

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: PEOPLE TO PEOPLE (P2P)

1. Executive Summary

This proposal offers innovative **British soft power interventions** that will target audiences in the Baltic States whose primary language is Russian (and who primarily receive their information and news from Russian language sources), to **develop greater affinity with the UK / EU / Baltic States**. In this project, **Albany Associates International**, a British strategic communications firm with extensive experience in creating innovative grassroots and cultural outreach programmes, will be partnered with **M&C Saatchi World Services**, a world renowned creative and digital agency with a strong track record in the Baltic States with competencies in cutting-edge digital research and campaigning technology.

By capitalising on close family ties among Russian-speakers and re-evoking the spirit of the Baltic Way, **we will use young Russian speakers as agents of change to influence their parents' and grandparents' generations and amplify a distinct "Euro-Baltic" identity** through family-centred direct outreach events. We will then aggregate and amplify these effects through a social media campaign, **to create a new lens through which older Russian speakers may identify with Euro-Atlantic values and a ground breaking online campaign to engage younger family members**. We will implement three distinct strands of activity:

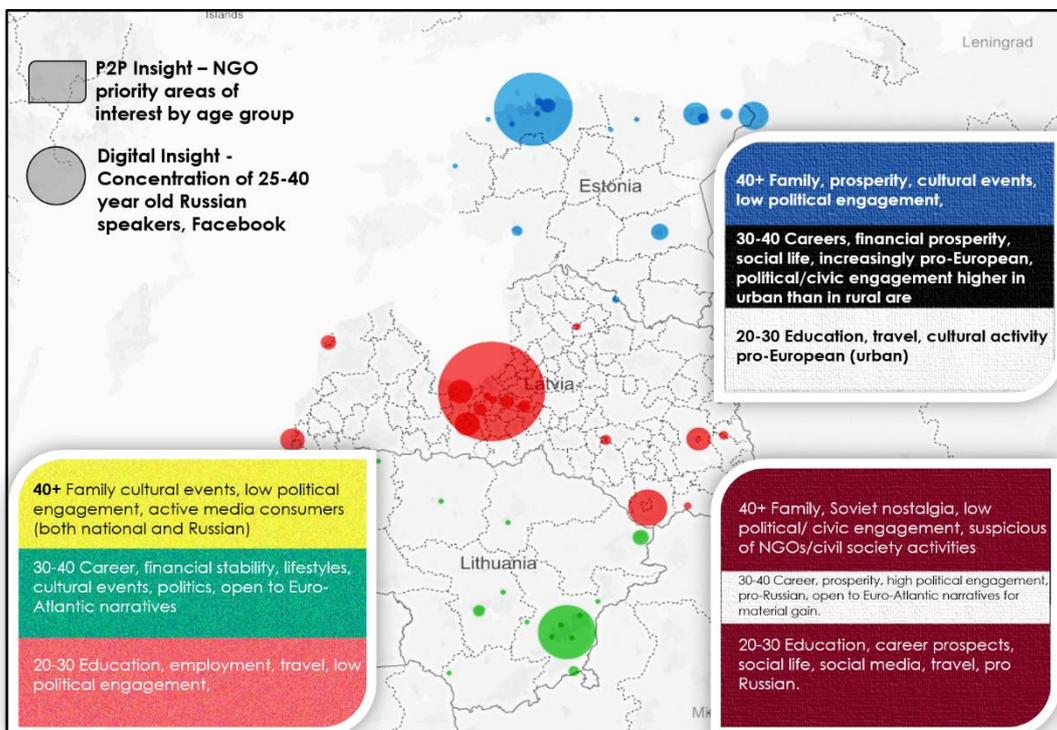
(i) In partnership with the Riga-based Russian language creative agency Inspired.lv (www.inspired.lv) and using M&C Saatchi's unique Human Digital analysis approach, we will undertake **cutting-edge sentiment analysis of Euro-Atlantic narratives in Russian speaking online communities**. We will also identify a **network of online influencers and advocates and seed online conversations** with pan-Baltic and Euro-Atlantic themes.

(ii) Complementary outreach activity will include the **staging of a minimum of 75 P2P activities** in carefully selected Baltic communities **which echo and further develop ongoing British Council engagement methods**. These will be implemented in partnership with, **Youth Initiative Group** in Lithuania (www.jig.lt), **Jasma** in Latvia (<http://www.jasma.lv>), and **Vita Tiim** in Estonia (www.vitatiim.ee).

(iii) These activities will be **underpinned and reinforced by a social media campaign to amplify the outcomes of P2P outreach activities and promote Euro-Baltic culture**, supported by strands of activity which harness the reach of the traditional Russian language media consumed by the over-40 age group.

2. Analysis of target audience and how interventions will reach the most vulnerable.

The following depicts the results of our initial qualitative and digital target audience analysis.



DEMOGRAPHIC	How will they be reached?
<i>Estonia 40+ years</i>	<i>Primary: Events in: Tallinn, Narva, Kohtla-Jarve, Sillamae, Kivioli, Maardu Secondary: Social media and digital outreach on Vk.ru and Ok.ru</i>
<i>Estonia 30-40 years</i>	<i>Primary: Social media and digital outreach on Vk.com and Facebook Secondary: Events in: Tallinn, Narva, Kohtla-Jarve, Sillamae, Kivioli, Maardu</i>
<i>Estonia 20-30 years</i>	<i>Primary: social media and digital outreach on Vk.com and Facebook Secondary: Events in: Tallinn, Narva, Kohtla-Jarve, Sillamae, Kivioli, Maardu</i>
<i>Latvia 40+ years</i>	<i>Primary: Events in: Riga, Daugavpils, Ludza, Rezekne, Jurmala, Liepaja Secondary: Social media and digital outreach on Vk.ru and Ok.ru</i>
<i>Latvia 30-40 years</i>	<i>Primary: social media and digital outreach on Vk.com and Facebook Secondary: Events in: Riga, Daugavpils, Ludza, Rezekne, Jurmala, Liepaja</i>
<i>Latvia 20-30 years</i>	<i>Primary: social media and digital outreach on Vk.com and Facebook Secondary: Events in: Riga, Daugavpils, Ludza, Rezekne, Jurmala, Liepaja</i>
<i>Lithuania 40+ years</i>	<i>Primary: Events in: Vilnius, Visaginas, Salcininkai Secondary: social media and digital outreach on Vk.ru and Ok.ru</i>
<i>Lithuania 30-40 years</i>	<i>Primary: social media and digital outreach on Vk.com and Facebook Secondary: Events in: Vilnius, Visaginas, Salcininkai</i>
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3. Level of innovation to complement more traditional forms of engagement employed by the British Council

This proposal employs ideas and concepts of cultural outreach and strategic communications derived from methodological innovations proven in other relevant and/or similar contexts. It then combines the unique skills and experience of our local implementing partners in the Baltic States to develop imaginative approaches that will underpin the project. The output of this partnership will be culturally relevant campaigns that will resonate with audiences who primarily receive information and news from Russian language sources.

Albany's culturally attuned grassroots communications track record and M&C Saatchi's regional influence and use of cutting-edge digital research will enhance the current engagement methods employed by the British Council. Central to our approach will be the notion of a virtuous circle of concurrent research and feedback that will inform the creative process and enhance our locally grounded activities and media content. The P2P ideas we present are sustainable because they are based on tried and tested concepts that will resonate with our primary target audiences, challenging ingrained perceptions in ways that stand out and attract positive attention.

Current forms of engagement

The British Council (BC) have employed a variety of forms of engagement in the Baltic States which we are developing further to fit this context (c.f. clarification log question 7 & 9). These include study tours, policy dialogues, competitions and youth forums as well as other initiatives to promote the arts including Shakespeare Lives, fiveFilms4freedom, FameLab, The Selector, The Social Enterprise Initiative (Vilnius, Lithuania 2014). These are in addition to the BC's work to promote English language training. Our Lithuania country manager has worked on BC initiatives, creating knowledge and networks, to be leveraged on this project.

Underpinning innovation through local implementing and creative partners

The project will exploit direct outreach techniques already developed by our local partner NGOs who are already working with Russian-speaking minorities across all three Baltic States. These methods were developed and implemented to deliver small-scale community engagement goals funded, in many cases, through various EU initiatives such as EuropeAid, Erasmus+, or EU Youth in Action. To reinforce our local NGO networks and aggregate their activities across wider audiences, M&C Saatchi has also teamed up with a regionally renowned creative agency - **Inspired.lv** with a proven track record in digital multimedia and social media campaigns in Russian across the Baltics. Inspired.lv led successful campaigns on European currency transition, and currently produce a Latvian/Russian news portal with a user base of approximately 400,000.

Conflict sensitivity: all partners operate with a full understanding of the (potential) conflict context to avoid causing harm, including unintended consequences and second and third order effects. In terms of *gender sensitivity*, our approach is consistent with UNSC Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security. The gender balance of our team reflects how seriously we take the promotion of participation of women at all levels of decision-making, and we believe this will have positive impacts on the outcomes of the project.

Innovating Baltic engagement: research, dissemination strategy and P2P outreach

M&C Saatchi's Human Digital approach is a unique blend of cutting-edge technology and expert human verification and analysis to ensure robust, culturally relevant results and insight. These techniques have already been employed successfully and sustainably for clients including UK Home Office, UK Ministry of Defence, US Department of Defence, NATO, USAID, Broadcasting Board of Governors, Google, and Facebook. Through Inspired.lv, we have existing digital target audience data to help define and determine channels that resonate most with the key target audience. Key features of this blended approach include:

- Data Sourcing: Unmatched (in line with global data expansion) access to unlimited data sources of text, imagery and video (via image recognition) with state-of-the-art digital collection platforms.
- Full Spectrum Social Media Platform Analysis: Our methodology ensures that full coverage of an influencer's footprint across the Surface and Deep Web can be captured via a blend of technological and human processes. Where platform visibility is poor, human-led processes are deployed to guarantee a comprehensive view of influence across all global and locally relevant social media.
- Content Analysis: We will employ a market leading tracker to map influencer content, and bolster this map by calculating the reach across all platforms through our web traffic analysis tool.
- Via human-led verification and analysis we provide verification of sentiment, tone, context and language complexity (all fundamental to producing accurate insight on online conversations and beyond the reach of current computer learning) to deliver insights that are accurate, actionable and secure.

Dissemination strategy

- A central Russian language Facebook page will disseminate information on Baltic Euro-leaning heritage, advertise, aggregate and amplify the activities and media content from the P2P campaign and provide a space for crowd-sourced content for participants to celebrate their individual Baltic culture (art, music, food, lifestyle, commerce) through social media. N.b. 400,000 monthly active people on Facebook in the Baltics (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia; 55% Women, 45% Men) in age group 18+;
- Participatory conversation will be encouraged on the platform, then analysed throughout to gauge sentiment, refine influencer maps and establish key themes to support ongoing M&E;
- The campaign will be launched and carefully seeded in Russian on appropriate social media channels according to a tailored seeding strategy. It will also use key dates and events of significance to Russian speakers, such as WWII celebrations on 09 May 2016 as a way of inserting itself in to pre-existing conversations to amplify the campaign effects.

P2P outreach

Our P2P activities will be continually informed by our research. We will directly engage approximately 6,750 Russian-speakers in both 40- and 40+ age groups in 15 locations and reinforce these activities regionally across Russian speaking populations through the project's social and digital media component, significantly enhancing reach and impact. (**Lithuania** - Vilnius, Visaginas, Salcinikai; **Latvia** - Riga, Daugavpils, Ludza, Rezekne, Jurmala, Liepaja; **Estonia** - Tallinn, Narva, Kohtla-Jarve, Sillamae, Kivioli, Maardu). There is a total of 75 events, requiring three staff working on a full-time basis per NGO to conduct the events on weekends (to maximise turnout) throughout the project. The set-up period would be 4-6 weeks, with events taking place concurrently across 30-36 non-consecutive weeks. We will run direct outreach events that our partner NGOs have successfully delivered in the past in these target areas, based also on known audience appetite. They are:

- Family movie nights (average attendees: 60 people; 15 events) which echo but develop through expert curation the British Council's *fiveFilms4freedom* and *Shakespeare Lives*;
- Family city games (average attendees: 100 people; 15 events) which are an enhancement of issue-driven policy dialogues or Social Enterprise Initiatives;
- Family quiz tournaments (average attendees: 100 people; 15 events), an enhancement of issue-driven events such as competitions and youth forums, expanded to address intergenerational concerns;
- Mother and Daughter afternoon tea parties (average attendees: 40 people; 15 events), designed to leverage female influence in society and address intergenerational concerns of Russian speakers;
- Youth theatre performances (average attendees: 150 people; 15 events); the Lithuania-based Harlequin theatre group will produce and tour a strategically and collaboratively written play echoing the cultural work undertaken by the British Council, but enhanced to address the desired effects.

4. Demonstration of rationale of the projected impact (theory of change)

<p>Idea</p>	<p>Employing a fused approach using traditional and culturally relevant engagement, reinforced and amplified by Social and Digital Media – delivering innovation and significant reach across the Russian speaking populations. Over 15 years’ experience of working with Russian-speaking communities in the Baltic States strongly suggests capitalising on close family ties among Russian-speakers, using young Russian speakers as agents of change to influence their parents’ and grandparents’ generations, amplifying a distinct “Euro-Baltic” identity through family-centred direct outreach events to create a new lens through which older Russian speakers may identify with Euro-Atlantic values and a dynamic participative on line campaign to gain the support of younger family members.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Removing the eclipsing effect of negative European sentiment among the 30-40 and over 40 years age groups in Russian-speaking Baltic communities would illuminate positive Euro-Atlantic values (democracy, media freedom, human rights, trust in international organisations, freedom of speech) to these audiences. ➤ The younger, more tech savvy, prosperity-seeking professional Russian speakers will be engaged online, whereas the less malleable older demographic that seeks to be reassured about stability and security will be engaged primarily through direct P2P outreach events, amplified through advertising in Russian Language social media. ➤ Re-evoking the sentiment of the Baltic Way (see www.balticway.net) creates a pathway away from Russian influence into a <u>middle ground</u> (Baltic Identity). This <u>opens Russian speakers’ minds</u> to Euro-Atlantic narratives via language and culture with which they are already familiar.
<p>Activities</p>	<p><u>Phase 1 – Sentiment Analysis</u></p> <p>In partnership with the top-rated Russian language social media communications agency in the Baltic Region (Inspried.lv) and using M&C Saatchi’s own unique Human Digital analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Produce a baseline sentiment analysis for Euro-Atlantic narratives in Russian speaking online communities ➤ Identify a network of online influencers and advocates and seed online conversations with pan-Baltic / Euro-Atlantic themes ➤ Provide regular reviews to measure departure from baseline measurement <p><u>Phase 2 – Use the sentiment analysis to inform P2P activities</u></p> <p>Informed by the sentiment analysis, our P2P activities aim at improving knowledge of the Euro-Atlantic narratives and leveraging the Baltic Way and Baltic middle ground themes. All outreach activities will be filmed and photographed and used for Phase 3 (below). We have three partner local NGOs, one from each Baltic State.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Family movie nights</u> (c.60 people per event) - tour and screen movies and films (selected by our local experts to ensure critical mass of interest) that spark a discussion on Euro-Atlantic values and narratives, moderate a discussion among the participants afterwards ➤ <u>Family-friendly “city games”</u> (smartphone-enabled engagement / orientation activities; c.100 people per event) - organise a workshop on thematic areas under Euro-Atlantic values and afterwards conduct the games, where participants would be asked to answer questions on carefully selected topics that concern the Euro-Atlantic narratives that they were introduced at the workshop ➤ <u>Family quiz tournaments</u> (c.100 people per event) - organise a workshop on thematic areas under Euro-Atlantic values, followed by a quiz tournament where the participants are asked to questions on carefully selected topics about the Euro-Atlantic narratives they were introduced to at the workshop.

	<p>Fostering a discussion on identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Mother and daughter tea parties</u> (c.40 people per event) - organise discussions over tea on inter-generational identity challenges ➤ <u>Youth theatre shows</u> (c.150 people per event) - local youth theatre groups will tour Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia presenting a play on contested identities in Russian-speaking families and inter-generational frictions, the viewers will be invited to discuss the performance. <p><u>Phase 3 – Create a social media campaign to amplify the outcomes of P2P outreach activities and promote Euro-Baltic culture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Russian Language social media campaign</u> to encourage participative engagement in grass roots campaign. Develop shareable content from direct P2P outreach activities (videos, articles/ blogs) about successful project activities. ➤ <u>Crowd Sourced Pan-Baltic Cultural Project</u> A Russian language social media-led project for Russian speakers amplifying Baltic Life, including art, music, media and citing success stories (videos, articles/ blogs/ op-eds on successful Russian-speakers benefiting from the EU, Baltic governments and other Euro-Atlantic institutions (e.g. Russian recipients of EU funds etc.) Focus on media outlets preferred by Russian minorities. <p><u>Phase 4 - Monitoring and evaluation via regular feedback loops</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employ the same methods used in the initial baseline sentiment analysis to measure tangible change in perception of Euro-Atlantic narratives among Russian-speakers online.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Direct engagement of approximately 6,750 people (ages 16-60, with a special focus on attracting the 40-60 age group) living in areas where the significant majority of Russian-speakers reside ➤ Promoted inter-generational discussion on identity at the grassroots, that bridges the generational gap of civic allegiances ➤ Active engagement of the over-40 Russian speaking community in a forum where they regularly participate and engage ➤ Exponential reach of engagement via the region’s most powerful online influencers and advocates ➤ Younger Russian-speakers empowered as agents of change in engaging older generations in a debate on Euro-Atlantic narratives ➤ Target audiences persuaded of material benefits to be gained from a closer alignment to Euro-Atlantic narratives
Outcome	The project will yield a measurable increase in the willingness of the Russian-speaking population in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to understand, support and advocate Euro-Atlantic narratives
Impact	Russian-speaking target audiences, as a whole, will have a greater affinity with the UK/EU/Baltic States
Metrics	<u>Event Attendance Rates</u> Number of attendees by cultural background <u>P2P Engagement Records</u> Surveys, interviews, Focus Groups <u>Dissemination Log</u> <u>Digital Influence Dashboard</u> Dynamic mapping influencer/advocate reach, media monitoring, social media following and sentiment density over time.