

THE YUNUS EMRE ENSTITÜSÜ– CULTURAL AMBASSADOR OF TÜRKIYE

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the implementation of the official foreign policy objectives of Türkiye in the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute as its “cultural ambassador” in Constanța Romania for a six-month period (July 2025- January 2026), in order to evaluate the consistency between official political goals at global level and everyday cultural undertakings at local level. The study identifies recurrent cultural themes in the activities of the Yunus Emre branch in Constanța and their strong connection to the a) stated (“official”) objectives and b) deduced principles & values of official foreign policy.*

Keywords: *foreign policy, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, the Yunus Emre Institute, culture*

Introduction

In the past years Turkish culture has gained more international visibility through the increasing popularity of Television dramas, Turkish music, food, and even Turkish Airlines as a sponsor of many sports events, which, in turn, has contributed to the improvement of Türkiye’s image abroad. A corresponding rise in tourism can be observed, the country having received 60.6 million tourists in 2024, a 9.8% increase from the previous year.² Against this background of discernible foreign attraction, the present research paper serves as an investigation of the mechanisms of Turkish

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² United Nations World Tourism Organization, “UN Tourism Data Dashboard”, 2025, <https://www.untourism.int/tourism-data/un-tourism-tourism-dashboard>.

cultural diplomacy assumingly employed with the purpose of boosting the country's international image and prestige.

Due to the complex nature of undertaking an analysis of a state's cultural agenda abroad, this study will focus solely on the activity of the Yunus Emre Institute in the Dobrogea region of Romania (specifically the county of Constanța). Accordingly, this paper is constructed around the following research question: *How do the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța reflect the objectives of the Turkish foreign policy cultural agenda?* In order to provide an answer, this study aims to 1) offer a general account of the foreign policy of Türkiye and its objectives, 2) present the country's international cultural agenda through its public and cultural diplomacy strategies, 3) introduce (at broad level) the Yunus Emre Institute and 4) present the main activities carried out by the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța as a relevant case study. Methodologically, the analysis will consist of the identification of recurrent cultural themes in the activities of the Yunus Emre branch and their correlation to the a) stated objectives and b) deduced principles & values of official foreign policy. Lexical analysis, as well as rhetorical and connotation analysis, will be conducted on the official texts and statements of policy in order to determine the fundamental values and principles underlying the foreign cultural agenda.

Theoretical Framework

This paper references three main concepts: soft power, cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy. In this section, each will be outlined and connected to the case of Türkiye and the Yunus Emre Institute.

The notion of "soft power" as coined by Joseph Nye suggests that "[a] country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it; [...] soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others".³ In short, the soft power of a country can be understood as its capacity to influence the behaviour of other countries through attraction, as opposed to coercion.

³ Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004, p. 5.

“Cultural diplomacy” and “public diplomacy” are highly debated notions and the distinction between them is often abstract.

On the one hand, “cultural diplomacy” as a concept can generally be understood as “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding”.⁴ Moreover, “cultural diplomacy” refers to “a long-term process involving a range of policies, initiatives, and activities for the purpose of advancing national interests [...] it concerns three areas of national interest: cultural identity (social), soft power (political), and the creative economy”.⁵ On the other hand, “public diplomacy” can be defined as “a complex of activities carried out or supported by a state which focuses on influencing public opinion abroad with the aim of reaching or promoting a certain foreign policy goal”.⁶ In addition, it is generally seen as a “one-way information flow” focused on portraying a highly positive image of one’s country to foreign audiences. For this reason, the concept is often associated with propaganda.⁷

The main conceptual difference between “public diplomacy” and “cultural diplomacy” is observed in terms of the entity tasked with undertaking the activities. For the former, the government of a state attempts to manage the international context through facilitating cultural interactions with the aim of influencing foreign audiences.⁸ For the latter, professionalised actors in each cultural field engage in the international environment through the medium of cultural resources and facilitate cultural exchanges.

⁴ Milton C. Cummings, “Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey”, 2009, <https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/MCCpaper.pdf>.

⁵ Hyungseok Kang, “Reframing Cultural Diplomacy: International Cultural Politics of Soft Power and the Creative Economy”, 2011, <https://culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2011-08-loam/Reframing-Cultural-Diplomacy-International-Cultural-Politics-of-Soft-Power-and-the-Creative-Economy-Hyungseok-Kang.pdf>.

⁶ Erik Pajtinka, “Public Diplomacy as a Theoretical Problem: Searching for a Definition”, in *European Journal of Transformation Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019, pp. 21-32.

⁷ Jan Melissen, “The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice”, in Jan Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 13, 16-17.

⁸ Hans Tuch, *Communicating With the World: US Public Diplomacy Overseas*, New York: St Martin’s Press, 1990, p. 3.

In the case of Türkiye however, the conceptual lines become blurred once again. Due to the increased and significant central executive involvement in directing cultural activities and exchanges aimed at foreign public the notion of “public diplomacy” is most often applied.⁹ Contrastingly, on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the promotion of Türkiye abroad is carried out under the umbrella of “cultural diplomacy”.¹⁰ In light of this, the main hypothesis of the paper is that the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute can be placed within the scope of “cultural diplomacy” as an instrument of “public diplomacy”¹¹ following the differentiation between the main actors involved.

Turkish Foreign Policy

For the purposes of this study all information regarding the foreign policy agenda of Türkiye is gathered from the official publications of the Turkish government.

The foreign policy of Türkiye is officially described as “the embodiment of a bridge between the tradition and the future”.¹² In line with this, four objectives of Türkiye’s national foreign policy can be identified.

First, Turkish foreign policy is aimed at strengthening regional peace and security through facilitating the fight against terrorism and extremism (seen as global threats), through promoting and engaging in conflict prevention, peaceful resolution and mediation as means of preventing humanitarian crises, as well as through prioritising regional ownership (through organisations such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation or the Southeast European Cooperation Process).¹³

⁹ Federico Donelli, “Persuading through Culture, Values and Ideas: The Case of Turkey’s Cultural Diplomacy”, in *Insight Turkey*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2019, pp. 113-134.

¹⁰ Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Promotion of Türkiye Abroad”, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/promotion-of-turkiye-abroad.en.mfa>, accessed January 10, 2026.

¹¹ Mehmet Ali Uğur, Ahmet Fethi Gün, “Turkish Cultural Diplomacy and Yunus Emre Institutes: the Cases of North Macedonia and Serbia”, in *Codrul Cosminului*, vol. 2, no. 30, 2004, pp. 325-348.

¹² Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “National Foreign Policy in ‘The Century of Türkiye’”, 2025, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

Second, the Republic seeks to expand the institutional basis of its foreign relations. This objective should be tackled both through efforts to deepen existing relations (in NATO, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and in the Organisation of Turkic States) and through initiatives to establish new relations.¹⁴

Third, Türkiye strives to promote economic development and prosperity in its region through regional connectivity via transport corridors.

Fourth, the Republic of Türkiye aims to influence the transformation of the global system into a fairer and more inclusive system. Accordingly, it supports cooperation and effective multilateralism, a humanitarian-development nexus targeting inclusive economic growth and equitable distribution (“The World is Bigger than Five”),¹⁵ humanitarian aid programs, and institutional reform of the UN and other international organisations. Furthermore, the official text emphasised the need for transparency, anti-discrimination measures, dialogue, diversity and inclusive policies.¹⁶

Turkish Public and Cultural Diplomacy

On the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye there is no official publication listing all the institutions, bodies or agencies playing a role in Turkish cultural diplomacy. The only mention of these participants references “the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and academic circles” as collaborators of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁷ Similarly, the text of Presidential Decrees regulating the organisational structure of the before-mentioned government ministries is not made available on official websites, and no official statement is made on distinctly cultural objectives. Because of this, the present research fails to provide an accurate overview of all the actors involved in Turkish cultural diplomacy.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Motto coined by the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan referencing the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and thus indicating the need for the democratisation of the institution

¹⁶ Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “National Foreign Policy in ‘The Century of Türkiye’”, 2025, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>.

¹⁷ *Idem*, “Promotion of Türkiye Abroad”, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/promotion-of-turkiye-abroad.en.mfa>, accessed January 10, 2026.

In terms of overseas promotion, all activities of state actors involved in Turkish cultural diplomacy aim to: facilitate communication, eradicate prejudices, provide accurate information, forge a positive image, and cultivate awareness. These promotional endeavours play an essential role in achieving the success of cultural diplomacy within the wider framework of the foreign policy agenda.¹⁸ The recurrent events organised by Turkish diplomatic missions focus on promoting a modern global image of the country, as well as its rich cultural traditions. Some of the annual events organised all across the world are: “Turkish culture days/weeks”, “Turkish film days”, “Turkish food week”, festivals, various art exhibitions, dance performances, concerts, conferences and seminars on culture and art, poem readings, literature days.¹⁹ It can be observed that most cultural activities and events follow two complementary levels, mainly high culture (literature, modern art, education) and popular culture. On each level, both public and private actors participate.²⁰

The Yunus Emre Institutes

The Yunus Emre Foundation was established by law number 5653 in 2007 “to promote Türkiye, Turkish language, its history and culture and art, make such related information and documents available for use in the world, provide services abroad to people who want to have education in the fields of Turkish language, culture and art, to improve the friendship between Türkiye and other countries and increase the cultural exchange”.²¹

It is the first public organisation systematically building cultural links with foreign societies, both at home (targeting minorities living within Türkiye) and abroad (focus on Turkish Diaspora communities and on foreign citizens interested in Turkish culture). It was created in order to facilitate a better coordination of Turkish cultural centres through a structure affiliated to the government. The Yunus Emre Institutes represent the branches of the foundation in different countries of the world. They were created following the model

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Cultural Activities Organised Abroad and Bilateral Agreements”, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/cultural-activities-organized-abroad.en.mfa>, accessed February 1, 2026.

²⁰ Donelli, *art. cit.*, p. 113-134.

²¹ Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, “Yunus Emre Institute”, 2026, <https://www.yee.org.tr/en/node/59>.

of other cultural institutes such as the Goethe Institute or the British Council. Their location reflects the prioritisation of the Balkan and Middle East regions, in accordance with the strategic promotion of a common cultural heritage and cultural proximity to countries in those areas.²² Correspondingly, the first centre was opened abroad in 2007 and located in Sarajevo. Currently, there are 93 branches of the Institute in 69 countries.²³

According to the Institute’s President, the organisation’s vision is to “connect with people around the world who build bonds with Türkiye and increase the number of friends of Türkiye”, while its mission is to “increase Türkiye’s international recognition, reliability, and prestige”. The Institute’s contribution in Turkish cultural diplomacy is guided by the motto “From Türkiye woven with iron railways to Türkiye weaving the world with cultural networks in its 100th year” and applies Yunus Emre’s principle “Let’s get to know each other”.²⁴

The primary activity of the Yunus Emre cultural centres abroad is teaching the Turkish language. The Institute provides several formats for language learning mainly through a distant Turkish teaching portal (independent study), through educational videos, through online courses (with a teacher) and on site courses. Additional activities of the Institutes cover fields like visual art, ecological art, traditional craftsmanship and skills, archaeology, food and cultural diplomacy training.²⁵

The “I prefer Turkish Initiative” is one of the most relevant programs launched by the Yunus Emre Institute in various host countries. In simple terms, this initiative aims to introduce Turkish as an elective foreign language in official curricula, alongside English, German, French or Spanish. As part of this effort, the Institute is involved in the development of school curricula and in the preparation of textbooks for first and second level of basic education. This initiative was successful in Romania (Constanța), Jordan (Amman), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo and Mostar), Georgia (Tbilisi and Batumi), Japan (Tokyo) and Poland (Warsaw).²⁶

²² Donelli, *art. cit.*, pp. 113-134.

²³ Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, *art. cit.*

²⁴ Aliy Abdurrahman, “President’s Message”, 2024, <https://www.yee.org.tr/en/node/60>.

²⁵ Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, “Learn Turkish”, 2026, <https://turkce.yee.org.tr/en/>.

²⁶ *Idem*, “Elective Turkish Courses”, 2026, <https://www.yee.org.tr/en/node/69>.

Case Study: The Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța, Romania

The last official census recorded that 20.945 ethnic Turks lived in Romania in 2021, with 16.121 residing in Constanța county.²⁷ Turkish culture is visibly present in Constanța not only as a consequence of the long history of cohabitation of Romanian and Turkish communities in the area, but also because of the existence of several educational centres and departments in public institutions dedicated to the Turkish minority. The Kemal Atatürk National College in Medgidia, the Zübeyde Hanım Kindergarten in Constanța, and the Romanian-Turkish and English-Turkish departments of Ovidius University of Constanța are only a few examples. Moreover, a Turkish school is in the process of being built in Constanța by the Maarif Foundation as an addition to the already-existing one in Bucharest.²⁸

In the remainder of this section this study will offer a comprehensive list of all the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța Romania for the period between July 2025 and January 1st 2026.²⁹ The main recurrent activities are: Turkish language courses, Turkish language proficiency exams, traditional Ebru water painting courses and workshops, soap figurines workshops. These activities represent the foundation of the Institute's work in a host country.

During the six month period subjected to analysis the Institute was involved in 15 school visits as part of the "I prefer Turkish" Initiative in which pupils participated in Turkish language classes, Ebru painting workshops, soap sculpture making, general knowledge quizzes and various games; it hosted or attended 5 commemoration events – 2 dedicated to significant historical events (30.08 Turkish Victory Day, 29.10 the 102 year anniversary of the Republic) and 3 to the passing of relevant figures (22.10 Prof. Dr. Mustafa Ali Mehment who was involved in the cultural dialogue between Romania and

²⁷ Institutul Național de Statistică, "Populația după etnie la recensămintele din perioada 1930-2021 (Etnii, Județe) – Tabel 2.01", 2021, <https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-rpl-2021/rezultate-definitive/>.

²⁸ Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Our Kinsmen in Romania/ Türkiye-Romania Bilateral Cultural Relations", 2021, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/Romanya_Kulturel_en.en.mfa.

²⁹ Retrieved from the Instagram page of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța, <https://www.instagram.com/yeekostence?igsh=dG1sYml2cmd5bGlj>, accessed January 28, 2026.

Türkiye, 10.11 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founder of the Republic of Türkiye, 27.12 Turkish national poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy) – it received/paid 10 visits from/to relevant figures (2.07 and 20.08 by General Major Abdullah Soydemir interim commander of the South Eastern Multinational Corps of NATO, 9.10 by the embassy’s domestic affairs counsellors, 17.10 to the Turkish Minister of Justice, 20.10 and 28.10 by the new Consul General of Türkiye, Derya Dingiltepe, 20.10 visit to the National Military Museum “Regele Ferdinand I” – for possible collaboration, 21.10 by the representatives of the National Administration of Romanian Waters – environment and water protection efforts, 11.11 by the Vice President of the Department for Turkic State Relations of the Provincial Organisation of the AK Party, 23.12 by the President of the Romanian Illustrators’ Club, Patricia Suliman) and organised 10 events for the celebration of international/national days (11.07 Aşure Day - Turkish dish symbolising the harmonious cohabitation of various cultures, the spirit of sharing and the feeling of societal unity- 15.07 Democracy and National Unity Day, 29.09 International Turkish Language Day – language courses, Ebru painting, flower making out of silkworm cocoons, soap figurines and calligraphy, 1.10 International Coffee Day, 5.10 Education Day, 24.11 Turkish Professor/Teacher Day, 3.12 International People with Disabilities Day, 5.12 International Turkish Coffee Day– presentation of the history, coffee and dessert tasting, 15.12 International Turkic Family Languages Day, and 18.12 National Minorities Day).

All other events organised by the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța that cannot be classified in a distinct category are listed in the table below.

Table 1 Activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța between July and December 2025

Date	Event
06.07 – 01.08.2025	Participation of Romanian pupils studying Turkish at the Turkish Summer School in Türkiye
09.07.2025	Call launched for scholarship programs for Turkish citizens living in Diaspora
13.07.2025	Turkish breakfast with A1 students
15.08.2025	Hot air balloon painting workshop for children
23.08.2025	Flower making from silkworm cocoons workshop for children
01.09.2025	Certification program in Turkology

Date	Event
7-8.09.2025	The Istanbul State Orchestra to play in the Casino in Constanța as part of the George Enescu International Festival
06.10.2025	Anadolu University – opportunity to take exams from anywhere in the world
09.10.2025	Shadows theatre creative workshop for children
08.10.2025	Architecture models contest – Romanian and Turkish architecture
17.11.2025	Call for registering at the Istanbul Education Summit (to take place between 5-6 December) – “Healing the World through Education”
28.11.2025	School event with Romanian and Turkish traditional dishes
09.12.2025	Children’s contest for Turkish poetry reciting
November-December	“Following Cultural Legacy – the Balkans” (7 week program for Turkish language courses with participants from 10 countries)
17.12.2025	book launch “Secolul Armoniei 1923-2023 – Romanian Turkish relations”

Analysis

In order to provide an answer to the research question “How do the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța reflect the objectives of the Turkish foreign policy cultural agenda?”, this section will correlate the recurrent cultural themes found in the activities of the Yunus Emre centre in Constanța to the a) stated objectives and b) deduced values of official foreign policy. The extent of this correlation observed on the basis of the analysis will serve as the criterion validating or invalidating the hypothesis that the Yunus Emre Institute acts within the scope of “cultural diplomacy”, while it also serves as an instrument for Turkish “public diplomacy”.

The activities undertaken by the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța can be considered successful at least in pursuing the aims of any Turkish actor involved in cultural diplomacy exposed in the official agenda statement. Both the school visits and the meetings with relevant Romanian and Turkish authorities indeed facilitate communication between Romanian and Turkish communities, the educational posts on social media, the different courses or workshops organised and the commemoration of important historical events can be considered a forum where accurate information about Turkish culture

is provided to the public in Constanța, and the celebrations of some international/national days such as International People with Disabilities Day, the Democracy and National Unity Day or National Minority Day does show the Institute's commitment to cultivate awareness. When it comes to the aims of eradicating prejudices and forging a positive image a comprehensive evaluation of their fulfilment would require a qualitative analysis of a public opinion survey which falls outside of the scope of this paper.

The first objective of the Turkish foreign policy is focused on strengthening regional peace and security. For the six month period investigated in this research, there were no events organised or participated in that completely overlap with this aim. However, the choice to inform the Romanian public (through Instagram and Facebook posts) specifically of the visits received by the director of the branch in Constanța from representatives of NATO (military security) and the National Administration of Romanian Waters (environmental security), as well as the visit paid to the National Military Museum can be taken as reflections of the commitment to this goal. Moreover, the prioritisation of education as shown through the celebration of World Education Day and Turkish Professor/Teacher Day, the promotion of the Istanbul Education Summit (with the motto of "Healing the World Through Education"), the 15 schools visits and the 5 educational posts on various topics, coupled with events highlighting the friendly relations between Romania and Türkiye (football matches, architectural models contest, common traditional dishes, the book launch and the participation of Romanian pupils in the Turkish Summer School) can also be interpreted as soft power efforts intended to prevent conflicts and facilitate mediation through familiarity building at the level of the society.

The second objective to expand the institutional basis of Türkiye's foreign relations is pursued at regional level through the "I prefer Turkish" initiatives carried out in several schools in Constanța. Through the Institute's efforts to expand the Turkish knowledge of Romanian pupils, it effectively lays the ground for the inclusion of Turkish as an elective foreign language in school curricula and thus furthering the institutionalisation of the language. Activities that fall under the scope of this objective serve as mechanisms to deepen the existing relationship between Romania and Türkiye, which in turn, can facilitate later development of this country's relationship with

Europe. In addition, possible cooperations between Romanian organisation (like the National Administration of Romanian Waters or the National Military Museum) and the Yunus Emre Institute, or partnerships between universities (Anadolu University opportunity) also represent ways in which the institutional basis of Türkiye's foreign relations is expanded.

There are no activities of the Institute identified that reflect the third objective of Turkish national foreign policy to promote economic development and prosperity in the region.

The fourth objective is the broadest one and thus also the most visible one through the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța. The events celebrating Aşure Day (symbol for societal unity and multiculturalism), National Minorities Day, International People with Disabilities Day and Education Day, as well as the events commemorating personalities involved in the facilitation of dialogue between Romanian communities and Turkish ones, reflect the commitment to make the global system more fair and inclusive through the promotion of anti-discrimination, dialogue and diversity. The meetings with representatives of NATO and of the Department for Turkic State Relations of the Provincial Organisation of the AK Party highlight Türkiye's commitment to multilateralism, as exposed in this aim.

Consequently, it was observed that three out of the four stated national foreign policy objectives of Türkiye are reflected to some degree in the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța. This can be understood as an genuine indication that the activities undertaken as part of the "cultural diplomacy" represent an instrument of the country's "public diplomacy" due to their adherence to guidelines set by the relevant government body.

By analysing the choice of words in the official texts published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning Turkish foreign policy priorities, the following words or idioms were found as repetitive: international community, peace, multilateralism, universal human values, solidarity, humanitarian development, inclusivity, diversity, dialogue, and anti-discrimination. It follows that the intentional reiteration of these terms or expressions demonstrates their apparent importance for the Ankara government. Consequently, they are considered the deduced principles & values of official Turkish foreign policy. The key words identified in the formulation of Instagram posts covering the activities of the Institute exposed in this section are: tradition,

pride, friendship, dialogue, respect, education, shared cultural heritage and gratitude. Their repetition emphasises the practical values wished to be associated with Turkish culture.

Conclusion

In short, this study achieved three out of four of its initial aims, mainly to provide an overview of Turkish foreign policy and its objectives, to present the Yunus Emre Institute and to showcase the activities of the branch in Constanța. The goal to present the country's international cultural agenda through its public and cultural diplomacy strategies could not be realised in full due to the limitations posed by the inaccessibility of the data required to do so. Generally, the paper offered a simple framework provided by official statements of policy, that serves as the basis for the analysis of practical activities and initiatives undertaken by the Institute, and the subsequent interpretations.

The main shortcoming of this study lays in the limited access to comprehensive and detailed official publications concerning the mechanisms behind Turkish cultural diplomacy, especially in terms of actors involved and, more importantly, distinct cultural objectives.

To answer the research question, the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța reflect three of the four stated objectives of Turkish foreign policy, mainly of strengthening regional peace and security, expanding the institutional base of Türkiye's foreign relations and influencing the transformation of the global system into a fairer and more inclusive one, through the facilitation of dialogue at the level of the local communities (especially for pupils, but also with public authorities), the promotion of traditional Turkish art and cuisine, through education and knowledge development. Also, they strive towards fulfilling the tasks expected of any actor involved in Turkish cultural diplomacy, mainly that of facilitating communication, eradicating prejudices, providing accurate information, forging a positive image and cultivating awareness. It can be inferred that the self-perception of the Turkish foreign policy embodying a bridge between tradition and future expressed in official statements is greatly highlighted in the activities of the Institute and in the portrayal of these activities on social media.

The findings of this paper emphasise a significant consistency between the official foreign policy agenda of Türkiye and the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in Constanța Romania which also supports the theoretical conceptualisation of “cultural diplomacy” as a tool of “public diplomacy” due to the clear implementation of state guidelines in the daily undertakings of a cultural institution. Therefore, at the level of this research, the Yunus Emre Institute can be considered the “cultural ambassador” of Türkiye due to its extensive and active involvement in the local community’s life. Nevertheless, further qualitative research is required in order to determine the success in cultivating a positive image of the country to the Romanian public in the analysed region.

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