on <http://worldwithoutnazism.org/>.

Ideologically Russia's government is supported by Russian Orthodox Church seen as a traditional element of Russian civilization and in post-Soviet space – the reconstruction and rebirth of the modern Russian state base, the symbol of national glory and victory. It is a component of religious, political and national identity of Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States. It is said that the Russian Orthodox Church's contribution to the consolidation of the compatriot community is highly

effective. In the Baltic States its influence has increased in recent years in very sensitive areas, especially among children and the youth.

### Legal policy

Russia uses the visa and citizenship policy as a soft power instrument, as well. The concept of this policy, however, has changed. Initially, during Putin's first presidency the category of compatriots was broadly recognized, while consciousness of 'Russianness' was the most significant indicator of Russian Community. Unexpectedly, the program encouraging Russian diaspora to return to Russia was not successful. It turned out that the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic States wanted to cultivate Russian identity and develop relationships with Russia, but did not decide to change their place of residency (Munoglu 2011). In 2010, President Dmitry Medvedev signed another repatriation program but addressed directly to the highly skilled and educated professionals to adopt new ideas or methods and modernize the Russian economy. Generally speaking Russian soft power in the area of visa and citizenship policy can be recognized as limited or ineffective. Residents of 'near abroad', including the Baltic States, mainly use facilities to travel to Russia for family or for business purposes. Thanks to the citizenship of the Russian Federation they also receive social assistance or opportunity to study in Russia. In the last few years more and more residents, including Latvian citizens, have managed to get Russian documents due to the economic advantages (Ruposters 2014). Due to an ability to travel freely across Russian borders and higher pensions for Russian citizens in the Baltic States, the situation could be a challenge for the Baltic governments. The more Russian citizens reside in the Baltic States, the more influential the Russian policy over the region is. But in according to economic crisis Russia was enforced to change their citizenship policy. In the beginning of 2015 Russian State Duma has developed the draft that provides for a half of paying pensions to Russian citizens living abroad more than 183 days in the last 12 months<sup>4</sup>. Russia plans to attract pensioners to stay in the country. Among them more than 20 thousand have lived in Latvia.

### Economic

Apart from economic instrument of hard power (pressure, embargo, sanctions) Russian-speaking strong lobbies and interest groups in the Baltic States are another factor of Russian soft power. In the 90s the process of transfer of the Russian elite from the business world to the political class began. The Russian businesses got involved in cooperation (business networks) and the promotion of Russian business culture (based

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<sup>4</sup>It concerns pensioners who have changed their citizenship or have taken a second one, Russia plans to stop paying pensions to citizens living abroad.

on emotional, fatalistic, pessimistic, inward facing, fortress mentality, direct , ‘dusha’ factors) increasing the effectiveness of the government policy of soft power (especially in the energy sector; Kuznetsov, Kuznetsova 2005). Using large state corporations and private firms such as Gazprom, Rosneft, Itera and Lukoil, by controlling pipelines, building new processing plants and overseeing the gas station business, Russia manages to develop its economic visibility.

#### 4 NATURE OF RUSSIA’S SOFT POWER

It is extremely hard to compare Russia’s and US or UE soft power, because there are distinctive differences (system, instrumental and objective factor) between them. It is hard to estimate the Russian soft power quality and importance too, using the West methods. Russia’s soft power sources are directed to Russian-speaking minorities to prevent culture from decreasing in contrast to Western one, directed to civil society in all states to promote and expand. US and EU countries use democratic methods and tools to influence international opinion. Their soft power depends not only on their governments, but also on independent entities. In that case soft power is more difficult to use than hard power, as many of its resources are out of state control and the effect largely depends on public acceptance. Companies, universities, churches, foundations can develop their own soft power, which is consistent or inconsistent with the official foreign policy. In case of Russia, the government is the main actor constructing the narrative for soft power, performed by highly institutionalized government agenda, foundations, non-governmental organizations, religious and cultural associations, political parties, business and lobbies (Table 4, 5).

Table 4: Russia’s soft power sources

<i>Soft power sources</i>	<i>Russia</i>
Culture	Russian language, literature, education, academic exchanges, art, popular culture and mass entertainment
Values	Anti-liberal, ‘sovereign democracy’, alternative to West ideas as liberal, democracy and freedom
Foreign policy	Strong authoritarian sovereign state, independent foreign policy instead of communication, lack of the respect the other states’ independence, lack of cooperation and partnership

Source: Author

Table 5: Russia's soft power instrument

<b>Soft power instruments</b>	<b>Russia</b>
Informational	Disinformation, media freedom restriction, state-owned media without alternative sources of information
Financial	By government or (GO)NGO
Organizational	Government organization
Diplomatic	Criticizing, accusation, propaganda rather than legal methods and cooperation
Ideological	Falsification, duplicity instead of legality, truth and objectivity
Legal policy	Visa and citizenship policy attractive for former Soviet Union residents
Economic	Promotion of Russian business culture

Source: the Author.

#### **4 RUSSIA UNPOWERED**

According to the Centum Levada (2015) public opinion polls the level of Putin's popularity is still high which means that his authoritarian rule, paradoxically, may not decrease Russia's soft power. But as Nye admitted the problem for Russia is that it already has very little soft power with which to work (Nye 2014). Sergey Lavrov (2012) speaking at the 20<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Meeting of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy in 2012, Moscow, admitted Russia was well behind other states in this respect. Heather A. Conley and Theodoer P. Gerber (2011) conducted a research which shows Russian soft power tools as ineffective or limited. It claims that Russian-speaking people are unadapted and unassimilated in the Baltic society as a result of the lack of language ability and unemployment while statelessness is of lesser importance. Respondents admitted they have no positive attitude to Russian government's minority protection policy or they see little influence on their situation.

Recognizing Russia's little soft power to work I estimate that it is sufficient to take a pressure to the post-Soviet space. According to the Baltic States Russia uses soft and hard power too. Soft power can be treated as a gentle and subtle step of new challenges, as in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine case. Propaganda, disinformation, promotion of Russian culture and language may precede hostilities. Russia is trying to

expand its offer, now it is addressed mainly to Russian-speaking community in the post-Soviet area, and focused on minimizing the influence of USA and EU. Russia's favour is a strong, non-integrated community of Russian diaspora, representing an overwhelming majority in some regions of the Baltic States, like in Narva, Estonia they constitute 97%. The greatest ability to influence the community is offered by the media. The further development of the global information suggests that the relative importance of soft power will increase. By well-developed means of communication states will be able to solve problems effectively. The rapid transition in 90. led the Baltic media not only to social and democratic goals of providing citizens with quality information and contributing to the democratic processes within society, but also to the profit-seeking logic of semi-professionals, often without proper training, but very keen on consumerism.

The process of democratization including access to new alternative sources of information involves even young generation of the speakers of Russian, who feel themselves more EuroRussians, adopting Western ideals of liberty, than part of the Russian community (Симо́нъян 2010). According to Agnia Grigas (2014) they do not approve the Russia's policy and see no need for any protection from Russia. In contrast members of Russian societies claimed that Russia's support is not sufficient (Корнышева 2011). It means that Russian community in the Baltic States is not consolidated but clearly divided. The one is obvious, based on anti-liberal values, the idea of protection from neoNazism, with limited popular culture expansion, inconsistency and incompatibility of foreign policy, Russia's soft power is being reduced.

In order to weaken Russia's influence in the Baltic States, the governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia should avoid hostile rhetoric and take advantage of the process of integration of the Russian-speaking minority in these countries. It includes legal and institutional support for independent Russian NGO, encouragement to participate in political, economic, social life, promotion of education and language skills to help adapt minorities in the Baltic States societies beyond ethnic divisions. The governments should also make greater efforts to alleviate the negative impact of the Russian propaganda. The Estonian state television have already planned to extend the program for a new Russian-language channels. USA has also announced assistance in the form of grants to Russian journalists working in the Baltic States. This journalism training program is for early and mid-career Russian-language journalists and other media professionals working on Russian periphery (Marcin 2015). Because of Russian propaganda and misinformation multiplies, the media in all three countries need the skills and tools to counter it with fact-based, credible news reporting. The program would also build a more mature, proactive 21st century media landscape in all three countries (United States Embassy in Vilnius 2015).

Although the tools of soft power are becoming more diverse, precise and

coordinated, it is unlikely that Russia will abandon its traditional instruments of influence. But in my point of view Russia's aggression and annexation of these countries is unlikely. Instead, Russia will more likely try to destabilize the Baltic region by misleading information and inciting social conflicts. Dualism of the Russian soft power activity includes two levels: subjective, concerning the action directed to both the diaspora and the international community, and objective, relying on the use of positive (incentives, support) and negative (disinformation and the devaluation of the Western system of values) elements. It seems that contrasting to the West methods most of the Russia's instruments of soft power are directed to particular audience (Russian diaspora). The public diplomacy tools focusing on the international opinion are usually recognized as a negative message and have little significance for the West public. Using diplomatic instruments like international organizations offered by democracy, Russia does not apply to democratic rules.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Soft power legitimizes the Russian feeling of the great past of the USSR, which is an instrument of building a historical, cultural and linguistic transnational community of 'русский мир'. The idea serves as a justification for Russia engagement in post-Soviet area, it is the reason for reconnecting the Soviet past with the current situation of Russian diaspora and it is a crucial instrument of articulating Russia's interests on the international forum (Laruelle 2015). In fact the idea of protecting the rights of Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic States articulated by Russia in the international arena is a subtle form of discrediting the governments of the Baltic States. This phenomenon appeared in Vladimir Putin's policy as part of negative image construction of the Baltic States to affect their domestic policies. From the Russian point of view, it is favourable to maintain a divided nation, undermining the integration and adaptation of Russian-speaking minority.

Russia's soft power instruments have become more sophisticated and diverse, adapting to the needs of recipients. In the Baltic States a vast majority of the speakers of Russian are adults and mature. By implementing new instruments such as the Internet, scholarship programs for students, Russian Orthodox Church activities for children and adolescents, the current Russian soft power tools are directed to younger generations.

Unsuccessful the political (the fragmentation of political parties, party system instability), economic (free market, commercialization, economic ties during the Soviet Union) and ethnic (high proportion of Russian diaspora, especially in Latvia and Estonia) factors create favourable conditions for Russia to realize its interests in the Baltic States area. Despite the accession of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to NATO and EU, Russia continues its economic, energy, ethnic policies based on the 90s of XX century (Žiugžda 2015). To increase their effectiveness, Russia balances hard and soft

powers. A few years ago Russian military operations along the Baltic borders were seen as they had 'little significance' (Żurawski vel Grajewski 2011), today they are a potential threat to the governments of the Baltic States.

Smart power, which Nye defined as the ability to rationally use hard and soft power, is necessary to succeed in international politics. In case of Russia, it seems that the policy towards the 'near abroad' is dominated by the first one, though soft power, as an instrument accompanying the hard power is significant too. But it is unlikely that Russia will attract non-Russian-speaking community in the world of pluralistic ideas and beliefs. Its advantage may be, however, the constructive opposition to the United States, among authoritarian regimes. I do not suppose the encouragement by Russian values and culture in that case will be a permanent trend in the future.

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