

Environmental diplomacy as a form of cooperation between international actors

Svitlana Glibova

Associate professor, Department of International Relations, National Aviation University, 1, Liubomyra Huzara Ave., Kyiv 03058, Ukraine

E-mail: svetly@ukr.net

Abstract. This article is dedicated to the analysis of relatively new phenomena - environmental or green diplomacy. Due attention is paid to the definition of this term. Noting that global community wants to understand the origin of the environmental problems and find ways of their solving, it is mentioned herein that environmental diplomacy may be conducted at international, regional and bilateral level. Green diplomacy means cooperation of state and non-state actors aimed at solving global problems. Special attention of this article is paid to the examination of the institutionalization of the environmental diplomacy, including the study of core international documents, such as Stockholm Declaration, Kyoto Protocol, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, "Changing our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development" document. The UN is engaged in coordinating of the environmental interests of states, governmental and non-governmental organisations that play important role in addressing global challenges.

1. Introduction

Environmental issues are becoming the new subject of discussions of scientists, politicians and civil society. Environmental diplomacy as a phenomenon of the XX-XXI centuries developed as the reaction of the world community to the growing threat of environmental disaster. However, modern research connected with the environmental issues originate from the doctrine of the biosphere of the outstanding Russian scientist and naturalist V I Vernadsky. Vernadsky proved that the biosphere is the outer shell of the Earth, and it is the biosphere that is the place of existence of all living organisms, including humans. But due to the of anthropogenic influence, which appeared as a result of human activity, the new form the biosphere was formed - the noosphere. In the second half of the 20th century, the world community faced a number of problems, these problems became global and a global mechanism for their solution gradually took shape.

2. Materials

Nevertheless ecological or "green" diplomacy is fairly new and a little studied phenomenon, we should mention scientists that conduct researches in this sphere Matveeva E V [1, p. 311], Mohammad S A [2, p. 37], Ohliger T [3], McIntire D [4], Weibner C [5], Bliznetskaya E [6], Alimov E [7].

3. Results

It is worth mentioning that today there is no generally accepted definition of environmental diplomacy, since this type of international activity is only designated as one of the areas of diplomatic activity. For example, D. McIntyre cites the US Department of State's definition of green diplomacy as follows: 'promoting a shared commitment to conserve natural resources through sustainable functioning and responsible management of environmental protection' [4]. K. Weinber gives the following definition: these are "negotiations conducted during conference times, in most cases organized and supported by the UN and ending with the signing of declarations, treaties and agreements [5]. However within the context of globalization some experts consider the exercise of environmental diplomacy in two ways: 1) the whole range of ways to mitigate or overcome negative human impacts on the environment undertaken by the international community through multilateral institutions; 2) as a practice of negotiating between countries in the field of environmental protection [6].

To the opinion of the author of this thesis there is also one way that might be defined as a separate outer form of environmental performance of the functions of the state - the green embassy. Namely the intentional initiative of the states to use the new renewable sources of energy for the provision of the functioning of the foreign representatives aimed at promoting positive image of the state. For example, since 2015 Italy has launched the new initiative called "Green embassy" aimed at reduction of the environmental impact of the embassy buildings, thanks to eco-friendly energy generation and waste management. For example the Embassy of Italy in London aims for "Zero Waste". After being the first diplomatic office in the United Kingdom to be equipped with a photovoltaic system for the production of electricity, it is now the first to have set itself a goal of eco-sustainability with an all-encompassing approach. Thanks to an agreement with two innovative Italian companies in the field of sustainable economy, it has drastically cut non-recyclable waste, while 100% of the energy consumed comes from renewable sources [18].

Unsorted waste now represents only about 20% of the total compared to about 50% of separate collection and about 30% of organic waste. The collaboration with Italian companies - in addition to the advantage of significant savings in energy terms and the reduction of costs incurred - has allowed the state to combine attention to the environment with the promotion of the Italian system [18].

The Embassy in London has also launched other green initiatives through the disposal and recycling of technological equipment and discarded IT equipment, the use of ecological paper for photocopiers and printers, the gradual replacement of existing lighting with low consumption light bulbs. The Permanent Representation of Italy to the United Nations has abolished the use of single-use plastic: blocking the purchases of non-recyclable plastic products, as well as external services that use single-use products. In addition, it promotes awareness activities on the importance of reducing plastic pollution and adopting eco-sustainable behaviours both among staff and visitors, asking in particular not to enter the Representation carrying disposable plastic items [18].

The other initiative within the comprehensive program of the Italian embassy is the 'Quid noctis'. This Farnesina project guarantees energy savings that can be quantified at 40,000 euros per year, only thanks to the centralized management of the shutdown methods of ministerial PCs. The workstations currently involved are 2400 and have been intelligently programmed to zero consumption in the hours in which they are not used. The "power management" rules are applied both in working hours and in the night, according to methods aimed at maximizing energy savings [18].

Modern environmental diplomacy develops in three levels: 1) international level - within the UN; 2) regional level - multilateral agreements and organizations; 3) bilateral agreements on ecology. At multilateral level the environmental diplomacy is focused on the following issues: a) climate diplomacy, b) ozone diplomacy, c) conservation of biodiversity, d) chemical conventions, e) cluster for the protection of seas and oceans [6].

Climate diplomacy is currently the main issue of international cooperation in the field of ecology. Environmental diplomacy also includes complex connections between external and internal policy (system of certain measures) and politics (sphere of relations). The close relationship between

domestic and foreign policy in the field of environmental diplomacy leads to the fact that active participants of international cooperation in this area are not only national states, but also large TNCs and public organizations. It is difficult to separate environmental cooperation from interaction in other areas, depending on the solution of specific problems, cooperation can be of a political, economic, scientific and technical or legal nature [6].

When speaking about the global dimension of green diplomacy, one should mention the role of the UN that launched the first programs for the preservation and protection of the natural environment and fostered the adoption and formalization of environmental legislation. The UN system has about 44 organizations responsible for a certain range of environmental issues [7]. The modern international environmental protection system was formalized at the UN Stockholm Conference in 1972 with the adoption of the United Nations Environment Program and the Stockholm Declaration, which consolidated the basic 26 principles of environmental protection including the right of every person to favourable living conditions, rational use of natural resources, international cooperation on addressing environmental issues [8]. The new concept of sustainable development, which underlies international green diplomacy nowadays was presented at this conference for the first time. Other provisions on the need for international cooperation are also contained in UN General Assembly Resolution No. 37/7 of October 29, 1982 World Charter for Nature [9], UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Declarations on environment and development and in many other documents.

In 1983, as a result of growing concern about environmental degradation and the rapid depletion of natural resources, the International Commission on Environment and Development was formed at the UN. The work of this commission resulted in the report "Our Common Future", published in 1987, which definitively defined sustainable development as one of the main directions of environmental diplomacy [10]. During the 1992 UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro the basic principles of environmental law were defined, complementary to the provisions of the Stockholm Declaration and mainly focused on the concept of sustainable development [11].

The first global environmental agreement can be called the Kyoto Protocol 1997 it was the first fundamental international document designed to regulate the problem of climate change. However due to the varying degrees of interest of countries in adopting the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol, its ratification was hindered by countries with a high level of industrial development, such as the United States and China [12].

In 2000, at the international Millennium Summit, the UN Millennium Declaration was adopted, which also consolidated the obligations of the world community to protect the natural environment and other global problems. The Declaration secured the responsibility of each individual country for monitoring the state of the environment and the results of achieving the set goals [13].

20 years after the adoption of the UN Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the next large-scale international UN conference called "Rio + 20" was held. The result of this conference was a document called "The Future We Want"[14].

In 2015, New York hosted one of the largest UN summits on sustainable development, which resulted in the signing of a document entitled "Changing our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development." This document contains a comprehensive and universal action plan of the world community for the application of the concept of sustainable development, the development of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources [15]. In the same year, the UN international conference on climate change was held in Paris, the purpose of which was to sign a universal and binding international agreement on combating climate change.

Thus, the UN is engaged in coordination of the environmental interests of states and the implementation of environmental diplomacy on a system-wide scale.

There is also a regional level of green diplomacy, that is, environmental activities conducted primarily by regional environmental institutions to implement local environmental protection programs. The most striking example of the use of green regional diplomacy - it is an environmental policy implemented by EU member states. Within the EU a huge number of environmental programs

are applied to develop renewable energy sources, protect flora and fauna, and combat pollution of water and land resources.

The modern stage of globalization is characterized by an increase the number of institutions involved in the implementation of green diplomacy, including nongovernmental organisations, such as WWF, Greenpeace, European Environment Agency, Green Cross International and Charles Darwin Foundation. Greenpeace activists quite often arrange outrageous actions and thereby provoke various conflicts [16].

Green diplomacy is distinguished by a number of characteristic non-military methods of its implementation, such as organizing various environmental events (green film festivals, eco-forums, campaigns to collect and recycling, various educational seminars and projects), consultations and negotiations on emerging environmental problems, the signing of bilateral and multilateral environmental agreements. There also may be some economic protection instruments of the environment: penalties for causing damage to the natural environment; ecological taxes; subsidies to producers seeking to make their production more environmentally friendly; development of the natural resources and much more [17].

Despite the active development and popularization of green diplomacy, it faces a number of problems that impede its effective implementation. One of the most important problems is the bureaucratization of the green diplomacy. Thus, the UN's environmental activities are accompanied by a huge number of commissions, convention secretariats and other subsidiary bodies, which often complicate the green resolution process and, as a consequence, the entry into force of some documents. Secondly, the North-South problem is also relevant for environmental diplomacy; developing countries of the South do not have the necessary financial resources to carry out environmental activities.

Another obstacle to environmental diplomacy is the "sectoral" approach to solving environmental issues. Due to the prevalence of various environmental problems in certain countries and regions, there is a focus on certain aspects of environmental development rather than solving the whole range of environmental problems. Attention should also be paid to an increasing number of international conflicts based on environmental considerations and lack of natural resources [16].

However, we should mention that the implementation of new methods of green management in the activity of the states and their embassies provides new spheres of cooperation. Such as at the Italian Embassy in Brasilia, the Green Embassy project promotes the use of sustainable technologies for the production of energy and the disposal and recycling of water. In collaboration with Enel, a 50 kWp photovoltaic system was installed in 2012 on a portion of the Embassy roof. In addition, a constructed wetland system for the residual waters of the Embassy was built, located in the gardens of the Embassy. The treatment process, which culminates in the absorption of organic matter by the selected plants, returns water of excellent quality, used directly for irrigation, without having to be fixed into the sewer system. The ambition, crowned with success, was and is to be a stimulus and an example to imitate, reaching a large number of users, promoting behaviours capable of reducing the environmental impact of energy production and use of water in buildings. The experience of the Green Embassy has generated, within the EU delegation in Brasilia, an ad hoc group that develops new methodologies and applications in collaboration with local authorities.

The Embassy of Italy in Bern has joined the Swiss Red Cross program "Every cartridge counts", an initiative that combines environmental protection and social commitment. The Swiss Red Cross offers municipal offices, hospitals and companies a free service to dispose of used toner and ink cartridges. The company that then recycles the cartridges donates a donation to the Red Cross for humanitarian activities, especially in favor of needy families in Switzerland [18].

The buildings of the Embassy and of the Italian Cultural Institute in Vienna (Palazzo Metternich and Palazzo Sternberg) and of the Permanent Representation to International Organizations have received the prestigious "green certification" from one of the main Austrian electricity operators: the entire electricity requirement of the offices is insured by renewable sources (80% by hydroelectric

energy and the remaining 20% largely by wind energy), at lower costs than in previous supply contracts [18].

The Consulate General of Chongqing is located in the new WFC building, a project based on advanced green building standards to allow advanced energy saving measures (thermal insulation, low consumption air conditioning system, elevators with energy feedback).

The Embassy in Tehran has put into operation a photovoltaic system of 36 photovoltaic panels of 250 watts each (for a total area of about 115 square meters) and a 10KVA electric inverter, also allowing cost containment. To further reduce electricity consumption by up to 70%, night lighting and LED office lamps were also installed in the garden and in the offices [18].

The initiatives carried out within the Farnesina Verde are flanked by the commitment of the MAECI to promote the Forum of the Green Embassies, a group that since 2015 has brought together accredited foreign embassies and international organizations present in the Italian capital and committed to promoting higher environmental standards. In practice, through a series of meetings, the Group favours and shares examples, practices, methodologies and experiences in the field of the rational use of energy resources such as the promotion of initiatives for the improvement of separate waste collection, to promote green certification, low consumption lighting, energy savings, reduced water consumption, increased employee awareness on these issues and healthy behavioural habits [18].

4. Conclusions

Environmental diplomacy continues actively to develop and form as an integral part of the system of international relations. Due to the importance of this phenomena a wide range of international actors take part in international cooperation for the environmental protection. Green diplomacy tools are applied in countries around the world, contributing to the protection of the environment, as well as improving the international image of "ecological" countries. At the same time such challenges as overburocratization of the green diplomacy, the North-South problem and national "sectoral" approach to solving environmental issues should be faced.

References

- [1] Matveeva E V 2010 Environmental policy of the EU Nignyi Novgorod Lobachevsky University № 6 pp 311–316
- [2] Mohammad S S 2013 International environmental management of the EU *Euroasian legal review* № 12 pp 37–39
- [3] Ohliger T 2017 Environment policy: general principles and basic framework *European Parliament*. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.4.1.html
- [4] McIntire D 2014 Eco-Diplomacy: Building the Foundation *The Foreign Service Journal*. [Electronic resource]: <http://www.afsa.org/eco-diplomacy-building-foundation>
- [5] Weinber C 1998 From Environmental Diplomacy to Environmentally Sound Diplomacy *Conference report «Environment diplomacy»*. pp 25–30
- [6] Bliznetskaya E A Research and teaching of the multilateral environmental diplomacy [Electronic resource]. URL: https://lomonosov-msu.ru/archive/Lomonosov_2015/data/7065/uid42746_report.pdf
- [7] Bliznetskaya E A 2012 International environmental management: prospectives and crucial issues of implementation *MIIR Review*. 2012. N 2 p 152
- [8] Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment *Stockholm, 1972* [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/dunche/dunche.html>
- [9] World Charter for Nature [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/39295>
- [10] International Commission on Environment and Development Report "Our Common Future", 1987 [Electronic resource]: <http://www.un.org/ru/ga/pdf/brundtland.pdf>

- [11] Rio de Janeiro Declaration 1992 [Electronic resource]:
http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/riodecl.shtml
- [12] Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 1997 [Electronic resource]. URL:
http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/kyoto.shtml
- [13] The UN Millennium Declaration 2000 // [Electronic resource]. URL:
http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/summitdecl.shtml
- [14] Resolution adopted by the General Assembly «The future we want» on 27 July 2012 [Electronic resource]. URL:
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement>
- [15] Kiku D The United Nations: New Horizons for Sustainable Development [Electronic resource]. URL: http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=6574#top-content
- [16] Alimov A and Shestakova A I 2017 Environmental diplomacy in the XXI century *Society. Environment. Development* № 2 pp 97–101 [Electronic resource]. URL:
<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/ekologicheskaya-diplomatiya-v-xxi-veke>
- [17] Avdeeva T G 2001 Environmental diplomacy *International life*. №5 pp 37–48 [Electronic resource]. URL:
<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/ekologicheskaya-politika-i-ekologicheskaya-diplomatiya-ponyatiynyy-apparat-i-otdelnye-problemy>
- [18] Farnesina Verde. Le iniziative della Farnesina [Electronic resource]. URL:
<https://www.esteri.it/mae/en/ministero/farnesinaverde/farnesina-verde-le-iniziative-della-farnesina.html>