

# DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

27.05.22 | ONLINE

# PUBLIC DIPLOMACY'S NEW CIVIC ACTORS: NGOS, WOMEN- MEDIATORS' NETWORKS AND DIASPORAS

## EVENT DETAILS

### Speakers:

- **Dr Katarzyna Zalas-Kamińska (University of Wrocław, Poland):** NGOs' social power in Polish public diplomacy.
- **Dr Catherine Turner (Durham Global Security Institute, UK):** Women mediators' networks' role in co-creating a foreign policy mechanism on the example of the Northern Ireland peace process.
- **Mr. Dimitris Tzirakis (DG MARE, European Commission, Belgium):** A Comparative Case Study of Greek and Irish diasporas' cooperation with the respective ministries of foreign affairs.
- **Dr Martin Russell (The Networking Institute, Ireland):** Discussant.

## OVERVIEW

This webinar discussed the role of new actors in public diplomacy efforts on the example of case studies of Irish and Greek diasporas, Polish NGOs' involvement in social diplomacy abroad, and the contribution of women mediators' networks on the Northern Ireland peace process.

The recent increase of research attention to the engagement of non-state actors in social diplomacy has been warranted by the growing impact non-state institutions (like NGOs), communities (like diasporas) and hitherto underrepresented individual and group actors (like women and women-mediators' networks) have started to exert on the public sphere at home and abroad. The uniqueness of this particular field of research and practice is also discernible in the fact that those representatives of civil society actively engage with the relevant state institutions and international stakeholders to co-create public policies in "soft" diplomacy or influence negotiation outcomes.

The invited experts addressed the following questions:

- What are the most important aspects of the social power exercised by NGOs engaged in public diplomacy?
- How do women mediator's networks co-create a foreign policy mechanism for amplifying all women's voices, including those of civil society?

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- What does the comparison of Irish and Greek diasporas and their cooperation with the respective ministries of foreign affairs tell us about the factors that make diasporas' efforts effective?
- What are the challenges new civic actors face in these endeavours?
- What is the intended as well as the unintended added value of non-state actors' engagement with social diplomacy?

### Highlights / Key Actions / Recommendations / Concluding Discussions:

*The most important aspects of the social power exercised by NGOs engaged in public diplomacy on the example of Polish NGOs are:*

- attracting attention to Poland (promoting values, carrying the narrative);
- educating (social power, including social participation; cultural differences, history), and
- enforcing discussions (advocacy and monitoring policies).

*The Northern Ireland Experience summed up in this publication is that women mediators bring to diplomacy:*

- a. Relational Approaches: Listening/Empathy; More attuned to emotion or unspoken words; Prioritising listening to build trust
- b. Non –political (?): Seen as non-threatening; Not a competitor/not being 'fit' into the male pecking order; Soft authority
- c. Quietness as a strategic tool: 'I always hear two or three war stories quietly in the corner'; "I learned how to sidle up to those difficult conversations in a gentler way"; "I never wanted to be a big presence. I wanted to be a quiet presence"
- d. Experience based knowledge: engaging culturally sensitive and context specific knowledge; Sensitivity to traditional gender roles

### New Diplomacy

- Diplomacy has been changing;
- Diplomacy has gone public;
- The number of actors has pluralized;
- The emergence of new technologies.

Speakers presentations shared - available at <https://www.dsaireland.org/resources/>.