



UPTAKE

Working Paper No. 1/2017

# THE GLOBAL MOBILITIES OF RUSSIAN MUSEUMS: THE STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM GOES TO MÁLAGA

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Suggested format for citing this paper: Bethwaite, Julia (2017). ‘The Global Mobilities of Russian Museums: The State Russian Museum Goes to Málaga’, UPTAKE Working Paper, No. 1.



Editor: Igor Merheim-Eyre  
Cover design: Kalle Paalits  
Layout: Tiia Ilus

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University of Tartu Press  
[www.tyk.ee](http://www.tyk.ee)

## ABSTRACT

Museums are establishing foreign branches and satellite museums abroad, illustrating a growing trend among both public and private museums. Guggenheim, Louvre, Centre Pompidou, The State Hermitage Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum are a few of the cultural institutions that have presence abroad in the form of physical exhibition sites. In addition to creating permanent venues in foreign countries, many museums also cooperate internationally through temporary circulating exhibitions that engage expert exchanges and diplomatic relations.

This article frames the discussion about the role of art museums as practitioners and actors of international cultural diplomacy and cultural relations. It delves into the interplay between the state actors and non-state actors that are involved in the museums' trajectories, further extending the understanding of constituent and influential actors in international relations. In particular, the focus is on the State Russian Museum's first foreign branch that was opened in Málaga, Spain in March 2015.

First, the paper identifies the key actors, who contributed to the project, paying attention to both the state actors and non-state actors. Second, the paper reviews the purpose of establishing the museum in Málaga in the context of the interests of each of the selected actors. The paper concludes with a brief discussion on how the analysis of foreign branches and satellite museums could be deepened and what methodological instruments would be beneficial for further research.

**Keywords:** Museums; public diplomacy; cultural diplomacy; cultural relations; museum diplomacy; state actors; non-state actors; The State Russian Museum

*This paper was presented at the UPTAKE Training School at the University of Kent on 15–22 January 2017.*

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the discussion about the role of art museums as practitioners of international cultural diplomacy and cultural relations. It focuses on the interplay between the state actors and non-state actors, as both types of actors engage in the global mobilities of art museums.

The global mobilities of art museums imply such practices of international cultural relations as construction of satellite museums and organization of exhibitions abroad, all of which involve international cooperation. The main objective of this paper is to further develop the traditional notion of international cultural diplomacy and cultural relations by shedding light on the agency of the private and non-state actors in these activities, moving beyond the prism of just the state and state institutions (Melissen 2005). The paper analyses how the state operates through the agencies and practices of the non-state actors.

In particular, this paper focuses on Russian art museums by presenting the case of the State Russian Museum's branch in Málaga, Spain. The satellite museum opened in March 2015. The paper identifies the central private actors, involved in the project, and analyses their interests in establishing the branch in Málaga. The analysis is based on media data, collected using the Integrum database. The research aims to illustrate how the state actors and non-state actors interact and cooperate, bringing together different fields and field dynamics. It would be fruitful to apply the theory of a social field by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) to analyze the non-state actors on the field of cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations, and in particular, on the field(s) in which The State Russian Museum is participating. This could illustrate the interconnectedness of the different fields and actors. However, this paper won't conduct full Bourdieusian analysis, but it introduces the key actors, involved in the Málaga case.

Furthermore, to grasp the complex essence of power and the relation of art and power, it is necessary to analyze international practices beyond the notion of state entities. This can encourage the development of the research apparatus of IR by viewing the field of international relations as a dynamic configuration of heterogeneous actors, strategies and power that does not function within the traditional static concepts and boundaries.

## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND CULTURAL RELATIONS: THE RISE OF THE NON-STATE ACTOR**

When examining the global mobilities of museums, the concepts of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations need to be taken into account to grasp and conceptualize the role of the museums in international relations. As noted by Jan Melissen, the concepts overlap with each other (2005: 21). Public diplomacy is based on official communication with the foreign public, and its interest lies in managing a country's reputation and image by targeting "the general public in foreign societies and more specific non-official groups, organizations and individuals" (2005: 5). Public diplomacy considers not only traditional state actors such as diplomats and governments, but also "large and small non-state actors, and supranational and subnational players", such as NGOs and international companies (Ibid.: 12). Melissen notes that public diplomacy can be motivated by a diverse set of objectives from softer goals, such as increasing foreign direct investments and warming up political relations, to harder intentions, such as military aims, which highlights the relevance of public diplomacy in the field of international relations and world politics (Ibid.: 14).

Thus, unsurprisingly, soft power is often discussed in relation to public diplomacy (Hayden; 2012). As Joseph Nye has outlined, a country's soft power resources consist of three components: a country's culture, its political values and foreign policies (2004: 11). Referring to the first soft power resource, a country's culture, cultural diplomacy and cultural relations are therefore considered as integral elements of communication with foreign audiences. The difference between cultural relations and cultural diplomacy is that cultural diplomacy relies on the government-led exchange of culture, involving "the systematic intervention of governments in the arts, sciences, and other cultural expressions as the basis of an official categorization of national identity" (Zamorano; 2016: 169). Cultural relations, on the other hand, is a subtler practice of creating durable relationships and building trust with foreign audiences without direct government interventions. Melissen states that while cultural relations serve "the national interest", the actors of cultural relations, such as culture institutes, distance themselves from diplomacy and top-down managed government-led practices (2005: 22). Instead, they aim to "represent the non-governmental voice in transnational relations" (Ibid.: 22–23). This results in blurring the lines between public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and cultural relations (Ibid.).

The common factor that unites the three concepts, is the growth and relevance of the non-state actors. Besides governments, cultural diplomacy, just like public diplomacy, engages a wide range of actors from artists to business people (Zamorano; 2016: 169). However, Christine Sylvester has noted that the research apparatus of international relations hasn't been able to detect and evaluate the agencies of the non-state actors, as international diplomacy has been focused mainly on "moves of state leaders, foreign policy appointees, and international organizations" (2009: 154). In other words, the role of the non-state actors has been under-researched.

Nonetheless, the non-state actors do affect international relations by participating in international practices of cultural diplomacy. In her work "Art/Museums: International Relations Where We Least Expect It" Sylvester (2009) provides an example of a non-state actor, who was central to the establishment of the Berlin Jewish Museum. The museum's architect Daniel Libeskind faced significant opposition during the planning phase of the Berlin Jewish Museum and the museum's plans risked not being realized. Nevertheless, the architect's wife Nina Libeskind, a well-connected individual with an influential family background, managed to push the museum project forward. Libeskind generated international pressure by contacting the international media and utilizing her influential social connections. Because of her prominent family, who were involved in Canadian politics and the UN, Libeskind managed to encourage the political and cultural elite to support the construction of the Berlin Jewish Museum, which then also won the support of the wider public.

The example of the Berlin Jewish Museum and the influence of the non-state actor illustrates that cultural diplomacy also involves other actors beyond state representatives. There is a risk that by concentrating only on state-centric cultural diplomacy, crucial actors, complex strategies and meandering connections can be left unnoticed. Moreover, when examining cultural diplomacy, it is crucial to extend the analytical perspective beyond state entities, and examine sub-national or even transnational movements.

Also, as was shown in the Libeskind example, international relations involve different forms of capital that actors can utilize in their tactics to realize their strategies. Libeskind used her social capital to generate symbolic capital namely, social influence and recognition. She was able to influence the national situation by turning it to an international question via the help of the international media

and influential actors outside Germany, including leading Israeli politicians and respected rabbis from the United States. Therefore, by extending the analytical apparatus of international relations to cover the analysis of the non-state actors, different forms of capital and field strategies, it is possible to do research on actors and phenomena that act or exist on different fields, and cross different boundaries such as the fields of politics, economy and culture. (Sylvester; 2009: 153–155.)

### **‘Museum Diplomacy’: a Foreign Policy Tool of the State or a Form of Strategic Self-Instrumentalization?**

In her recent article, Goff (2017) analyzed the phenomenon of the satellite museums, exploring what kind of transnational actor the museum is. Goff analyzes three types of agencies that the museums are claimed for: first, she analyzes museums as for-profit transnational actors, that aim to expand their markets in a manner of multinational corporations, expressing a “cultural imperialist force”. However, seeing museums in such light is misleading, as “[m]useums are not earning money for their shareholders, but rather to fund operations”, retaining “a distinct mission to conserve and exhibit art and to educate the public about it” (Ibid.). Second, Goff reviews museums as non-profit transnational actors, but concludes that they do not fit smoothly into the concept of NGOs, as museums, in contrast to non-governmental organizations, “are not typically involved in advocacy” and “do not typically seek to influence policy processes” (Ibid.). Also, as Goff points out, the museums can be either private entities, like the Guggenheim, or connected to their national governments via the public funding streams. The third category that Goff applies, is the role of the cultural diplomat, which emphasizes the rise of the non-state actors. Goff notes, that the museum may serve as an instrument of cultural diplomacy through art and international business partnerships. These international business partnerships can be able to bridge differences and foster dialogue, promoting understanding about the different cultures. As it is seen also in the Goff’s typology analysis, “[m]useum satellites are [...] unique transnational actors in terms of their purpose and influence” (Ibid.), which justifies the need to pay more attention to the international agency of the museums.

In her article about the France-Singapore museum exchanges Cai (2013) applied the concept of 'museum diplomacy'. However, she noticed that cultural cooperation between the two parties was apolitical, and that social and economic imperatives, such as national branding and city branding, were some of the main driving forces behind the museum cooperation instead of employing strategic tactics to increase the states' political influence. In other words, the museum relations were not motivated by the top down cultural diplomacy objectives, spelled out by the national governments. Instead, cultural diplomacy was utilized to serve "a means to achieve economic and societal objectives", constituting Singapore's city brand (2013: 140). In addition, as Cai states, for museums "cultural diplomacy was seen as funding opportunities to support their programming or as political gateways to gain access to the renowned museums overseas that would benefit their own objectives and missions" (Ibid.). However, Cai also importantly notes that even though the "museums did not take their nations' political goals into consideration [...] their consequences were nonetheless political due to inherent unequal power relations between the collaborating parties" (Ibid.: 139). These partly perhaps even unintentional political consequences accentuate the significance of the museums' in the field of public diplomacy and foreign affairs: that museums matter.

Indeed, in her case study on English museums, which includes six cultural institutions such as Tate and Victoria and Albert Museum, Nisbett (2013) noticed that the museums had politically instrumentalized themselves, emphasizing their strategic role in cultural diplomacy to convince the government of their importance for the sake of increased public funding. This made cultural diplomacy a fruitful pretext for the museums to gain their objectives under the wing of foreign policy aspirations. As Nisbett argued, "[t]he cultural institutions used a sophisticated rhetoric to make connections with the Government's foreign policy agenda. The museums initiated, advocated and lobbied for a new policy, which was based on their organisational needs... [T]he cultural organisations acted as the makers of policy, its implementers, and the recipients of the funding" (2013: 571). This highlights the influence that the museums can have on shaping the cultural diplomacy and foreign policy initiatives. Also, Nisbett's case-study illustrates that instrumental policies "are flexible and can be easily manipulated in order to satisfy a range of personal and professional agendas" (Ibid.: 572).



Thus, considering the increased role of the non-state actors in public diplomacy and international affairs, and the unique character and power of museums, it is necessary to advance this branch of research further.

## MOVING MUSEUMS

The phenomenon of ‘satellite museums’ has been demonstrating museums’ aspirations to travel across the national territorial boundaries. Guggenheim is an example of an art museum “with the most global ambition and global presence” (Sylvester; 2009: 113), having established satellite museums in different countries, the most famous of which is the widely recognized Frank Gehry building in Bilbao, Spain. Similarly, many internationally recognized museums are working on their international strategy. For example, Louvre’s new museum in Abu Dhabi is due to open in 2017, in the same year as Victoria and Albert Museum’s outpost in Shenzhen, China. Also the Russian State Hermitage museum is planning to open its second European branch in Barcelona in 2019.

Besides establishing permanent satellite museums, museums have also been becoming more aware of the need to develop international cooperation between countries and museums by organizing art exhibitions abroad. For instance, the French contemporary art museum Centre Pompidou, which started its international expansion from a satellite museum in Málaga, Spain in 2015, is opening two temporary exhibition spaces in South Korea and China in 2017 and 2018 (Le Gall; 2016).

Also the Moscow-based State Tretyakov Gallery is planning to organize temporary exhibitions abroad. In the museum’s development concept, published in 2016 and confirmed by the Russian Ministry of Culture, the State Tretyakov Gallery stresses that it is not interested to establish satellite museums abroad, but it wants to develop international cooperation by organizing art exhibitions on “strategically important” international platforms. Moreover, the Gallery’s national and international strategy declares that the museum is going to make a significant contribution to cultural diplomacy. As a part of its strategy, the museum’s international activities will be coordinated according to the cultural diplomacy of the Russian Federation (Kontseptsia razvitiia Tret’iakovskoi galerei; 2016: 38–39).

This self-instrumentalization of the museums, as they situate themselves to function under the wing of the state, raises questions about the objectives of this practice. In fact, international museum exchanges can have indirect political consequences (see Cai; 2013).

Indeed, it is disputable to call museums as neutral players on the field of international relations. In fact, as Christine Sylvester notes, the “[a]rt museums reflect, frame and shape complex and often hidden aspects of international relations”, which makes museums far from neutral (Sylvester; 2009: 137). Koksál thinks along the same lines by stating, that “[t]he museum has always been a space that is both poetic and political, a space where knowledge is transformed, negotiated, and visualized in terms of regimes of power and knowledge” (Koksál; 2014: 233).

For example, an art museum can represent a worldview, producing knowledge and moving people emotionally. The museum is able to promote values not only via exhibited art, but also through its architecture, adoption of display technologies and approaches of categorization of art (Koksál; 2014: 242–244). These components can help a museum to exploit the idea of transnationalism to serve its objectives, evoking “national affirmation through transnational means” (Savoy & Skott; 2014: 87). The national question has been central to the study of museums, as museums “since the nineteenth century have been loci for the construction of identity, mirrors of competing nations, products of national affirmation” (Meyer & Savoy; 2014: 1). However, as Meyer and Savoy articulate, “European museal reality includes the existence of another, more complex, multi-faceted level – one that is marked by transnational cross-fertilizations” (Ibid.: 1). The authors criticize the “one-sidedness of the national perspective”, getting rid of which could make “complex connections come to light, interrelations that linked museums to one another for centuries, sparked museal trends, shaped the expectations of the visitors, and so on” (Meyer & Savoy; 2014: 1–2).

Exploring the transnational character of art museums could shed light on how the museums are linked to the fields of world politics and global economy, and who the central non-state actors are that are involved in the international practices of cultural diplomacy and cultural relations.

## A CASE-STUDY: THE STATE RUSSIAN MUSEUM GOES TO MÁLAGA

The Russian State Museum was established in Saint Petersburg in 1895, becoming the first museum of Russian art. Today the museum is one of the largest in Russia, and it houses the largest collection of Russian art in the world. (The State Russian Museum; 2015.) The museum's first branch abroad was opened in Málaga in March 2015, and, according to the museum's deputy director of development and public relations, the project did not receive any financing from the State Russian Museum, but it has been fully funded by Spain (cit. Tsvetkova in Bugulova; 2015).

The year 2011 was an important milestone for the cultural relations between Russia and Spain, as it was the 'Year of Russia in Spain' and, similarly, the 'Year of Spain in Russia'. This coincided with opening of a 57<sup>th</sup> Russian centre abroad in Madrid with the objective to foster relations between the two countries by promoting Russian language and culture. (Chitkova; 2011.)

The Year of Russia in Spain included an educational programme, including the promotion of Russian language. During 2011, Russian authorities discussed the need to support Russian language studies in Spain, acknowledging that the disinterest of learning Russian in Spain is rooted in the lack of economic incentive. As Mikhail Shvydkoi, the special representative of the president in international cultural cooperation stated that the amount of people studying Russian abroad is based on Russia's economic attractiveness and offering work opportunities for foreigners (in Naborshchikova; 2011).

Besides language promotion, Russian state representatives also discussed a variety of business opportunities that would provide mutual benefits to Russia and Spain. Shvydkoi brought up tourism and transport logistics, noting Madrid's significant role in transport interchanges (cit. Shvydkoi in Naborshchikova; 2011). Also the then-President Dmitri Medvedev highlighted the potential of increasing cooperation not only in the fields of tourism and logistics, but also in energy, light industry and shipbuilding (in Kriviakina; 2011).

It is not surprising, that tourism was mentioned both by Shvydkoi and Medvedev, as Russians are the highest spending tourist group in Spain (Smirnova; 2015). Indeed, the cities of Málaga, Marbella and Puerto Banus have been called "Russia-oriented", referring to the number of wealthy tourists in the region of Costa del Sol regardless of the economic crisis and political tensions in lights of sanctions (Timashova; 2015). In 2013, Russians even became the second largest

group of foreign real estate owners in the Málaga region (Marbella Living; 2013). That also helps to explain the plans to build the first Orthodox church of Spain in Marbella.

## **The Key Actors and the Purpose of the Museum**

### **The City of Málaga**

Based on media data analysis, it is not entirely certain who was the initiator of the project. One of the media sources, *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, highlights the role of the Russian non-state actors in the opening of the satellite museum. The article states that “Russian businesspeople came up with the idea and lobbied the St. Petersburg museum’s administration to take up the idea. They also helped in talks with the Spanish side and are involved in sponsoring the project” (Novikova; 2015). However, it is not clarified who are these anonymous “Russian businesspeople”. The source does mention though that the “Costa del Sol is home to one of Spain’s largest Russian communities, which has been a key factor in opening the branch”, which may indicate that the lobbying businesspeople are well-connected Russians, who may have business interests in Spain.

Most of the media material presents the initiator and the main responsible party for the satellite museum’s financing as the city of Málaga and particularly its long-term mayor Francisco de la Torre. As well as The State Russian Museum, Málaga also started to collaborate with the French Centre Pompidou, opening a pop-up satellite museum in the city in 2015. Notwithstanding the city’s existing debt of € 600 million, in 2015 the city budgeted € 4.2 million for Centre Pompidou and € 3.7 million for the State Russian Museum. One of the drivers for the investment in culture was the desire to rebrand Málaga as “The City of Museums”, which today has over 30 museums (Kassam; 2015.)

The city authorities believe in the tourism-boosting effect of the museums, and according to Málaga’s mayor, “Málaga could also use culture to attract top talent from around the world to work in fields such as technology and innovation”, indicating as well that the museum projects could end up having economic and social effects on the local society by creating more jobs (Kassam; 2015). In other words, the purpose of the museum investments for the city of Málaga is to increase Málaga’s attractiveness to attract tourists and highly

educated workforce, which can have economic and social effects by boosting the local economy and creating more jobs.

## The State Russian Museum

According to the media material analysed, the Russian Museum took the Spanish offer seriously and signed a 10-year contract with the city of Málaga in 2014 (Chereneva; 2015). The director of the State Russian Museum Vladimir Gusev notes that the Spanish audience were surprisingly receptive (Uvarov; 2016) with the museum evoking a great interest and wide publicity in the Spanish media (Moskvicheva; 2015). Moreover, while the economic crisis has hit the private sponsors of the Russia State Museum, Gusev also expressed hope that receiving extra income from the Málaga branch creates a beneficial new funding stream for the museum.

Tsvetkova also highlights the potential of culture to create a common language that everyone can understand, regardless of the political climate. She notes that “sometimes one needs to see something with his own eyes and meet the people to understand that everything is not as, for instance, the European media has been presenting” (Tsvetkova in Bugulova; 2015).

The positive Málaga experience may have resulted in increased confidence for the State Russian Museum to continue with the global mobilities of establishing museum branches abroad. For instance, even though the Málaga branch was the Russian Museum’s first satellite museum abroad, it most likely will not be its last: the museum is planning to expand next to Havana, Cuba. The Havana branch is now in progress and the museum is seeking for support from the state and sponsors (Moskvicheva; 2015).

## The Russian State Authorities

### *The official outlines of the state cultural policy*

By ‘Russian State Authorities’, the paper refers to the state representatives that have commented on the Málaga branch in the Russian media. It’s appropriate to view their comments in the context of the new strategy of state cultural policy, that the Russian government confirmed in February 2016 (*Strategia gosudarsvennoi kul’turnoi politiki na period do 2030 goda*; 2016: 1). The strategy, which covers the years 2016–2030, is focused on the realization of objectives and

tasks that were outlined in the document on the foundations of state cultural policy, which was approved by President Putin in December 2014. This new strategy of cultural policy aims to strengthen the unity of Russian society by acknowledging Russian culture as a strategic asset and a national priority, and by increasing the influence of Russian culture abroad. According to the strategy, the new cultural policy aspires to increase and support international cultural connections and use Russia's cultural potential in international multilateral cooperation. In addition, the strategy declares that the growth of the extra-budgetary investments is the most important condition for the effectiveness of cultural policy.

Thus, acknowledging the wide range of actors involved in the practices of cultural policy, the strategy encourages Russian museums to diversify their funding channels and utilize the potential of philanthropists and sponsors. To encourage private investments, the state is planning to offer attractive tax incentives (*Strategia gosudarsvennoi kul'turnoi politiki na period do 2030 goda*; 2016: 8–25). Also Russian state museums have taken into consideration the need to diversify their financing sources and attract private funding. For example, in its concept of development, the State Tretyakov Gallery has outlined the objective to reduce state funding and increase private capital (*Kontseptsia razvitiia Tret'iakovskoi galerei*; 2016). Also the case of the Málaga branch illustrates that the state is not directly involved in financing the satellite museum. Considering the Soviet heritage of the state-funded field of culture, it is intriguing to examine how the current tendency of enhancing the role of the non-state actors will influence the international practices of cultural diplomacy and cultural relations as well as the field's dynamics and its organizing principles.

#### *Long-term relations and economic objectives*

The special representative of the Russian President for International Cultural Cooperation Mikhail Shvydkoi noted that opening a branch of the Russian Museum in Málaga was a success, and soon a multi-functional center by the State Russian Museum is going to open in Shanghai, China, illustrating the prosperity of the practice. Besides the opening of the Russian Museum in Spain, Shvydkoi also mentions that culture-related lectures are going to be further organized in Spanish universities. This emphasizes the educative and knowledge-based practice of cultural relations between Russia and Spain. However, Shvydkoi notes that

there is no official structure in Russia that would manage the political promotion of culture and education (Smirintskii; 2016). Even though today, as Shvydkoi continues, “during the period of political confrontation and partly frozen economic relations, the sphere of cultural, sports-related and educational cooperation functions most intensively” (in Smirintskii; 2016). Hence, cultural diplomacy functions also beyond traditional state-led diplomatic structures.

Also, the Russian ambassador to Spain, Iuri Korchagin, has been very satisfied with the State Russian Museum’s first foreign branch (Fediakina; 2016). Korchagin sees that the exhibitions in the Málaga museum will give an opportunity to thousands of Spanish people to introduce themselves to Russian culture and art, and that the exhibitions can allow Spaniards to get closer to Russia and dispose the stereotypes (Ibid). The ambassador notes that “many people will fall in love with Russia and begin to take a deep interest in it, which will foster the cultural and human relations, which are not subject to political coolings and tensions” (Ibid). Furthermore, art not only changes the perceptions about Russia, Korchagin says, but the mutual project is seen as a symbol of fruitful cooperation between Russia and Spain (Ibid). Thus, cultural diplomacy is not dependent on being led by just state representatives.

The Russian state authorities may also have economic interests in mind. For example, while Mihail Shvydkoi emphasized the educational cooperation between Russian and Spanish universities, he also mentioned that Russia could be interested to develop tourism relations with Spain. Additionally, Russia could also be interested in the fact that Spain is an advanced country in transport logistics, as Madrid is considered to be one of the ideal cities from the aspect of transport interchanges. (Naborshchikova; 2011) Also, the then President Dmitri Medvedev stressed in 2011 that “Russia and Spain could increase cooperation in energy, transport, shipbuilding, light industry and tourism” (in Kriviakina; 2011).

To summarize, the state authorities imply, that Russia is interested to increase cooperation with Spain in the fields of culture, education and business. This could increase Russia’s attractiveness in Spain, both in the spheres of culture and economy. Thus, the State Russian Museum’s Málaga branch fits well the objectives of the state actors.

## The Corporate Sponsor: The Finsudprom Group

According to the State Russian Museum's website, the corporate sponsor Finsudprom Group had an important role in the opening of the Málaga branch and maintenance of its ongoing activities. Finsudprom is a well-connected actor in Spain, as it is said to have long-standing partnerships with several Spanish companies. Its main task, according to the description on the State Russian Museum's website, is to promote the State Russian Museum through exhibitions and deepen the mutual understanding between the two nations of Russia and Spain. The Group aims to introduce foreign tourists and residents of Spain to the masterpieces of Russian art (The State Russian Museum; 2016).

Finsudprom is listed under the main sponsors and partners of the State Russian Museum, along with such significant companies as Lukoil, Sistema, MTS, VTB and Sberbank (The State Russian Museum; 2015). Finsudprom exists also on the Spanish website of the Málaga branch, being one of the two partners, together with The State Russian Museum (Colección del Museo Ruso; 2017). Also the official social program of Finsudprom confirms that the State Russian Museum has an important role in the Group's social priorities.

The social program of the Group has been prioritizing "long-term measures targeting health and social support of vulnerable segments of the population, primarily, disabled children (mainly through charity funds), assistance in development of science and education; promoting of publishing, exhibition and museum orientated projects" (Finsudprom; 2017a). Thus, the company seems to be philanthropically active. The support to the Russian State Museum is distinctly highlighted, declaring that "[i]n 2015 the utmost importance, along with execution of the long-term projects in the traditional areas of social and charity activities, is given to sponsor participating in various regional events, as well as to supporting of the Fund of the State Russian Museum "Friends of the Russian Museum" including the opening of a branch of the State Russian Museum in Spain" (Ibid).

In other words, Finsudprom has offered significant support to the State Russian Museum and especially to its satellite branch in Málaga. However, it is not sure to what extent the company is a non-state actor without close connections to the state. The Group was established in 2000 and it has amalgamated several companies, operating in Russia, Europe and Central Asia. The Finsudprom Group consists of different industrial facilities, such as 'Yaroslavsky shipyard' and 'Baltic Marine Fishing Company'. The Group's activities involve different industries such



as “project financing, shipbuilding, engineering and woodworking industries, marine fishing and food industries, port infrastructure development and environmental projects (projecting and construction of waste processing plants)”, which demonstrates the breadth of the Group (Finsudprom; 2016b).

Based on some of its business activities, the Group seems to have business relations with the state. For instance, Yaroslavsky shipyard is an almost 100 year-old company that has been building ships for the needs of the Soviet Union and Russian Federation, and its ships can be found in nearly every Russian fleet. By the order of the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade, the company belongs to the list of companies that have a significant effect on the industry and trade, producing ships for the use of Russian Ministry of Defense, the FSB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs within the framework of the state defense order (Gavrilenko; 2015).

Considering Finsudprom’s involvement in the Málaga project, it is interesting, that already in 2011 President Medvedev pointed out that one of the fields in which Russia and Spain should cooperate in, is logistics and shipbuilding (Kriviakina; 2011). For now, the analysis is still in progress.

## CONCLUSION

This article discussed the theme of museums as part of a state’s cultural diplomacy toolkit. It explored the museums’ role in international relations and presented the case of the State Russian Museum’s first satellite museum abroad in Málaga. Given the wide range of actors involved, the paper rather used the concept of cultural relations. This concept does not imply following and conducting a clearly defined policy, but it suggests a more organic and free-flowing formation of relations, engaging both state and non-state actors with varying objectives.

The paper examined the purpose of establishing the Málaga branch by identifying four groups of actors: the city of Málaga, the State Russian Museum, the Russian State authorities and Finsudprom Group, the main corporate sponsor of the satellite museum. Based on the media analysis, many of the actors seemed to be motivated by economic drivers: the City of Málaga wanted to boost the local economy and rebrand Málaga, and the State Russian Museum benefitted from receiving a new funding stream, especially useful in the times of economic crisis. The Russian State authorities aspired to deepen the business ties with Spain, as did the corporate sponsor Finsudprom Group. The corporate sponsor served as

an example of a non-state actor that shares the foreign policy interests with the state, as it was also seeking to establish and strengthen the economic ties between the two countries. It is noteworthy that while the Russian State had not been financially involved in the support of the satellite museum, both the City of Málaga and the general sponsor Finsudprom were pivotal in establishing and financing the branch. This illustrates the tendency of utilizing non-state actors in the practices of cultural diplomacy and cultural relations, and reducing the direct involvement of the state.

The case study of the State Russian Museum's branch in Málaga demonstrates that international cultural relations consist of a wide range of actors motivated by different interests and objectives. Economy-related interests can encourage the actors to cooperate with each other, but perhaps there are also other forms of capital in play. The case-study analysis could be deepened by applying Pierre Bourdieu's theory of a social field as a methodological thinking tool, which could explain the capital accumulation dynamics of the different actors and expose the relations between the various fields, involved in the satellite museum in Málaga.

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