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THE ROLE OF HONORARY CONSULATE OF GEORGIA IN WROCLAW (POLAND) IN THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESSES (CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA)

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to study what the role of Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wroclaw in the Georgia's Euro Integration processes is. This is the only honorary consulate of Georgia in Poland, which was established in 2019. Research Question: What the role of Honorary Consulate in Wroclaw during the Georgia's Euro Integration processes is, how actively it promotes and strengthens relationship between two countries. Research hypothesis: The Honorary Consulate plays an active role in promoting and strengthening relations between Georgia and Poland.

The research object is an official Facebook page of Honorary Consulate in Georgia. The content analysis is used for the research as a main method, as well as a method of semi-structured interviews, in order to study attitudes of the Georgian diaspora in Poland, towards the role of Consulate. 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted among Georgian citizens who live in Poland. 3 face-to-face interviews were taken in Wroclaw in December 2021 and 11 online interviews from January 20 till March 20, 2022.

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Introduction.

The Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wroclaw is the only Georgian consulate in Poland. It was established in 2019, within the framework of ceremonial events of 100th anniversary of Georgian-Polish diplomatic relations.

The consulate is located in the city center, in a building opposite the city hall. According to the Ambassador of Georgia in Poland, the goal of the Honorary Consulate is to promote and strengthen the development of the peoples' relations between the two countries and the further development of cultural, educational and economic cooperation (1).

As it can be read on the website, on September 27, 2019, the first Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Poland was opened in Wroclaw. The honorary consul is Wojciech Wrobel, a Wroclaw entrepreneur. Its aim is to build and deepen Polish-Georgian relations in the areas of local government, education, culture, tourism and economy, and to support Georgian citizens living in Poland" (2).

Honorary council Wojciech Wróbel is a well-known entrepreneur in Poland. As he wrote about himself, "a few years ago I fell in love with Georgia. I am still getting to know its culture, traditions and fascinating, friendly inhabitants. Since 2019, I am honored to be the Honorary Consul of Georgia in Wrocław" (3).

As it is officially stated in the Consulate mission on the website: "As an Honorary Consul of Georgia in Wrocław, my mission is to build the best Polish-Georgian relations possible. I would like to present Georgian culture and tradition and encourage business contacts and tourist trips. The consular

district covers the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, but since Georgia in Poland only has an embassy in Warsaw, I sometimes support Georgian citizens all over Poland” (4).

During the conversation with Polish journalist, he emphasized “We focus on popularizing Georgian culture and promoting Georgia as a place to invest” (5). The consul also mentioned that the activities of the Consulate are supported by a group of volunteers who support the organization of integration events, activities in social media, etc. Crypto-volunteers are also numerous representatives of state and local authorities, including representatives of parliament (6).

As Wojciech Wróbel emphasized in another paper, the consulate cares about the best possible establishment of Polish-Georgian relations, bringing the Polish people closer to Georgian culture and traditions, encouraging business contacts and tourist trips. „We already have a great friendly and local governmental relationship, now it's time to do things. I want companies from Wrocław and Lower Silesia to be in the South Caucasus. This region is highly attractive and creates new business prospects. Lower Silesian entrepreneurs and local government representatives, who have been traveling to Georgia on an economic mission for several years, know this“ (7).

What kind of activities are used for this purpose? This is the main goal of this study. According to social media page, the goal of this research is to study, what the role of Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław in the Georgia's Euro Integration processes is, how actively it promotes and deepens the relations between two countries.

Research Methods.

The research object is an official Facebook page of Honorary Consulate in Georgia. The content analysis is used as the main method for the research, as well as the method of semi-structured interviews, in order to explore Poland migrated Georgian citizens attitudes towards the role of Honorary consulate.

Main Research Question and Hypothesis.

Research Question: What the role of Honorary Consulate in Wrocław during the Georgia's Euro Integration processes is, how actively it promotes and strengthens relationship between two countries.

Research hypothesis: The Honorary Consulate plays an active role in promoting and strengthening relations between Georgia and Poland.

Main Findings – qualitative content analysis of Facebook group.

For qualitative content analysis of Facebook page of “Konsulat Honorowy Gruzji we Wrocławiu” was selected a 3-year-time period from 2019. This page has 3.2 thousand “likes” and 3.4 thousand “followers”.

Research objects are: Posts, photos and videos. As it was revealed by this study, there are some topics which actively appear:

Cooperation with the administration and local government institutions.

As it turned out by the qualitative content analysis of Facebook posts of “Konsulat Honorowy Gruzji we Wrocławiu” (Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław), one of the main topics is an active cooperation with the City of Wrocław, Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Voivodship, Culture and Art Center, where all initiatives and projects related to Polish-Georgian cooperation are supported as a part of culture, art, social initiatives and more:

- Unveiling of the Roundabout of the Georgian Officers of the Polish Army on one of the most important communication routes in the city; At the initiative of the Honorary Consul of Georgia in Wrocław, on January 28, 2020, on Graniczna street, the roundabout was officially opened. In this way, the 101st anniversary of Poland's recognition of Georgia's independence was celebrated.
- Participation in several missions to Georgia organized by the Marshal's Office of the Lower Silesian Voivodship; multiple interventions and assistance for Georgian citizens by the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław in institutions such as, Courts, Prosecutor's Office, Police, Border Guard (over several dozen interventions);
- Intensive cooperation with the Office for Foreigners Assistance in legalizing the stay and work of Georgian citizens; Providing help for citizens of Georgia during a global pandemic (a place to live, food, transport to Georgia, crowd funding for those who needed help the most and giving out the most

relevant information). Visits of Georgian citizens to the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław; The assistance was provided to all.

According to qualitative content analysis it was revealed that on December 13, 2019, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław and the Polish-Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one of the goals of which is to attract Polish investors and companies, promote them in the Georgian market, as well as promote Georgia for Polish investments and tourists, i.e., a memorandum on bilateral economic cooperation between the countries and aims to promote the development of cultural relations.

Culture, education and integration.

As a qualitative content analysis of Facebook page of “Konsulat Honorowy Gruzji we Wrocławiu” (Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław) shows, despite the obvious difficulties related to the fight against the epidemic in 2020, the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław carried out activities in the field of education, culture and integration.

- Organization of a cultural events by Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław and representatives of Marshall’s Office of Lower Silesia and Municipal office in Wrocław for the Georgian community living on Lower Silesia.
- Wrocław is the first city to establish a Georgian consulate in Poland. It is not a coincidence - the capital and region of Lower Silesia had friendly contacts with Georgia for many years ago. Wojciech Wróbel really wanted Wrocław and Batumi to have a partnership, and he achieved this goal. On July 17th, 2019, in the Alphabet Tower in Batumi, the President of Wrocław Jacek Sutryk and the Mayor of Batumi Lasha Komakhidze signed an agreement. This is a continuation of the cooperation that Lower Silesia has had with the Adjara region since 2016. According to the agreements, there is certain close cooperation between Wrocław and Batumi in terms of educational and cultural directions.
- Before the outbreak of the epidemic, a visit to Batumi was also completed. The leading topics discussed by the authorities of Adjara and Batumi were the possibilities of cooperation in the field of economy, tourism, culture and sport. Their development was also facilitated by the missions organized by the Lower Silesian Marshal's Office in cooperation and with the participation of the Honorary Consul of Georgia.
- The cooperation with the Wrocław City Hall was also valuable. Thanks to it, among other exhibitions, it was possible to organize a city exhibition presenting the historical threads of Polish-Georgian history, in this particular case, the fate of Georgian contract officers who fought in Poland during the Second World War.
- Due to travel restrictions, integration events aimed at Georgians living in Poland have gained importance. Successful events such as Christmas Eve for Georgian citizens or the Polish-Georgian meeting in Prusowice, where Georgians in summer aura, with their traditional culinary specialties could meet and talk with the authorities of Lower Silesia, such meetings gained great popularity. The meeting was attended, among others, by the Marshal of the Lower Silesia Province, Cezary Przybylski, a representative of the President of the City of Wrocław, and other representatives of local authorities.
- Co-organization of Passport Days, which were attended by over 2,000 spectators while the Georgian booth enjoyed the greatest popularity.
- Cooperation in the organization of the Tbilisi Symphony Orchestra concert, which was attended by almost 1,600 spectators; several press outlets in Poland wrote about the event.
- Organizing of Polish-Georgian shows. On December 9, 2019, the premiere of the play "Brave Kids Tbilisi" took place. At the Polish Theater, young artists presented the traditions of singing and dancing.
- Consulate is also an organizer of some concerts of Georgian dancers and singers.

It is worth mentioning that within the framework of the Caucasus Foundation's project "Know Your Rights!", the Honorary consulate invites Georgian citizens living in Lower Silesia to use the advisory service of the foundation's experts in the field of fundamental rights of migrants. Advisers will be provided by: lawyer Radosh Pavlikovsky - legal advisor, specialist in the field of migrants' rights. Ekaterine Matidze – a representative of the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław, translator of the Georgian language.

It should be also noted that, observing social media posts proves that the Honorary Consulate is trying to popularize Georgia and its various corners among Polish people. Individual posts are dedicated

to different cities and their sights. It can be explained on the one hand, for tourist purposes, on the other hand, for entrepreneurs - to make investments in Georgia.

It should be also emphasized Georgian alphabet of Wojciech Wrobel – his blog “Georgia – what is worth and should know – the Georgian alphabet of Wojciech Wróbel”. As he wrote, Georgia has to be felt, tried and experienced. “If we do this, I guarantee that you will fall in love for life. To bring this country closer, here is my Georgian alphabet” (8).

Each Georgian letter of the Georgian alphabet is interestingly represented by a Georgian word or place. So, it has cognitive character. It is also worth paying attention that the Honorary Consulate office for promoting of Georgia offers their readers some blogs, articles or books about Georgia. On this website, some of the articles on the National Geographic Polska can be found, if they are interested to visit this beautiful Country (9).

Thus, it can be said that this social media page is intended not only for Georgians, but also for Polish People.

Main findings of semi-structured interviews.

14 semi-structured interviews were conducted among Georgian citizens who live in Poland. 3 face-to-face interviews were taken in Wroclaw in December 2021 and 11 online interviews from January 20 till March 20, 2022. The respondents were selected using a snow ball selection.

According to this research, Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wroclaw always assists Georgian citizens, not only in Wroclaw but also in other cities of Poland.

As most questioned respondents emphasized, Consulate had a 24/7 hotline for Georgian citizens in Poland, who needed help and assistance. This was very important during the covid-19 pandemic, when there were certain types of restrictions to stay home and not to move in the city.

“Me and one of my friends didn’t live in Wroclaw, we were in one small village but when we had a problem, we phoned Georgian consulate. A Georgian assistant Ekaterine works there who is very attentive...” (One of the respondents, a 31-year-old man).

“It’s not easy to live in a foreign city, especially when you are newly arrived. It was very difficult time for me. As my relative told, Georgian Honorary Consulate in Wroclaw could help. He gave me the number and I always call the Consulate if I need some advice...” (One of the respondents, a 27-year-old man).

“During the early time of pandemics, Honorary Consulate gave us vouchers and we could use those vouchers at one of the supermarkets in Wroclaw...” (One of the respondents, a 47-year-old woman).

Most of the interviewed people mention that they are thankful that Honorary Consulate offers assistance in learning the Polish language for free.

As most of the respondents emphasized, cultural events are not less important. Honorary Consulate Office tries to organize some concerts, exhibitions etc.

‘My heart is filled with proud when I see posters about Georgian dancers’ ensemble concerts in Wroclaw streets ... Especially, when “Sukhishvilebi” have a performance or a famous singer Kate Meluas has a concert’ (One of the respondents, a 52-year-old woman).

“Honorary Consulate tries to organize some cultural and educational events, I am glad that the Poles are interested in our ancient culture and are trying to popularize it, I am glad that we have such a friendly country in Europe, who is interested in the integration of Georgia into the Euro Union. Many thanks to them for love and support to our country (One of the respondents, a 42-year-old man).

Conclusions.

According to this study which was conducted by using qualitative approaches - content analysis of social media and semi-structured interviews methods – the strategy of Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wroclaw, is to promote and deepen cultural, economic relations between two friendly countries, assist citizens of Georgia in integration processes to stay and work legally in Poland, cooperate actively with administration and local government institutions of Lower Silesian, as well as representatives of volunteer groups, in order to tighten close links between Georgia and Poland.

As it was revealed by this study, the following activities were carried out in these directions: building friendly relations between two countries - Georgia and Poland; developing regional cooperation, joint initiatives of local governments; promoting the development of business and tourist relations; developing Polish-Georgian cultural relations; initiating cooperation of social organizations, professional circles, associations and churches; assisting Georgian citizens living in Lower Silesia; informing those

interested in going to Georgia about the possibilities of developing joint initiatives; cooperating with the Polish-Georgian Chamber of Industry and Commerce; supporting for Polish-Georgian diplomatic initiatives.

Thus, the study of social media activities of “Konsulat Honorowy Gruzji we Wrocławiu” proved hypothesis that the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Wrocław tries to play an active role in the processes of Eurointegration of Georgia with various different activities.

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