

Key actors of German "soft power" in the Baltics

Megem, Maksim; Maksimov, Ilya; Gritsaenko, Polina

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Megem, M., Maksimov, I., & Gritsaenko, P. (2016). Key actors of German "soft power" in the Baltics. *Baltic Region*, 1, 45-59. <https://doi.org/10.5922/2079-8555-2016-1-4>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Free Digital Peer Publishing Licence zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den DiPP-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<http://www.dipp.nrw.de/lizenzen/dppl/service/dppl/>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a Free Digital Peer Publishing Licence. For more information see:

<http://www.dipp.nrw.de/lizenzen/dppl/service/dppl/>

**KEY ACTORS OF GERMAN
SOFT POWER'
IN THE BALTICS**

M. Megem *

I. Maksimov *

P. Gritsaenko *



This article focuses on Germany's key 'soft power' actors promoting the country's interests in the Baltics. The authors analyse the policies of 'soft power' aimed to create a positive image of Germany in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The article examines the activity of German political foundations, research institutions, communities, language centres, and scientific and cultural organisations. It is stressed that Germany makes use of the Baltics' historical familiarity with German traditions in implementing its policy in these countries. The study suggests that German political and educational foundations are major actors of German soft power. It is shown that the development of a multilevel German language learning system incorporating various courses and scholarship programmes is one of the central strategies of German foundations. This strategy uses 'High German' as a means to integrate the Baltic audience into the German information space. The German language serves as a basis for popularisation of the German educational system and educational standards, on the one hand, and partnership institutionalisation, cooperation, and integration on the other. It is concluded that, alongside Sweden and Russia, Germany is a major foreign policy player in the Baltics.

Key words: soft power, German soft power, German-Baltic relations, German political foundations, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Baltics

Germany's experience in soft power¹ cannot be matched by any other EU country. This can be explained by

* Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University
14 A. Nevskogo ul., Kaliningrad,
236041, Russia

Submitted on November 1, 2015.

doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2016-1-4

© Megem M., Maksimov I.,
Gritsaenko P., 2016

¹ The American political scientist Joseph Nye coined the term in 1990. According to Nye, soft power is a form of political power, an ability to achieve the desired results through voluntarily participation, friendliness, and attractiveness as opposed to 'hard power', which suggests coercion. Nye interprets language and culture as 'soft power' that plays a key role in international relations, directly or indirectly influencing world politics and business ties. For more detail, see Bondarenko A. V. 'Soft power and manageable chaos: Tools of modern world politics' [In Russian]. URL: <http://www.hse.ru/data/2014/10/20/> (accessed on 20.01.2016). The terms 'civil power' (Zivilmacht) and 'formative power' (Gestaltungsmacht) are used in Germany. See, for instance: Deutschland als Gestaltungsmacht. Review 2014. 12.06.2015. URL: <http://www.aussenpolitik-weiter-denken.de/de/aussensicht/show/article/wie-kann-globale-nachhaltigkeit-gelingen/pages/1.html> (accessed on 16.09.2015)

the following circumstances. Firstly, after the horrors of World War II, Germany had to restore its 'lost' international image. Creating a positive image of the state without using the methods of cultural diplomacy would have been difficult in these conditions. Moreover, for a long time, West Germany did not have an opportunity to use any tools except for 'smart power'². Secondly, West Germany's economic miracle and availability of sufficient resources allowed the West Germany to pursue a soft power policy and diversify its tools. Thirdly, West Germany developed 'soft power' competences in the course of unification with East Germany.

The Baltic territories have played an important role in the life of Germany. German culture prevailed in the region for eight centuries. It was brought to the area in the 13th century by Crusaders and Hanseatic merchants. For a long time, Germans had a significant influence on the spiritual and material culture of the local autochthonous Baltic population³. German nobility played a crucial role in the development of South-East Baltic. German traditions affected many spheres of life, becoming part of the cultures of Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and other peoples living in this area. This circumstance has been always taken into account when carrying out a soft power policy in the region.

In 2004, the Baltics acceded to the EU. In the course of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia's integration, the architects of the EU had to help the Baltics to approach the Union's standards. A wide range of 'soft power' tools was perfect for attaining this goal. In effect, Germany was one of the first heralds of European integration in the Baltics, promoting European values from the early 1990s. The image of a well-off Germany was used by European politicians to emphasise the benefits of accession to the EU. Germany's soft power and the EU's smart power worked towards the same goal.

In its soft power efforts in the Baltics, Germany used the already tested tools. This article considers the key agents of Germany's soft power, directly or indirectly present in the Baltics to promote the country's foreign policy priorities.

Key actors of Germany's 'soft power' are political foundations committed to promoting the principles of democracy, European integration, culture, and arts. [1, p. 30] Out of Germany's six major political foundations⁴, two organisations are active in the Baltics — the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

² This article uses the term 'smart power' as a synonym for 'soft power'.

³ Germany's influence is apparent in architecture, urban planning, law, languages, arts, cuisine, etc.

⁴ The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung) represents the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands), the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung) is supported by the Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung) is financed by the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU), the Hanns Seidel Foundation (Hanns Seidel-Stiftung) is patronized by the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (Christlich Soziale Union in Bayern), the Heinrich-Böll Foundation (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung) is sponsored by the Alliance '90 / The Greens (Bundspartei Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen), the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung) promotes the interests of The Left (Die Linke).

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation supported by the Christian Democratic Union is a major player that has been promoting German and European interests in the Baltics since 1993⁵. The Foundation specialises in ‘exporting democracy’. The Foundation’s ideologists see the Baltics, bordering on Russia and Belarus, as a perfect platform. In this context, the Baltics are instrumental in supporting and developing contacts between politicians, academic institutions, and non-profits of the Baltic States and their post-Soviet neighbours. [2] It is not a surprise that one of the key priorities of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is providing training for Baltic politicians. [3]⁶ Moreover, the Foundation carries out projects supporting transboundary cooperation, ensuring peace at the eastern borders of the EU and NATO, and promoting Euro-Atlantic institutions. [2]

Conferences, round tables, and workshops supported by the Foundation discuss relevant issues of the EU and post-Soviet space. [4]⁷ The problems are considered from a perspective that suits German interests. The Foundation also publishes analytical reports on presidential and parliamentary elections in Lithuania [5; 6], Latvia [7], and Estonia. [8] Regional offices in the Latvian and Estonian capitals and the contact office in Vilnius coordinate the organisation’s activities in the Baltics. Riga is responsible for cooperation with Nordic partners. [2] The Tallinn office runs the EU-Russia Dialogue projects, whereas the Lithuanian branch focuses on work with Belarus. [9]

In 1993-1994, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung) opened its doors in the Latvian and Estonian capitals. A year later, an office was set up in Vilnius. The activities of the three offices are managed from Riga — home to the Foundation’s head office in the Baltics. [10] The Foundation is committed to strengthening civil society, cooperating with youth and women’s organisations, democratising political culture, ensuring social security and dialogue, modernising trade unions, protecting human rights, developing sustainable technology, preventing drug trafficking, terrorism, and corruption, etc. [11]

The soft power tools and strategies used by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation are typical of such institutions — projects, conferences, workshops, round tables, discussions, and summer schools. The Foundation awards scholarships for PhD, Bachelor and Master Degree students. Scholarships are given to individuals studying in Germany, having good command of German, and holding membership of an organisation, whose goals and objectives correspond to those of the Foundation. In effect, the organisation picks out talented and active young people from the Baltics to bring them together under its aegis. [12] The Foundation is a reputable organisation; its partners include ministries and governments of the Baltic States. [13]

⁵ The organisation’s offices were opened in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia in 1993.

⁶ Special attention is paid to working with young politicians.

⁷ The Belarusian branch of the Foundation works from Vilnius.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung) does not have offices in the Baltics⁸. However, it is active in the region through its scholarship programmes. Scholarships are given to individuals studying in Germany, or intending to defend their doctoral theses at a German university. [14] The Foundation always stays in contact with its former scholarship recipients. This area is covered by a network structure called the Union of Scholarship Winners ('Verband der Stipendiaten und Alt-Stipendiaten'). [15]

German political foundations run projects and hold conferences to lobby, promote, and idealise the German political model, political institutions, and picture of the world. At the same time, they instil the idea of superiority of the German development paradigm. Another important element is selecting and training young people who might once hold senior positions in the government, business, and academic, non-profit, or municipal structures⁹. German foundations play the role of instructors teaching grant recipients the 'right' way to manage their countries and interpret international developments.

German interests are also promoted in the Baltics by academic, research, and cultural foundations. Their mission is to popularise the German language and education system. The best-known organisations are the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD) and the Goethe Institute (Goethe-Institut).

The key tool used by DAAD is scholarship programmes, providing an opportunity for Baltic scientists and students to study, do research, and receive advanced training in German research and academic institutions¹⁰. German researchers and students can also visit the Baltics for similar purposes¹¹. In total, residents of the Baltics can choose from 87 DAAD programmes¹² to study in Germany. [18]¹³ DAAD also supports joint projects

⁸ The Foundation's head office for Eastern and South-Eastern Europe is located in Sofia. It is committed to promoting democracy, freedom of speech, market economy, and the rule of law in the region. For more information, see *Die Stiftung für die Freiheit in der Region Südost- und Osteuropa*. URL: <http://www.msos.fnst.org/Suedost-und-Osteuropa/607c154/index.html> (accessed on 12.10.2015).

⁹ For instance, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation carries out a project within which young Baltic politicians visit Germany and adopt the practices of their peers from the Christian Democratic Union of Germany. [3]

¹⁰ In 2014, 118 Estonians [16], 177 Latvians [17], and 143 Lithuanians [18] received short- and long-term German scholarships.

¹¹ In 2014, 412 Germans received grants to study in Estonia [16], 356 in Latvia [17], and 351 in Lithuania. [18]

¹² The programmes are developed in partnership with such German foundations as the Leibniz Association (Die Leibniz-Gemeinschaft), Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung), German Federal Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt), Gerda Henkel Foundation (Gerda Henkel Stiftung), etc.

¹³ For instance, extended research visits for university professors and researchers, scholarships for PhD students and young scientists carrying out research in Germany, group academic visits for foreign students in Germany, follow-up academic visits, scholarships for defending PhD theses, scholarships for postdoctoral research, international parliamentary scholarships for university graduates (the Bundestag).

and cooperation between the Baltic and German universities. Apparently, this reaches two objectives — increasing the reputation and competitiveness of German universities and improving the education systems of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia¹⁴. To this end, the Baltic-German University Liaison Office (Das Baltisch-Deutsche Hochschulkontor) [19; 20]¹⁵, which serves as the ‘German Centre’ in the Baltic, was established in Riga in 2005. It coordinates research cooperation and academic exchange between Germany and the Baltics. It is not a coincidence that the office is located in Riga. DAAD believes that the Latvian capital — just as in the times of the Hanseatic League — has the perfect geographic position for transferring ideas to the Baltic States. In a long-term perspective, similar centres will open in Vilnius and Tallinn. [20] Over 10 years, the office has created such organisations as the DAAD Information Centre (DAAD Informationszentrum), the University Contact Office of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Kontaktbüro Hochschulen Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)¹⁶, the Centre for Professional German (Lernzentrum Fachsprache Deutsch)¹⁷, the Centre for German Law (das Zentrum Deutsches Recht)¹⁸, Partnerships between German Studies Institutes (Germanistische Institutpartnerschaften)¹⁹, and the Vladimir Admoni Graduate School (Vladimir-Admoni-Doktorandenschule)²⁰.

Alongside DAAD, the Goethe Institute has promoted cultural cooperation and the German language in the Baltics. The first Baltic office of the

¹⁴ German universities receive funds for organising events contributing to the development and institutionalisation of partnerships between Baltic and German universities — joint workshops, summer schools, orientation visits, academic and research visits, etc. For more detail, see: Anschlussförderung Strategische Partnerschaften und Thematische Netzwerke. URL: [https://www.daad.de/hochschulen/ausschreibungen/projekte/de/11342-foerderprogramme-finden/?zland\[\]=22&s=1&projektid=57212410](https://www.daad.de/hochschulen/ausschreibungen/projekte/de/11342-foerderprogramme-finden/?zland[]=22&s=1&projektid=57212410) (accessed on 16.09.2015).

¹⁵ A forerunner of the Liaison Office was the Eurofaculty Riga (Eurofakultät Riga) project, carried out in 1993—2004 to train lawyers, economists, and managers. It was established by DAAD, the University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

¹⁶ The Centre strives to strengthen cooperation between universities and research institutions in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the Baltics.

¹⁷ The Centre offers reference materials, textbooks, and medical, law, economic, physics, and other dictionaries, etc.

¹⁸ The Centres advises on programmes in German and European law offered by German universities in the German and English languages.

¹⁹ The programme provides individual support for undergraduate and graduate students of and specialists in German studies. It brings together Daugavpils University and the University of Marburg, the University of Latvia and the University of Freiburg, the University of Tartu and the University of Göttingen, Vilnius University and the University of Duisburg-Essen, Vytautas Magnus University and Heidelberg University.

²⁰ The organisations awards scholarships to PhD students from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The project brings together sixteen educational institutions from Daugavpils, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Riga, Tartu, Ventspils, Vilnius, Essen, Freiburg, Gießen, Göttingen, Heidelberg, Mainz, and Marburg.

Institute was opened in Riga in 1992. [21] Six years later, its offices were set up in Tallinn [22] and Vilnius. [23] The activities of the Goethe Institute can be divided into two categories. The institution promotes the German language. To this end, it runs German language courses. Classes are held in the Institute's offices or at partner institutions²¹. The courses are targeted at both beginners, advanced learners and those learning professional German — German for specific purposes. Moreover, the Institute offers distance-learning options. After completing a course, students can take an exam and receive a certificate required for studying or working in Germany.

The Institute pays special attention to advanced training of teachers of German, who are offered an opportunity to raise their qualification level and become acquainted with most recent course books. The Foundation forges partnerships with Baltic schools, organising different events [22]²² and awarding scholarships to their students. The Institute also holds competitions in kindergartens. [22] Some of its offices have libraries, where teachers and everyone interested in the German language can familiarise themselves with newly published works²³. [21] Moreover, the Institute collaborates with the leading Baltic libraries²⁴, where the so-called German libraries were opened to inform visitors about Germany, its culture, politics, society, and economy. [23]

The other important area of the Institute's activities is the promotion of German culture. Here, the Goethe Institute is the central player in the Baltics. In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the Institute carries out projects²⁵ and organises numerous events that immerse residents of the Baltics into German culture — conferences, lectures, workshops, readings, film screening, exhibitions, drama and dance performances, music concerts²⁶. The German Spring project was launched in Estonia in 2010. It acquaints the Baltic audience with recent trends in the cultural life of the EU, inviting world-renowned musicians, authors, and artists. Each autumn, Tallinn and Tartu cinemas show recently popular German movies (including those screened at the Berlin festival). [22] The Institute pays special attention to the coverage of these events in the local media. [21] This creates a favourable background for cross-cultural cooperation.

²¹ In Lithuania, it is the Public Service Language Centre <http://vikc.lt/en/about-us>, in Estonia, the Institute of German Culture in Tartu and Tallinn. The two Estonian institutes are non-profits supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For more detail, see: Deutsches Kulturinstitut. URL: <http://www.dki.ee/haridus/?p=40&lang=de> (accessed on 22.10.2015).

²² For instance, the International Youth Debate initiative.

²³ Only the Lithuanian office does not have a library.

²⁴ The Estonian National Library in Tallinn, City Library in Pärnu, university and public libraries in Vilnius, Klaipėda, and Kaunas.

²⁵ For instance, the projects 'Modern German Theatre in Lithuania', 'Artists and the Curonian Spit', 'Comic Books in Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia', 'Broader Use of Indoor Spaces', 'From Figures to Physics: A Library as Interface'.

²⁶ In the Baltic space, the Goethe Institute presents itself as a newsmaker in European culture.

Developing a multi-tier system of German language learning²⁷ is a key strategy of German educational foundations. Through *Hochdeutsch*, they integrate the Baltic audience in the German information space. Special attention is paid to centres disseminating information on Germany and assisting in learning the German language. The German language helps to popularise the German education system and educational standard and to institutionalise partnership, cooperation, and integration in research²⁸. The leading role in this process is played by German institutions, which oversee financial resources and encourage research in the areas of expertise of Baltic scholars.

At the same time, through funding and increasing competences and qualification, Germany contributes to the development of the Baltics. This is another important aspect of Germany's policy of soft power — a positive image of Germany is created through emphasising ostensible benefits of cooperation. Moreover, research and education foundations pursue somewhat of a 'selection' policy through inviting and supporting scholarship recipients — the best and most active students, professors, and researchers stay in Germany²⁹. It is also important to take into account the reverse side of economic exchange — German citizens study and conduct research in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Some of them can later act as experts on the region.

History is another important element of Germany's soft power. Research institutions studying the past of the Baltics often serve as a channel for German politics in the region. They identify traces of historical affinity of Germany with the Baltic territories and peoples living there. [24, p. 184] Research centres popularise the rich German heritage in the Baltics. They focus on the oeuvre of German artists and authors with close connections to the Baltics. In Lithuania, it is the Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann³⁰, in Latvia — the author and playwright Eduard von Keyserling³¹, in Estonia — the architect Johann Wilhelm von Krause³², etc.

In 2002, the Nordost-Institute³³ was established on the basis of the Institute for the Culture and History of Germans in North-Eastern Europe. The Institute focuses on three regions — Poland, Russia, and the Baltics. Baltic history studies are of special importance for the Nordost-Institute. [25]³⁴

²⁷ The Institute works with kindergartens, schools, and universities. At universities, scholarships are awarded not only to students, but also to professors and administrative staff.

²⁸ Germany is also very flexible about training procedures in the country. Sometimes, courses are taught in English. However, the scholarship programme encourages grant receivers to learn German.

²⁹ Unlike political foundations that train personnel for the Baltics.

³⁰ In 1930—1932, Thomas Mann lived in Nida.

³¹ In 1890—1895, he lived in the Kurzeme Province in Latvia.

³² Johan Wilhelm von Krause lived in Livonia in 1796—1828. He designed the main building of the University of Tartu.

³³ For more detail, see an interview with Prof Dönninghaus at <http://www.rubaltic.ru/article/kultura-i-istoriya/nemetskiy-istorik-1939-1945-gg-dlya-istorikov-stran-baltiipolitika240613/> (accessed on 12.11.2015).

³⁴ It is worth noting that most research fellows of the Institute specialise in Baltic history.

It publishes works on the history of the Baltics [26], translates works of Baltic researchers on the German past of Eastern Europe, runs projects, holds conferences, carries out research on the heritage of German diasporas in the Baltics [27], and organises academic visits of Baltic colleagues to German libraries. One of the key achievements of the Institute is the publication of a three-volume history of the Baltics from Antiquity to the beginning of the 21st century — a German version of the Baltic past. [28] Since 2012, a visiting professor from Germany has been teaching a course entitled ‘German History and Culture in the Baltics’ at the University of Tallinn³⁵. During the first five years the course is financed by the German party. The visiting professor regularly organises conferences, open workshops, and summer schools organized jointly with Estonian schools and museums. [29]

The Baltic Historical Commission (Baltische Historische Kommission), established in 1951 in Göttingen, brings together German and Baltic scholars. [30]³⁶ The Commission focuses on studying the Baltic history. The interest in the past of Germans in the Baltics is the starting point for the Commission. An important element of the Baltic Historical Commission is intensive cooperation between German and Baltic historians. The Commission publishes three series of works³⁷ authored by both its members and other specialists in Baltic history. Moreover, the Commission also participates in the publication of the *Baltic History Studies* journal. [31]³⁸ The Commission runs research projects aimed at publishing works on the Baltic studies. Since 1947, the Commission has organised yearly meetings in Göttingen to acquaint a wide audience with reports made by specialists in Baltic history. [32] The Commission’s website offers a large number of materials in the German language³⁹ and several online dictionaries — *The Baltic Biographical Dictionary (Baltisches Biografisches Lexikon)* telling the stories of famous Germans in the history of the Baltics⁴⁰ and *The Baltic Legal Dictionary, 1710—1940 (Baltisches Rechtswörterbuch 1710—1940)* helping to understand the particulars of German law in the Baltic area.

³⁵ A similar course is taught at universities in the Czech Republic, Romania, and Hungary.

³⁶ The 92 permanent members include four Latvians, twelve Estonians, and one Lithuanian. Out of 34 corresponding members, nine are Latvians, eleven Estonians, and one Lithuanian. There is one citizen of Estonia on the Board of the Commission.

³⁷ *Sources for and Studies of Baltic History (Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte)*, *The Works of the Baltic Historical Commission (Schriften der Baltischen Historischen Kommission)*, *The Past and Present of the Baltics (Das Baltikum in Geschichte und Gegenwart)*. The Commission also prints bibliographies of works on Baltic history published in the German language (*Baltische Bibliographie*).

³⁸ Since 2006, the Universities of Tartu and Tallinn publish the annual periodical *Baltic History Studies* in collaboration with the University of Riga. The journal is funded by Estonia, Latvia, and Germany.

³⁹ For instance, ‘The Courland Records of Goods’ (*Kurländische Güterurkunden*), ‘Johann Wilhelm von Krause, Memoires’ (*Johann Wilhelm von Krause, Erinnerungen*), etc.

⁴⁰ Two paper editions were published in 1970 and 1998.

The work of Baltic historians is supported by the Herder Institute, which is located in Marburg and focuses on Eastern European studies. The Herder Institute regularly awards scholarships to Baltic PhD students and researchers who study problems directly or indirectly connected with the German past [33]⁴¹. The Marburg organisations has developed infrastructure and a well-stocked library, whose online catalogue has been translated in English, Russian, Lithuania, Latvian, and Estonian. During their academic visits, scholarship winners study German historiography and acquaint themselves with German literature and documentary sources. The Institute maintains contacts with ex-scholarship recipients, sends out magazines containing information on its current activities, and invites them to summer schools and research colloquia. The Herder Institute also runs projects focusing on German-Baltic history [34]⁴².

There is another institution, indirectly involved in studying Baltic history. *Academia Baltica*⁴³, holds conferences and publishes works on the history of the Baltic region countries. Here, the Baltics are integrated in the context of the Baltic region. [35]

Therefore, a positive image of Germany is partly shaped by a positive interpretation of the common German-Baltic past. Support is provided for works and studies that focus on the cultural potential of the then large German population of the South-East Baltic⁴⁴. Special attention is paid to the achievements of Baltic Germans in art, literature, and architecture. Germany is not ashamed of encouraging research into the ‘sore spots’ of its Baltic past — the Holocaust and World War II. This is explained by the fact that Germany’s politics of memory is based on repentance. Through repentance, Germany presents itself as a country that could admit its guilt in full, which makes it exceptional in comparison to the other states.

⁴¹ In the last seven years, citizens of the Baltics accounted for 15% of all PhD students and scholars visiting the Herder Institute. They studied problems of the Baltic cultural heritage in the context of the resettlement of Baltic Germans, art collections of Baltic German nobility in the 19th century, the culinary culture of Baltic Germans in the Modernity, the language of Lithuanian minority in the North of East Prussia during the interbellum, cultural self-governance and the German minority in Estonia in 1918/25—1940, etc.

⁴² For instance, the ‘Virtual Reading Room for Baltic Archives’ project.

⁴³ One of the Academy’s sponsors is the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia.

⁴⁴ See, for instance,: *Die baltischen Lande im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung* : Livland, Estland, Ösel, Ingermanland, Kurland und Lettgallen; Stadt, Land und Konfession 1500—1721 / hrsg. von Matthias Asche. Teil 1, 2, 3. Münster : Aschendorff, 2010; *Geschichte der Ostsee : Völker und Staaten am Baltischen Meer* / Wolfgang Froese. Gernsbach : Katz, 2008; *Libau : eine baltische Hafenstadt zwischen Barock und Klassizismus* / von Imants Lancmanis. Köln [u. a.] : Böhlau, 2007; *Von der Geschichte zur Gegenwart und Zukunft : mittelständische Wirtschaft, Handwerk und Kultur im baltischen Raum* / Burghart Schmidt (Hg.). Hamburg : DOBU, Wiss. Verl., Dokumentation & Buch, 2006; *Ostseeprovinzen, Baltische Staaten und das Nationale* / Norbert Angermann, Michael Garleff, Wilhelm Lenz (Hg.). Münster : LIT, 2005; *Deutschbaltische Literaturgeschichte* / Gero von Wilpert. München : Beck, 2005, etc.

Significant attention is paid to the networking between German and Baltic research centres and individual scholars. Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian scholars are awarded scholarships, invited to conferences, and given an opportunity to work in German libraries and archives. Historical journals in the German language — published with the active assistance of the German party — serve as a platform for relevant discussions.

The Baltics, as well as in the other regions that once had a large German population, have German communities striving to preserve their national identity through cultivating German culture and traditions and developing contacts between the Baltics and Germany. Such communities often emphasise the significance of local Baltic German culture to the Baltics and the strength and antiquity of the connection between these lands and Germany. Communities organise cultural events and meetings, ensure representation in the public institutions of the Baltics and Germany, and forge connections with non-governmental and religious organisations, foundations, companies, and authorities. Communities also undertake memorial initiatives⁴⁵, search for new partners and funding sources, help in making project applications, etc.

The following German communities are active in the Baltics: The Union of Germans in Latvia⁴⁶ (Verband der Deutschen in Lettland) [36], The ‘Domus Rigensis’ Latvian-German-Baltic Centre (Lettisch-Deutschbaltisches Zentrum “Domus Rigensis”) [37], The *Wiedergeburt* Union of Germans in Latvia (Verein der Deutschen “Wiedergeburt” in Lettland) [38], The Union of Germans in Estonia (Verein der Deutschen in Estland) [39], The German Society in Tallinn, Tartu, the Ida-Viru County, and Narva (Deutsche Gesellschaft) [40], The Union of Germans in Lithuania (Verein der Deutschen Litauens), The *Deutsches Heim* Vilnius Union (Wilnaer Verband “Deutsches Heim”) [41], The Union of Germans in Klaipeda (Verein der Deutschen in Klaipeda) [42], etc.

An analogue of Baltic communities in German is the German-Baltic Society (Deutsch-Baltische Gesellschaft). Since 1950, it has been bringing together Baltic Germans and their descendants from Estonia and Latvia. The organisation is run from Darmstadt. The Society includes nine regional associations and six unions⁴⁷. Organisations from Latvia and Estonia act as associated partners. The German-Baltic society holds conferences, festivals, and concerts to popularise the Baltic German heritage. An important area of the Society’s activities is networking and joint projects with Baltic partners. [43]

Communities collaborate with different German religious organisations active in the Baltics. One of them is the German Evangelic-Lutheran Church

⁴⁵ Installing commemorative plaques, monuments, etc.

⁴⁶ The Union has branches in Daugavpils, Dobele, *Liepāja*, Riga, Valmiera, and Ventspils.

⁴⁷ The Carl Schirren Society (Carl-Schirren-Gesellschaft), The German-Baltic Church Services (Deutsch-Baltischen Kirchlichen Dienst), The German-Baltic Academic Foundation (Deutschbaltische Studienstiftung), The German-Baltic Youth and Student Group (Deutschbaltischen Jugend- und Studentenring), The Union of Baltic Architectural Heritage (Verein Baltische Baudenkmäler), the Genealogical Society (Genealogische Gesellschaft).

in Latvia (Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Lettland) [44], which is committed to religious enlightenment. Alongside services in the German language [45]⁴⁸, the German Evangelic-Lutheran Church in Latvia regularly holds various cultural events. [44]

In conclusion, it is important to stress that the Baltic States are an important region for Germany. It is proved by the intense activity of numerous soft power actors pursuing different strategies for creating a positive image of Germany and promoting German interests in the Baltics. To this end, Germany engages various actors located either in the Baltics or in Germany and working with Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia remotely. In different variations, such actors are characteristic of most Eastern European countries historically connected with Germany.

Firstly, these are political foundations active in most countries of the world⁴⁹. Their activities are affected by the fact that the Baltics border on Russia and members of the Eastern Partnership. Thus, many events held by such foundations have a political component. Within their mission, such foundations focus on the ‘democratisation’ of the EU’s eastern partners in line with the common European policy towards this region⁵⁰. The Baltic States are given the role of a platform reconstructed to meet Western standards for further export of democracy to the East. Of interest are the results of a content analysis of publications by Deutsche Welle — a broadcaster of Germany’s soft power. The Baltic events are often considered through the prism of the EU-Russia relations. For instance, 73 % of the 2015 publications about Estonia mention Russia — the deployment of NATO troops in Estonia in the context of potential Russian aggression, struggle with ‘Russian propaganda’, a court case of the ‘spy’ Kohver, etc. In 47 % of the publications, Russia is presented in a negative light⁵¹.

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia usually hold events that present the European/German perspective on international development. For instance, in 2015, lectures held under the aegis of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation discussed tolerance and the refugee situation in the EU⁵². Moreover, German foundations do not avoid the topic of the Ukraine events. [9]

Secondly, these are foundations and organisations popularising the German language, educations, science, and culture. Here, Germany has achieved

⁴⁸ In Latvia, services are held in Germany in five cities — Riga, Dobele, Valmiera, Daugavpils, and *Liepāja*; in Estonia, in Tallinn, Tartu, and Viljandi.

⁴⁹ For more information on German political foundations, see Pogorelskaya S. V. Germany’s soft power: Political foundations // *Aktualnye problemy Evropy* (Current Problems in Europe, 2014, Issue 3, p. 135—152. [46]

⁵⁰ Events held by German foundations often discuss the problems of freedom of speech and democracy in the post-Soviet space. Moreover, Germany supports the idea of Intermarium, which suggests active cooperation in the Baltic-Black Sea region.

⁵¹ 103 publications were analysed (calculated by the authors).

⁵² In autumn 2015, a series of lectures, entitled ‘Soviet immigration in the context of the Syrian refugee problem’, ‘Racism in Europe and Latvia from the historical point of view’, ‘Who is afraid of Islam?’ [2], and ‘The migration crisis in Europe’ [9], was held in Riga and Tallinn.

significant results. Linguistic, academic, and research programmes do not only help to learn German, develop professional skills, and conduct research, they also acquaint scholarship recipients with German culture and traditions. During academic and research visits to Germany, Baltic students and scientists observe the benefits of the German civilisation. On their return home, familiarised with German culture and often having a good command of German, they become ‘informal agents’ integrated into the system of Germany’s soft power. As a rule, they are often invited to conferences, festivals, summer schools, and cultural events. They also get journals containing information on the activities of German organisations.

The policies of Germany’s soft power actors towards promoting the German language, education, and science are similar to those pursued across Europe. However, this does not hold true for the country’s activities in the Baltics in the field of history and the politics of memory. This area is covered by German academic and cultural foundations, research institutions, and communities. Special attention is paid to the German past of the Baltics⁵³. The positive common history is used as a virtual bridge for creating a positive image of Germany, promoting the country’s interests, and developing relations with the Baltics. In the German nostalgic discourse, the Baltics carry a special Baltic type of German culture.

An important element of these actors’ activities is the memorialisation of famous Baltic Germans who contributed to the development of Baltic German culture — the installation of monuments and memorial plaques⁵⁴, museumification, reissue of their works, support for relevant research, etc. As to history, an important area is networking between German and Baltic researchers studying the German past of the Baltics. Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian scholars focusing on the topic are supported financially and invited to conferences. They are also assisted in translating their works in German and publishing the translations.

When working with the Baltics, Germany does not focus solely on the past. Baltic citizens are familiarised with the key trends in today’s German culture — theatre, cinema, art, literature, music, contemporary art, etc. Using soft power, Berlin has achieved significant success in the Baltics. Germany has a positive image in the Baltics. Its culture, traditions, and the past are respected in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Germany’s soft power makes the country one of the key players in the region, alongside Russia⁵⁵ and Sweden⁵⁶.

⁵³ Primarily, it is the German history of Latvia and Estonia. In Lithuania, special attention is paid to the German past of the Klaipeda (Memel) County — once part of East Prussia — and German-Lithuanian relations.

⁵⁴ For instance the *Domus Rigensis* Latvian-German-Baltic Centre installed commemorative plaques in tribute to the pedagogue, ethnographer, and historian Johann Christoph Brotze, the lawyer and politician Paul Schiemann, the architect Gustav Hilbig, the writer Garlieb Merkel, the author and translator Werner Bergengruen, etc. [37]

⁵⁵ Russia has a strong economic presence in the Baltics, especially, in the transit and food industries. Russia pays special attention to working with ethnic Russians and supporting Russian culture

⁵⁶ Sweden focuses its efforts on the Baltic mass media and banking sector. Many Baltic periodicals, online portals, and banks have Swedish owners.

The article was prepared within Project No. 15-37-01209 'Trends in Germany's policy towards the Baltics in the context of Russia's regional interests' and supported by the Russian Foundation for the Humanities.

References

1. Lanshina, T. A. 2014, "Mjagkaja sila" Germanii: kul'tura, obrazovanie, nauka ["Soft power" in Germany: culture, education, science], *Vestnik mezhdunarodnyh organizacij* [Bulletin of international organizations], no. 2, p. 28—58.
2. Auslandsbüro Lettland, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, 2015, available at: <http://www.kas.de/lettland/de/about/> (accessed 01.10.2015).
3. Studien- und Dialogprogramm für Nachwuchspolitiker aus den Baltischen Staaten, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, 2015, available at: <http://www.kas.de/lettland/de/publications/42658/> (accessed 02.10.2015).
4. Auslandsbüro Belarus, 2015, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, available at: <http://www.kas.de/belarus/de/about/contact/> (accessed 01.10.2015).
5. Präsidentschaftswahl in Litauen geht in die zweite Runde, 2015, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_37784-1522-1-30.pdf?140520102055 (accessed 04.10.2015).
6. Machtwechsel in Litauen, 2015, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_32587-1522-1-30.pdf?121031183056 (accessed 04.10.2015).
7. Regierungsbildung in Lettland, 2015, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_39443-1522-1-30.pdf?141111140631 (accessed 04.10.2015).
8. Saarts, T., Lumi, O. 2013, *Die Entwicklung der Parteienlandschaft in Estland 1991—2011*, available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_36769-1522-1-30.pdf?140205135916 (accessed 04.10.2015).
9. Länderbüro Estland, 2015, *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, available at: <http://www.kas.de/estland/de/about/> (accessed 10.10.2015).
10. Landesbüro Estland, *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, available at: <http://www.fes-baltic.ee/index.php?id=10652> (accessed 11.10.2015).
11. Die Arbeit der FES in den baltischen Staaten, 2015, *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, available at: https://www.fes.de/international/moe/in_moe/estl.htm (accessed 11.10.2015).
12. Stipendien, 2015, *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, available at: <http://www.fes-baltic.ee/index.php?id=10724> (accessed 11.10.2015).
13. Partner, 2015, *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, available at: <http://www.fes-baltic.ee/index.php?id=10723> (accessed 11.10.2015).
14. Bewerbung, 2015, *Friedrich Naumann Stiftung*, available at: <https://www.freiheit.org/content/bewerbung> (accessed 12.10.2015).
15. Netzwerk. Wir bleiben in Verbindung. 2015, *Friedrich Naumann Stiftung*, available at: <https://www.freiheit.org/content/netzwerk> (accessed 12.10.2015).
16. Estland, 2015, *DAAD*, available at: <https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/estland/de/> (accessed 15.09.2015).
17. Lettland, 2015, *DAAD*, available at: <https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/lettland/de/> (accessed 15.09.2015).
18. Litauen, 2015, *DAAD*, available at: <https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/litauen/de/> (accessed 15.09.2015).
19. Baltisch-Deutsches Hochschulkontor, 2015, *DAAD*, available at: <https://www.daad.de/medien/bdtk.pdf> (accessed 15.09.2015).
20. *Das Baltisch-Deutsche Hochschulkontor*, 2015, available at: <http://www.hochschulkontor.lv/> (accessed 15.09.2015).

21. Lettland. Aufgaben und Ziele, 2015, *Goethe-Institut*, available at: <https://www.goethe.de/ins/lv/de/uun/auf.html> (accessed 22.10.2015).
22. Estland. Aufgaben und Ziele, 2015, *Goethe-Institut*, available at: <https://www.goethe.de/ins/ee/de/ueb/auf.html> (accessed 22.10.2015).
23. Litauen. Aufgaben und Ziele, 2015, *Goethe-Institut*, available at: <https://www.goethe.de/ins/lt/de/ueb/auf.html> (accessed 22.10.2015).
24. Makarychev, A. 2013, 2014, Germanija v Baltijskom regione: identičnost', instituty i mnogostoronnjaja diplomatija [Germany in the Baltic region: identity, institutions and multilateral diplomacy], *EvroAtlantika* [Euro-Atlantic], no. 3—4; no. 1, p. 182—188.
25. Das wissenschaftliche Team, 2015, *Nordost-Institut*, available at: <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/wissenschaftliche-mitarbeiterinnen> (accessed 30.08.2015).
26. Publikationen, 2015, *Nordost-Institut*, available at: <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/zeitschrift-nordost-archiv> (accessed 30.08.2015).
27. Forschung, 2015, *Nordost-Institut*, available at: <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/forschung-hauptmenue> (accessed 30.08.2015).
28. Das Baltikum - Geschichte einer europäischen Region, 2015, *Nordost-Institut*, available at: <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/indiv-projekte-mitarbeiter/projekt-das-baltikum> (accessed 30.08.2015).
29. Stiftungsprofessur Tallinn, 2015, *Nordost-Institut*, available at: <http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/stiftungsprofessur-tallinn> (accessed 30.08.2015).
30. *Baltische Historische Kommission. Mitgliederverzeichnis*, 2015, available at: <http://www.balt-hiko.de/mitglieder/> (accessed 06.09.2015).
31. Forschungen zur baltischen Geschichte, 2015, available at: <http://www.fzbg.ut.ee/info.html> (accessed 06.09.2015).
32. *Baltische Historische Kommission*, 2015, available at: <http://www.balt-hiko.de/> (accessed 06.09.2015).
33. Stipendien und Nachwuchsförderung, 2015, *Herder-Institut*, available at: <http://www.herder-institut.de/stipendien-nachwuchsfoerderung.html> (accessed 07.09.2015).
34. Hereditas Baltica — HerBalt — "Virtueller Lesesaal" für baltisches Archivgut, *Herder-Institut*, available at: <http://www.herder-institut.de/forschung-projekte/laufende-projekte/hereditas-baltica-herbalt-virtueller-lesesaal-fuer-baltisches-archivgut.html> (accessed 07.09.2015).
35. Akademie im Ostseeraum, 2015, *Academia Baltica*, available at: <http://www.academiabaltica.de/wirueberuns/index.html> (accessed 09.09.2015).
36. *Verband der Deutschen in Lettland*, 2015, available at: <http://www.verband.lv/index.php?page=verband-der-deutschen-in-lettland-latvijas-vacu-savieniba> (accessed 01.11.2015).
37. Lettisch-Deutschbaltisches Zentrum "Domus Rigensis", 2015, available at: <http://www.verband.lv/index.php?page=lettisch-deutschbaltisches-zentrum-domus-rigensis-latviesu-vacaltu-biedriba-domus-rigensis> (accessed 01.11.2015).
38. Verein der Deutschen "Wiedergeburt" in Lettland, 2015, available at: <http://www.verband.lv/index.php?page=vaciesu-biedriba-wiedergeburt-latvija-verein-der-deutschen-wiedergeburt-in-lettland> (accessed 01.11.2015).
39. Deutsche Minderheit in Estland, 2015, available at: <http://agdm.fuen.org/mitglied-26/estonia/> (accessed 03.11.2015).
40. Deutsche Vereinigungen / Deutsche Minderheiten (Estland), 2015, *Laenderkontakte*, available at: <http://www.laenderkontakte.de/estland/deutsche-vereinigungen> (accessed 03.11.2015).
41. Deutsche Vereinigungen / Deutsche Minderheiten (Litauen), 2015, *Laenderkontakte*, available at: <http://www.laenderkontakte.de/litauen/deutsche-vereinigungen> (accessed 03.11.2015).



42. *Verein der Deutschen in Klaipeda*, 2015, available at: http://www.sdh.lt/de/?page_id=11 (accessed 03.11.2015).

43. *Deutsch-Baltische Gesellschaft*, 2015, available at: <http://www.deutsch-balten.de/index.php/wir-ueber-uns> (accessed 05.11.2015).

44. *Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Lettland*, 2015, available at: <http://www.kirche.lv/> (accessed 06.11.2015).

45. Estland, Lettland, Litauen Stand, 2009, *Länderinformation Baltische Staaten*, Mai, available at: [https://www.ekd.de/baltikum\(4\).pdf](https://www.ekd.de/baltikum(4).pdf) (accessed 07.11.2015).

46. Pogorelskaya, S. V. 2014, "Mjagkaja" sila Germanii: Politicheskie fondy ["Soft" power of Germany: Political foundations], *Aktual'nye problemy Evropy* [Actual problems of Europe], no. 3, p. 135—152.

About the authors

Maksim Megem, Junior Research Fellow, the Laboratory for Social Risk Analysis, Modelling and Forecasting, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Russia.

E-mail: megem@yandex.ru

Dr Ilya Maksimov, Associate Professor, Institute of Social Sciences, Humanities and Communication, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Russia.

E-mail: IMaksimov@kantiana.ru

Polina Gritsaenko, Master's Student, Institute of Social Sciences, Humanities and Communication, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Russia.

E-mail: polina-gritsaenko@mail.ru

To cite this article:

Megem M.E., Maksimov I.P., Gritsaenko P.S. 2016, Key actors of German 'soft power' in the Baltics. *Baltic region*, Vol. 8, no. 1, p. 45—59. doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2016-1-4