



InsSciDE

Inventing a shared Science Diplomacy for Europe

InsSciDE Work Package 5:

Health Diplomacy as a Tool for a Strengthened and Innovative Europe

Case Study n°5.1	Designing a European Health Diplomacy: A Comprehensive Approach
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Introduction

This InsSciDE case study will generate a comprehensive historical account of international cooperation in and beyond European health diplomacy, in the field of epidemics and crises management during the first stage of the contemporary globalization from the mid 19th to the 1920s. We will analyze three case studies. First, we will study the management of a global epidemic in Europe at a local scale by analysing the diplomatic and consular services, dealing with the Plague in Porto at the turn of the 19th century. The second analysis will address the cholera epidemic in Italy in the decade following 1910, during which Europe experimented with a new scale of Health Diplomacy. Finally, we will examine the diplomatic efforts during the Spanish flu epidemic which occurred between 1918-1923 – a period of war and peace making.

Our analysis will focus on the different spaces, moments and practices of negotiation dealing with epidemic crises. This historical and comparative approach will fulfill the following three objectives. Firstly, it will question the conceptual definition of health diplomacy, beyond the “face-to-face diplomacy” which commonly opposes “state health diplomacy” and “global health diplomacy”. From one case study to another, we will progressively investigate how the diplomatic actor categories of physicians and formal diplomats were conventionally defined. Secondly and consequently, we will explore the importance of the wide range of actors involved in health diplomacy and map its plural networks. We will place particular focus on economic actors, such as world trade and telecommunications stakeholders, who have been strongly interested in dealing with epidemics and disaster management related to epidemics since the 19th century. Lastly, we will suggest a typology of the new actors emerging in health diplomacy, highlighting in particular the growing impact of civil society in the framing of both European and public health diplomacy.

Actors

The core of our research will be to provide an effective and useful map of all kinds of actors involved in or impacted by health, sanitary, and epidemics issues. Our analysis will discern for each historic case who controlled and managed the negotiations, and whether actors' objectives have been to regulate public health at European level or to deal with an epidemic in, or outside, Europe.

We will shed light on negotiation practices relative to different moments of health diplomacy: negotiations with a long-term perspective, but also those undertaken during health crises or epidemics disasters, or in the goal of managing threats of epidemic. Here the main objective is to identify the skills that have been used, and are needed in different health diplomacy situations. Humanitarian situations, crises management and global health cooperation require that both practitioners and diplomatic agents on the field or in conferences have expert knowledge in timing negotiations.



Networks and communication

We will furthermore seek to reveal how networks of experts, diplomats and economic stakeholders interacted in the past to manage epidemic hazards and deal with epidemic disasters. Here, information – understood in its broadest sense – and communication play an essential role in diplomatic negotiations and epidemic management. Moreover, networks of information and telecommunication are some of the most important tools available to protect the population from epidemics and to allow controlled economic exchanges in times of epidemic hazards. So, we aim to show the place of data collection and classification (regarding public health and population, or epidemics) in shaping the European influence on an international stage.

Mastering communication and telecommunications is essential to a powerful and innovative Europe in the field of health diplomacy. To understand the crossover between public diplomacy and European health diplomacy, we may attempt to answer how the European actor network communicated about epidemic crises during the first stage of globalization. We also aim to capture the trends that will help us understand the degree to which European health diplomacy can be framed as public diplomacy targeting public opinion in and outside Europe.

Disciplinary/methodological approach

We will consult information from different disciplines such as science diplomacy, health diplomacy, medicine, economics and epidemics management. Technology, sciences and medicine are entwined at all stages of the cases we study. We will borrow tools from the history of international relations, especially from the new diplomatic history and from the global history of medicine. We will conduct research in national and international material archives: those of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, La Courneuve and Centre des archives diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN) ; UK National Archives, Kew; and the League of Nations Archives, Geneva, We will utilize other printed material as well.

Essential bibliography

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