

Thumbnail Image:



The Festival of Embassies in Prague as a Public Diplomacy Instrument ^[1]

Prague can be considered a cultural center in the heart of Europe. Apart from having an iconic architecture and rich culture, it is the capital city of the Czech Republic, hosting embassies and missions for other countries. Prague also runs the prestigious yearly Prague Quadrennial, international soccer matches and the Festival of Embassies, in more recent years. The Festival of Embassies is a unique, multicultural event in Europe that brings together around 50 countries and ambassadors in one day, in just one place, attracting around 15,000 visitors, and transporting the public to multiple places at a time. In this event, ambassadors and stakeholders promote their culture, share their food and make it an instrument for public diplomacy.

Cultural events are considered a means to improve country image, foster relationships among different stakeholders and create a better understanding of others, thus nurturing a friendly and collaborative environment that public diplomacy pursues. In that sense, the 6th edition of the Festival of Embassies realized on June 10th 2023, can be considered as a vivid instrument of public diplomacy where not only state representatives such as the embassies participate, but also sub-national actors including the city of Prague, Prague Municipal District 6 and other stakeholders such as the Association of Farmers' Markets (Trhy Na Kula?áku), private companies and publics. Furthermore, the motto of the Festival, "Food and Culture Connecting Nations," highlights the importance of connecting with people through food and culture, aiding in winning the hearts and minds of the public.

This multicultural festival promotes countries' cultures and generates the desire to travel and know more about the countries presented there.



Organizátor

Praha 6

MARKETS
BOLAJAZ

Pod záštitou

SENATE

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES
PARLIAMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



FOOD & CULTURE

FESTIVAL
AMBAS



At the state level, the presence of ambassadors is important for officially representing their countries and promoting their culture. As part of the participation, ambassadors have a chance to address the public in their own language with a few words. During the Festival of Embassies, some ambassadors take this opportunity to emphasize the most important food and beverages they have brought to the festival, and invite the public to visit their stalls. For example, the South African ambassador passionately and hilariously invited the public to visit her country's stall, just in front of the main stage, where visitors can find the best food of the festival. The German ambassador seized the opportunity on the stage to emphasize the strategic partnership that his country has with the Czech Republic and the importance of nurturing the bilateral relationship. Similarly, the Thai ambassador highlighted the delicious Thai food in her stall and the available Thai massages, available for free for visitors, as well as the Saudi Arabian ambassador who offered free Saudi food in his splendid stall. This can be an on-stage opportunity not only to promote culture, but also the importance of the diplomatic relations with the host city and country.

This multicultural festival promotes countries' cultures and generates the desire to travel and know more about the countries presented there. The stalls are a window into the country's culture where visitors can also learn more about other countries through the items displayed in the stalls. Visitors get to understand the other countries' cultures better by talking to the people in the stalls, observing some rituals and crafts, and meeting new people in the venue. Many stalls display food, beverages, jewelry, brochures about the country, clothes and even massages. There was a strong presence of Southeast Asian countries whose stalls located close to the main stage were colorful, attractive and crowded. Stalls can also be used for the promotion of tourism, as is the case of the Polish stall, which was promoting touristic attractions and destinations, distributing maps and brochures of important cities, with a representative giving information and talking to people. The presence of a stall from Palestine and Taiwan may also signal the significance of particular nations in the festival. This is a way to reach foreign publics and attract tourism to the country.

PALESTINE
THE HOLY LAND



The Festival of Embassies is a great opportunity to show the best gastronomy of a country and introduce chefs who are experts in national cuisines. In many stalls, there were chefs cooking authentic food of the country of origin, bringing the best flavors of the region to the public, and offering the opportunity for visitors to experience what the country's food is and tastes like. Additionally, the musical performances at the main stage included a variety of folk dances and traditional attires. For example, the Mariachi Azteca of Prague played emblematic mariachi songs from Mexico, which are appreciated among the public. There were folk dances from Kosovo, musical presentations from India, and traditional songs from Bosnia, Moldova, and Mongolia. These performances display the culture of the country, bring a good vibe to the festival, invigorate the public, and bring different emotions and bonds to the people. Furthermore, this sort of event creates an ideal atmosphere to embrace new cultural encounters.

Consequently, the Festival of Embassies brings ambassadors together, creating an environment of collaboration, friendship and fraternity. Ambassadors mingle among people and some of them visit other stalls, talk to their peers, chitchat on stage and generate prestige for the event. Furthermore, at the inauguration of the event, they take a picture together, showing their willingness and enthusiasm for the event. Ambassadors participating in this event are a depiction of public diplomacy in action.

Finally, the Festival of Embassies creates connections among organizers, local authorities, and ambassadors who are the connection with the country. It fosters partnerships, the creation of networks and a better understanding among stakeholders. Furthermore, this event brings economic, political, and social benefits at different levels, including the Prague Municipal District 6, the city of Prague, and the Czech Republic. It boosts the local economy, generates ties between the city representatives and the ambassadors, and allows visitors to connect to the city and the countries present at the festival. This is a great social event for people of all ages and nationalities, for families, elders, or groups of friends that want to experience a multicultural event where food, music, folk dances and ambassadors blend.
