#### 3. ARMED FORCES, MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

# THE MEDIA IMAGE OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES IN THE YEARS 2010-2016

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The media image of the Polish Armed Forces in 2010-2016 is an article presenting the development of the media relations of the Polish Armed Forces in 2010-2016. The author aimed at familiarizing the reader with the media relations of the Polish Armed Forces. The article presents the overview of the directions of changes in this respect in the years 2010-2016.

**KEY WORDS** 

Media relations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.

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### Introduction – media in the national security system

The media - understood in general as means of social communication – is undergoing profound changes. Its earlier development concerned the emergence of the new media - from large-scale newspapers and magazines through radio to television. The current phase of change is digitization that transforms the old media and creates the new ones. As a result of digitization. network media (internet) was created, using various services - data transmission, email, websites and social networks. There are many relationships between the media and national security. The media, in fact and potentially, favors the identification of threats, informs the public about their occurrence and ways to oppose them. It stimulates pro-social attitudes that are an important premise of the democratic order, including the formation of "democratic security".

Effective cooperation between the media and entities dealing with crisis management seems extremely important. Thus, the media can educate extensively in the areas of prevention, effective coping at the time of occurrence of a threat and cooperation with crisis management bodies appropriate for the area of residence of a given community.

The media should offer the public the topics and problems of public interest. Meanwhile, in recent years, due to business requirements, the media has undergone a process of tabloidization – in the pursuit of the widest possible spectrum of audience the media subordinate the information sphere to sensationionalism, which translates into getting interested as many customers as possible. In the case of negative information intensity, this may enhance the general feeling of security loss.

Media reports are too often characterized by dramatization, personalization of the message, both its form and content. That is why a frequent topic are events marked by violence or human tragedy, like catastrophes or acts of terrorism.

A promotional activity in the Ministry of National Defense (Polish acronym MON) is governed by Decision No. 212/MND of the Minister of National Defense of 29 April 2008 (Polish: Nr 212/MON) on promotional activities in the Ministry of National Defense (Official Journal of the Ministry of National Defense No. 9, item 117, as amended), which defines among others:

- the scope and objectives of promotional activities in the department of national defense:
- persons and units responsible for this activity in the department;
- nancing promotional activities:
- principles of purchase and distribution of promotional materials:
- terms and methods of evaluation of promotional activities in the cells and organizational units of the Ministry of National Defense.

The obligation to inform the public by state authorities about the status of security and defense of the country results from the relevant provisions (national and allied). National:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Poland.
- Act on access to public information.
- Act on the protection of classified information.
- Press Act.
- The Public Finance Act.

They have an obligation to inform about the status of their activities and plans. The basic information documents of the Armed Forces are:

- fend the Republic of Poland.
- statutory regulations of extraordinary states.
- Press officers and other authorized persons are authorized to provide confirmed information about the activities of the armed forces. They must act on the basis of the following acts:
- the Act of 26 January 1984. Press Law (Journal of Laws 1984, No. 5, item 24 of 1984, as amended)
- the Act on Access to Public Information (Journal of Laws 2001, No. 112, item 1198 of 2001),
- Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 8 January 2002 on the organization of the tasks of spokespersons in government administration offices.

Moreover, there are included provisions regarding the protection of messages - promotional tasks, the method of fi- constituting the state and official secrets, contained in the Act of 29 August 1997 on the Protection of Personal Data (Journal of Laws 1997, No. 133, item 883 of 1997, as amended), the Act of 5 January 2010 on the protection of classified information (Journal of Laws 2010, No. 11, item 95 of 1999, as amended) and implementing acts based on this resolution. Press officers acting on behalf of heads of organizational units are also subjects to the Act of February 4, 1994 on Copyright and Related Rights (Journal of Laws of 1994, No. 24, item 83 of 1994, as amended).

Irrespective of the type of activity of a given state authority, state enterprise or other state organizational units, and in the field of socio-economic activities - cooperative organizations and legal or natural persons conducting business activity as well, they are all obliged to provide the public with information about work and the attitude to the critical social assessments and postulates presented to them, as well as to take - the Act on the general obligation to de- into account reasonable comments and

conclusions regarding the improvement of their work (LJ Buller, *Safe and effective communication: a practical guide to proceedings*, Sandomierz Diocesan Publisher, Warsaw 2005, p. 9).

These normative acts are only the basis on which the spokesperson operates. These provisions arise from and are directly related to the more extensive legal scope, including the provisions of the Civil and Criminal Codes, as well as the Code of Journalistic Ethics. The knowledge of the organization's right to provide information about its activities is the basic knowledge of spokespersons, and above all its managers. Public organizations, enterprises and other organizational units, cooperatives and self-employed persons are obliged to provide the press with information about their activities in the aforementioned scope. A refusal to provide information can only take place in the event of the protection of state and official secrets and other secrecy, protected by statute (Article 4 paragraph 1 and 2 of the Press Law) (Pietrzak, Hałaj, 2003, pp. 202-203). Numerous legal solutions are also included in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997. It resolves many important matters concerning the circulation and limiting of information. It is important that the people performing information and public functions in the organization, the press spokespersons in particular, have a lot of knowledge about the Polish law.

By becoming a member of NATO and the European Union, Poland accepted not only obligations related to the modernization of command systems, communications, military technology, but also standards for informing the public, appropriate for the institutions of the democratic state. According to it, the Republic of Poland provides its citizens with "the right to obtain information about the activities of public authorities

and persons performing public functions" (Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Article 61). The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland shape relations with the society that lead to an improvement in their social perception, including increasing social acceptance of their activities outside the state. It must be remembered that the armed forces are a tool of the state's international policy, and it is the political side that has the responsibility to inform the public about the decisions made and their justification. On the other hand, the Polish Armed Forces have the responsibility to make the best of their tasks.

The basic information documents of the armed forces include:

- ISO 9001.
- The information management strategy of the Ministry of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland in 2009-2018.

Military units implementing information policy of the armed forces are obliged to use such informational and promotional instruments as public information, media relations, public affairs and e-public relations. It should be remembered that the press and information activity of the armed forces in Polish and allied documents is understood as "social information, transfer of information from individual commands and building relations with the public, both internally and externally" (Antczak, 2009, p. 108).

The coordinating body for press and promotional work was the Press and Information Office of the Ministry of National Defense established in 1993, which was formed in order to implement the principle of civilian, democratic control over the armed forces. The organizational chart was based on a structure functioning in the NATO countries. The basic tasks were based on a wide, reliable and fast inform-

ing the public about events and processes taking place in the armed forces and in their surroundings. In 2004, the system of communicating the army with the public was modified and the Information Center of the Ministry of National Defense was established, the continuation of which is the Press and Information Department of the Ministry of National Defense operating from January 1, 2007. Decision No. 70/ MND of the Minister of National Defense of March 13, 2015 (Polish: Nr 70/MON) on the Ministry of National Defense, transformed the Press and Information Department of the Ministry of National Defense under the Undersecretary of State into the Ministry of National Defense, and after one year of activity, due to Decision No. 63/MND of the Minister of National Defense of March 24. 2016 (Polish: Nr 63/MON) regarding the list of organizational units subordinate to or supervised by the Minister of National Defense, along with their direct subordination, some tasks were transferred from the Department of Social Communication of the Ministry of National Defense to the MND Operational Center and the Department of Social Communication was reformed into the Department of Education, Culture and Heritage. According to the decision taken, the tasks that were transferred from the Department of Social Communication of the Ministry of National Defense to the MND Operation Center are to enable direct support of the Minister of National Defense in the process of shaping the image of the Ministry of National Defense and the defense zone of the state through the media. In turn, the reform of the Department of Social Communication into the Department of Education, Culture and Heritage with the remaining tasks related to shaping attitudes and soldier behavior is aimed at improving the cooperation of the Armed Forces with the society based on national and armed

traditions, and support historical and cultural education, which should be set in the Polish Christian and national identity (Ordinance of the Prime Minister amending the ordinance on the statute for the Ministry of National Defense).

The Minister of Defense is the creator of the information policy. The directions of the Ministry of National Defense information policy are:

- internal environment: professional staff, students of academies and military schools, soldiers of basic military service, soldiers of the army and civil servants of the Ministry of National Defense and reserve soldiers with mobilization allocation. The priority internal environment includes the leadership of the Ministry of National Defense, commanders at all levels of command and control, and military experts;
- immediate external environment: military families, former professional soldiers, veterans, candidates for professional military service and members of non-governmental organizations that have signed agreements with the Minister of National Defense:
- distant external environment: members of the general public, local community, school and university youth, potential conscripts and foreign audience,
- opinion-forming environment: domestic and foreign mass media, government, Sejm, Senate, local authorities, universities and schools, political parties, social initiatives groups, non-governmental organizations, churches and religious associations, and moral authorities.

#### Media relations

Pursuant to decision No. 203/MND of the Minister of National Defense from May 31, 2011 (Polish: *Nr 203/MON*) on the principles of information policy implementation

in the Ministry of National Defense, media relations "are actions focused on mass media, building media relations, allowing effective interaction through them for public opinion" (Decision No. 203/MND).

The mass media is very important in creating the image of every organization, primarily due to the credibility assigned to it, but also because of reaching huge audience. The effectiveness of the media in the field of persuasion is very high. That is why it is important to have proper contacts with journalists and to control what information the media receives. It depends on the communication system in the organization and the awareness of creating the image of all its employees.

The army, making contact with the media, must know and understand the way of thinking and editing. It must be aware of what type of information is desirable and comply with these requirements. This knowledge helps you reach the media with information in a form that journalists find interesting for their audience. This is particularly important when it comes to such a specific environment as the military, which is used by specialized information provided by military press services. A lot depends on the favorable attitude of media representatives to a given organization. The best way to build trust and understanding between the institution - the sender of the message and the information channel, which is the media. "Communicating with the media is therefore one of the most important tasks that is a part of public relations. The journalists' environment is in fact one of many groups of the environments in which the organization operates". (Cianciara, Uścińska, 1999, p. 16). Skillful use of the media relations means effective building of communication with selected environment groups using the informational media function.

Before starting to cooperate with the media representatives, you must first determine the purpose for which it is undertaken. The important fact is what is expected from the representatives of the environment, communicating with it. Knowing this, you are able to determine what content, form and structure of the message will be the most effective. Nevertheless, it is not less important to get to know the way the editorial team works and the goals it intends to cooperate with, as well as the scope of operation and the audience they reach. It is good to make this type of analysis, because it allows you to gain important knowledge about how to construct a media message.

The next step in establishing contact with the media is to make a decision regarding the frequency, quantity and manner of using particular types of the media. This requires identification of the types of the media. It is important to distinguish the main types of the media and those that are only secondary types. It should be remembered that by selecting several forms of the media at the same time, the messages given in them must be compatible with each other - in a way that the overall information is uniform and consistent. "The main advantage of using many types of media is the fact that the individual media complement and strengthen the power of the entire message. This creates a kind of interaction between these messages. What is more, the media can then transmit information in various forms and reach a much bigger audience" (Czarnecki, Korsak, 2001, p. 158).

The issue of which medium is the most beneficial for a particular media relations strategy in the armed forces is dictated primarily by the range and costs associated with publishing information. We should also remember about Marshall McLuhan's principle, which states that the choice of the medium used is also a kind of message.

In other words, it is a kind of complement to the message that the organization wanted to communicate.

#### The media relations tasks

Cooperation with the mass media should be an integral part of the media relations policy of any organization. The media is an information tool through which organizations reach a mass audience at relatively low costs. In turn, the mass media provides the audience with an independent source of information, which makes it more credible. However, one should remember about the way the media acts, which - before publishing the message - will modify it accordinaly, cleanse out of those fragments of information which, according to the editorial staff, are unimportant, but which may turn out to be extremely important for the sender. Cooperation with the media should take into account two directions of activities: first, provide full and appropriate information, and secondly, constantly shape good relations with the editorial offices. Good relations with the media allow you to have a greater impact on the presence of information about the institution in the media. Friendly relations with the journalists may also have some impact on the editorial correction and modification of the information provided. Trust in the media is the basis of this relationship and every organization has to work it out.

The primary goal of media relations is to get to know the media environment and establish the long-term cooperation with its representatives on the basis of mutual respect and awareness of a common goal, which is the obligation to provide full and objective information. In addition, it is important to create an information system, i.e. to introduce an efficient model of contacts with employees and the social environment of the organization, which aims at develop-

ing information resources, acquiring information and creating rules and channels for its distribution and supplementation.

The media relations fulfill five basic functions:

- information the media is the best and the fastest medium of information; the content of the information is immediately conveyed to the environment;
- explanatory explanation, elucidation and justification; referring to the broad environment, the media is the best carrier;
- creating a message in the media creates views and opinions and sometimes behaviors and attitudes;
- opinion-forming each message generates opinions; the spokespersons make sure that opinions create a positive image of the organization;
- obtaining information a message in the media, as well as journalists with whom press spokespersons have a direct contact, an excellent source of information, opinions, comments, so-called "opensource intelligence" (Kuczyńska, 2006, pp. 12-13).

The most important advantages of such cooperation are high credibility and low costs. Disadvantages, however, are the lack of control over the content, form and composition as well as difficult assessment of the effects. The army has no competition in the state, however, their commanding skills cause immediate interest of the media and citizens in its activities.

The frequency and method of contact with the media is very important in building the right image of the institution. The strategy of permanent presence in the media in a stable situation includes the use of the radio, television and the press. The organization has to determine its desired place, which it wants to occupy in the media. In the case when the organization wants the information to reach the widest possible

audience, special attention should be paid to simultaneous information of the media, so that each of its representatives can publish it at the same time, taking into account their publishing cycle.

One cannot forget about a very important aspect of the work of a press officer, such as informal meetings with representatives of the media. The purpose of such meetings is to be recognized in the journalistic environment, so that the spokesperson cannot be seen as a person "on the opposite side of the barricade". At such meetings, it is important not to touch upon topics related to the institution you represent. During informal meetings, journalists gain knowledge that could not be passed on to them in an official mode. At this moment, an opinion-forming circle begins to form in the journalistic milieu, the so-called competent circle (Bielawski, [3.04.2012]). Informal spokesperson meetings should also be attended by other people, especially those who may represent the institution in official contacts in the future.

Recognizing the spokesperson of a given organization in the media is a good direction, but he/she must limit his/her statements to matters which he/she really knows. In addition, he/she must be prepared to respond at any time and have prepared materials for journalists. This is particularly important in a crisis situation, when he/she must take over the entire burden of contacts with the public (Bielawski, [3.04.2012]).

It is also important to emphasize that contacts with the media should fulfill their task, their specificity should be understood (Ociepka, 1997, pp. 72-73). Quite often, journalists become press spokespersons. In the group of theoreticians and PR practitioners there is an opinion that a public relations specialist should not have previous journalistic experience. These views are primarily shared by people who

do not have journalistic experience but are nevertheless good PR specialists. The complaints are rejected by practitioners with journalistic experience, who believe that effective communication with the media first of all may be the result of luck and intuition supported by intelligence rather than knowledge of the "area" on which they move. Each press spokesperson has his/her own technique, through which he/ she builds relationships with the media. It is commonly believed that only formalized contacts with journalists are a testimony to the lack of professionalism. Information and press materials, conferences, and public meetings with journalists bring good results only when they are a supplement to unofficial contacts that allow the editorial staff to prepare official announcements of the organization (Molenda-Ździech, 2001, pp. 36-37). Building relationships with journalists is the long-term work. Ad hoc activities, with the exception of crisis situations, are perceived as a manifestation of seeking for a press effect, which is to be evidence of his/her compliance, usually unreasonable, by the wishes of the employer or the personal successes of the spokesperson himself/herself.

#### Campaigns and actions 1

In 2010-2016, the relevant departments carried out promotional campaigns for the army aimed at gaining social support for the army and its modernization, and reaching candidates for soldiers to serve in various corps after military conscription was suspended in 2009.

In **2010**, a promotional campaign was implemented to support the recruitment process to the National Reserve Forces and the preparatory service "NSR: Passion and challenge". Movies and spots were used, broadcast on *TVP1*. *Polsat* and *TVN*. On the

<sup>1</sup> www.wojsko-polskie.pl

website www.wojsko-polskie.pl there was a search engine for vacancies for candidates for the service in NSR. Among other things, the logo of the National Reserve Forces was created.

In 2012, the NSR promoted under the slogans "A pass for professional military service", NSR. Passion, development and challenge". In addition, TV spots broadcast calling for joining the corps of privates. Their main slogans were: "Professional privates - strength of character, power of possibilities". It is a continuation of the process of supporting recruitment to the National Reserve Forces and preparatory service started in 2010. TV advertising was used (broadcasting of spots in TVP1, TVP2, TVN and Polsat TV stations), radio advertising (Radio Zet and Radio Planeta) and press advertising (Super Express).

In 2013, a promotional campaign was launched under the slogan "Wojsko Polskie. Twoja Armi@" (Polish Army, Your Army), which aimed to present the contemporary Polish Army through its service to the public, showing the changes in equipment and training taking place in the Polish Army. Film materials were created, promoting the operation of the army for the benefit of society - especially in the field of rescue and liquidation of the consequences of disasters and natural disasters. The advertisement on the Internet was also used on the Facebook and on the following websites: www. wojsko-polskie.pl and www.mon.gov.pl, as well as on television, through broadcasting the film titled "Wojsko Polskie. Twoja Armi@" (Polish Army, Your Army) in the program 1 of the Polish Television.

In **2014**, the communication program "Wojsko Polskie. Twoja Armi@" (Polish Army. Your Army) was continued. Films and spots were broadcast showing the contemporary army in the context of its service to the public and the international involvement of soldiers

within the NATO and European Union structures (cinema and television advertising).

In 2015, the broadcast of spots under the slogan "Polish Army. Modernization". This is the first film production devoted entirely to the process of technical modernization of the Armed Forces. The film presented the possibilities of using and effectiveness of modern equipment and weapons purchased for the needs of the Polish Armed Forces in order to systematically increase the combat potential of the Polish army. On September 13, 2015, the film was broadcast for the first time on the websites (www.mon. gov.pl and www.wojsko-polskie.pl) and on Telewizja Polska (Polish Television).

Five episodes were broadcast:

- JWK specialties in action (episode 1/5) – in the episode opening the cycle in the main roles of the Military Unit of the Commando and the 7th Special Operations Squadron were presented.
- 2. A new predator in the Polish Army. Land Forces in action (episode 2/5) this episode is devoted to Land Forces.
- 3. Artillery of the Polish Army (episode 3/5)– this is an episode dedicated to the artillery of the Polish Army.
- Marine Missile Unit in Siemirowice (episode 4/5) – this episode is dedicated to the Navy on the example of , among others, the Rocket Unit in Siemirowice.
- 5. F-16 and JASSM in the Polish Army (episode 5/5) this section presents the Polish Air Force (Strategy for the Development of the National Security System of the Republic of Poland 2022, p. 88).

In 2016, the direction of military promotion was changed. From showing its equipment and combat tasks to pro-social activities. On the Polish military website, advertising and information spots were systematically posted on such topics as:

- NATO summit;
- World Youth Day;

- Military Territorial Defense;
- Women's self-defense;
- International Children's Day in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

From April 1, 2017, the above-mentioned TV spots can only be viewed on the mentioned website. Previous campaigns are only available on the Internet.

## The effectiveness of the media relations only on the Internet

The goal of the media relations is to get the desired support for the organization's activities. According to the *CBOS* (Polish acronym of Center for Public Opinion Research) Announcement No. 18/2016, as in previous years, the Poles trust charitable organizations most – the vast majority of respondents trust the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (85%), Caritas (83%) and Polish Red Cross (79%). Public institutions (79%) also enjoy great social trust. In comparison to 2012, the following institutions gained social trust: Institute of National Remembrance (an increase of indications by 7 percentage points), local authorities of the city/commune (an increase by 6 percentage points), military, NATO, public administration officials (5 points each) (CBOS, 2016a, p. 14).

Table 1. Social trust

	In general, do you trust or not these institutions?									
Institutions	I trust them absolutely	I rather trust them	Trust – in general	I rather don't trust them	I definitely don't trust them	Lack of trust – in general	It's hard to say			
	in percent									
Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity	43	42	85	6	4	10	5			
Caritas	31	52	83	8	3	11	6			
in percent	22	57	79	7	3	10	11			
Army	23	56	79	8	2	10	11			
scouting	20	53	73	5	1	6	21			
Roman Catholic Church	24	46	70	17	7	24	6			
Police	9	56	65	19	8	27	8			
Local authorities of the city / commune	11	53	64	17	6	23	13			
Ombudsman	13	50	63	9	3	12	25			
IPN (Institute of National Remembrance)	15	47	62	11	4	15	23			
NATO	14	48	62	13	4	17	21			
UN	13	44	57	13	4	17	26			
European Union	10	46	56	20	7	27	17			
Public administration officials	3	47	50	25	8	33	17			
Courts	7	38	45	26	16	42	13			
Television	4	34	38	36	14	50	12			
Government	8	30	38	30	20	50	12			
Large enterprises	3	34	37	24	8	32	31			
Constitutional Court	7	30	37	23	13	36	27			
Sejm and Senate	4	26	30	33	21	54	16			
newspapers	2	28	30	41	15	56	14			
Churches of other religions	4	25	29	30	13	43	28			

Unions	2	24	26	26	13	39	35
Political parties	2	18	20	43	22	65	15

Source: Komunikat z badań nr. 18/2016a. Zaufanie społeczne, CBOS, Warszawa, 2016, p. 1.

And after the March fall in satisfaction with the military operations, in September there

was an improvement. Currently, as many people as last year (69%) positively assess the functioning of the army, and 6% are of the opposite opinion. Every fourth respondent cannot comment on the functioning of this institution (CBOS, 2016b, p. 10).

Indications of respondents according to research dates changes March 2009 2012 2010 2011 2013 2014 2015 2016 Army 2016 ratings Septemin percent ber 2016 Good 70 64 69 62 71 66 76 73 65 66 55 66 66 67 69 66 69 +3 Bad 7 6 5 5 7 8 9 9 6 10 4 8 7 8 4 6 6 0 Hard to 22 28 19 22 23 25 25 26 30 27 28 25 -328 26 35 30 26 say

Table 2. Evaluation of public institutions

Source: Komunikat z badań nr. 133/2016b. Ocena instytucji publicznych, CBOS, Warszawa, 2016, p. 10.

This means that despite changing the direction of promoting the image of the army in Polish society, its perception and reception have not changed fundamentally.

In summary, it is worth noting that the use of the media to promote the image of the Polish Armed Forces is an effective action that brings success. That is why it is worth focusing on it and maintaining the quality of messages created because the

media is the best and the fastest medium of information; the content of the information to the environment is conveyed almost immediately. They can elucidate, explain and justify the decisions of superiors. However, one cannot forget that the media creates views and opinions and sometimes behaviors and attitudes of current and past beneficiaries of the Polish Armed Forces.

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