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DOI: 10.26410/SF_1/22/5

POLISH-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF SOCIETAL SECURITY – SELECTED ASPECTS

Abstract

Societal security is an area associated with an extensive catalog of natural and anthropogenic threats, which do not recognize any administrative boundaries in their destructive development. The escalation of their negative impact is determined by the geographic and natural conditions in the place of their materialization and the laws of physics. The mentioned dependencies mean that effective prevention of their occurrence or combating their negative effects requires combining the efforts of various entities in the internal (national) dimension, as well as with neighboring countries, especially in border areas. This article attempts to diagnose Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in actions to ensure societal security undertaken by fire protection units operating in Poland with their counterparts operating in Ukraine.

Keywords

societal security, civil protection, fire protection, rescue, State Fire Service, voluntary fire brigades, Polish-Ukrainian cooperation.

Introduction

By observing and analyzing the contemporary environment of human existence, we notice the intensification of the occurrence of dangerous phenomena, that pose a threat to the life and health of people and other living creatures, cause losses in property (individual and state), as well as result in degradation of the natural environment in which man lives daily, deriving necessary for life elements. The above thesis is confirmed by media reports, which almost every day inform about various unfavorable events that affect humanity. Fires, explosions, floods, storms, breakdowns and accidents (technical, communication) etc., crisis situations which are often reported by phenomena that materialize in one country and have negative effects in other countries, neighboring or distant. An example is the series of flash floods that hit western, central and southern Europe in July 2021 (Germany, Belgium, Austria, Italy, Romania), which were the result of heavy rainfall causing flooding of rivers flowing through these countries. Their most tragic effects were recorded in Germany and Belgium. In these countries, as of 19 July 2021, almost two hundred people lost their lives as a result of the floods (163 in Germany and 36 in Belgium)¹, and huge material losses were caused. Even more severe international effects were caused by the accident in 1986 at the Chernobyl nuclear

power plant in Ukraine. The radioactive particles released as a result of the unsealing of the reactor and the accompanying explosion caused radioactive contamination in the area adjacent to the power plant with an area of approximately 150,000 km², touching with its destructive power over 5 million people living there. Moreover, radioactive particles emitted from the damaged reactor spread throughout Europe².

In the context of the above, it should be emphasized that the diverse nature of the above-mentioned threats, and in many cases their global nature (not taking into account their escalation and generating negative effects of state and other administrative borders) mean that effective countering them often exceeds the capabilities of rescue resources of each state. Therefore, providing effective help to the injured and threatened in such situations requires multifaceted and multidimensional cooperation of all entities responsible for ensuring and maintaining societal security³, both nationally and internationally.

Cooperation between neighboring countries is of particular importance in the cross-border dimension of ensuring societal security⁴ for two reasons. Firstly, in the event of a cross-border es-

¹ Death toll in catastrophic European flooding: At least 199 dead, nearly 300 unaccounted for, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/europe-flood-death-toll-surpasses-150-latest-updates/story?id=78899752>, access: 9.11.2021.

² Vide: <http://www.chernobyl.info/Default.aspx?tabid=351&ItemID=339&returnTabID=210>, access: 23.03.2018.

³ B. Kogut, J. Ziobro, Fundamental Issues Related to Cooperation of Rescue Entities, „Scientific Journal of Bielsko-Biala School of Finance and Law”, No 1/2019, p. 15 – 19 and B. Kogut, P. Lubiewski, Organization of rescue activities in crisis situations caused by terrorist attacks, Вісник Львівського Державного Університету Безпеки Життєдіяльності, No 2018/6/11, Lviv 2018, pp. 23-29.

⁴ Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria–Badania–Praktyka, (ed.) A. Czupryński, B. Wiśniewski, J. Zboina, Józefów 2015, p. 38.

calation of a threat arising, for example, in a border zone within the territory of one country, its destructive impact may soon affect the territory of the neighboring country. Secondly, properly agreed and prepared support for combating this threat by the neighbor's resources can be provided quickly, thus contributing to minimizing the losses and damage caused by them.

Methodological and methodical assumptions

Considering the above dependencies, the main goal of the research presented in this study was to diagnose the course of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of shaping common security in border areas and throughout the territory of both countries, as well as to forecast its development in the future. The aforementioned goal was achieved by solving the research problem formulated with the question: How is the cooperation between Poland and Ukraine going, in the field of shaping societal security in border areas and in other territories belonging to them, undertaken by fire protection units operating in Poland and entities with the same or similar competences on the Ukrainian side?

Solving the main problem, the focus was on showing the theoretical foundations of ensuring universal security and the role of cooperation in this matter, as well as indicating the normative foundations, levels, entities and forms of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation undertaken to shape common security in both countries, as well as the identification of joint ventures.

In the research process, theoretical and empirical methods were used, in particular, analysis, synthesis, inference, document analysis, interviews and observations made by the author during over thirty years of service in the State Fire Service.

Theoretical foundations of ensuring societal security

When starting a discourse on the efficient and effective provision of societal security at a level acceptable to the society, it is first necessary to define the subject scope of the issues under consideration.

In the literature on the subject, there are many explanations of the term “societal security”. One of them says that it is one of the components of internal security, next to public and systemic security, and means “a condition ensuring protection of the life and health of citizens and national property against the effects of natural disasters and technical catastrophes”⁵. Analysis of the content of the cited definition clearly indicates the catalogue of values to be protected⁶ (life, health, material goods, natural environment) and the threats that could affect the above-mentioned values. It should be noted that the general catalog of threats defined as natural and technical disasters is an extensive set of various and unfavorable situations resulting

⁵ B. Wiśniewski, S. Zalewski (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne RP w ujęciu systemowym i zadań administracji publicznej*, Bielsko-Biała 2006, p. 35.

⁶ R. Gwardyński, *Safety in Praxeological Approach*, [in:] *Security – Threats, Law and Organization*. Schriften zu Mittel- Und Osteuropa in der Europäischen Integration. Band 24, (sci.ed.). B. Wiśniewski, G.G. Sander, P. Kobes, Verlag Dr. Kovač, Hamburg 2019, p. 11.

from mutual relations and interactions between the elements of a specific triad consisting of⁷:

- man / people with the entire catalog of his / their activities;
- civilization environment (the effect of material human activity);
- the natural environment in which the subject exists, from which they derive elements necessary for life.

The features characterizing threats to societal security are suddenness (surprise), unpredictability of the place and time of occurrence, variability of the nature and scale of impact and the negative effects caused. Their destructive escalation does not take into account any administrative boundaries but is determined by the geographical, geological, hydrological, meteorological, climatic, physics, and urbanization and development conditions prevailing in the place of materialization of the threat. The aforementioned features are also important factors influencing the organization of an efficient and effective process of ensuring societal security.

Considering the accountability of the mentioned features of threats to societal security, it should be emphasized that regardless of their nature and scale “the expected effectiveness of rescue actions can be ensured by taking them in the right place and time and by the right amount of forces and resources with the desired quality parameters, adequate to the nature and scale of

the adverse phenomenon”⁸. It should be added that each of the above-mentioned conditions has its importance in the final rescue success, but the key determinant of the response efficiency is the reaction speed defined as “time elapsing from the occurrence of an incident until the arrival of appropriate rescue resources”⁹.

By analyzing the contemporary security environment¹⁰ it is worth noting that it is characterized by high complexity and dynamics of changes. The progress of civilization related to the development of new industries and the implementation of modern technologies, intensive expansion of various technical infrastructure and changes taking place in the natural environment, related to increased human activity in the pursuit of satisfying one’s needs, are the main sources of threats to human (society) and the environment in which they exist. The mentioned factors, constituting the human environment, are interrelated and interact with each other, as a result of which “the number of factors generating threats to societal security

⁷ J. Ziobro, P. Lubiewski, *Podstawowe problemy powszechności zagrożeń dla ludzi i środowiska [in:] Racjonalizacja zarządzania jednolitymi formacjami umundurowanymi odpowiedzialnymi za bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne*, Tom 3, ed. B. Wiśniewski, Warszawa 2018, p. 26.

⁸ J. Ziobro, *Ratownictwo transgraniczne jako forma współpracy i integracji międzynarodowej oraz środków w procesie zapewniania bezpieczeństwa powszechnego – wybrane aspekty organizacji transgranicznych działań ratowniczych*, *Zeszyty Naukowe SGSP*, No 73/1/2020, p. 172.

⁹ J. Prońko, J. Kielin, B. Wojtasiak, *Model reagowania systemu ratowniczo-gaśniczego*, „*Bezpieczeństwo i Technika Pożarnicza*” 2016, No 1, p. 117.

¹⁰ Security environment – external and internal, military and non-military (civil) security conditions (conditions for implementing the interests of a given entity in the field of security and achieving its goals in this respect), characterized by four basic categories, which are: opportunities, challenges, risks and threats. Cf. <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/bezpieczenstwo-narodowe/minislownik-bbn-propozy/6035,minislownik-bbn-propozycje-nowych-terminow-z-dziedziny-bezpieczenstwa.htm>, [10.11.2021].

is increasing, and their catalogue is an open set, constantly evolving”¹¹.

Considering the constant evolution of threats and their globalization, as well as the fact that security is one of the basic psychological needs of a human being, the satisfaction of which is the basis of their existence, and at the same time the chance for future development, it should be emphasized that achieving and maintaining a socially acceptable level of societal security is a task for any democratic country, posing a significant challenge to its authorities¹². The aforementioned dependence in the context of the aforementioned globalization of threats makes it necessary to constantly deepen the cooperation¹³. The priority of all actions taken should be to create formal and practical conditions of „protecting citizens against phenomena that are dangerous to life and health or cause environmental damage or material losses and minimize their effects and create an environment conducive to the harmonious and sustainable development of society”¹⁴.

Due to the complexity and dynamics of changes taking place in the contemporary societal security environment, all entities responsible for ensuring it achieve their goals that “must demonstrate high efficiency of action, which

means taking advantage of the opportunities that appear in the environment”¹⁵. The recalled efficiency of action in praxeological terms means the ability of the subject to create relationships with external partners and with their help to cope with the changes taking place, instead of striving to maintain stability on their own¹⁶.

The essence and importance of cooperation in developing security

Before we proceed to diagnosing the basics, levels and forms of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of shaping societal security, as well as problems in its efficient course, it is necessary to first present its theoretical conditions, presented in the literature.

It should be emphasized that the issue of cooperation is explored on the basis of various sciences and scientific disciplines. In general terms it refers to activities and relations that occur between two or more entities (units) and their effects. In the management literature, these relationships are defined using many synonymous terms, incl. cooperation, partnership, commitment, outsourcing etc. The multitude of terms used and their frequent, interchangeable use in various contexts and situations by theorists and practitioners, politicians, journalists “caused the differences between them to blur, and the merits became

¹¹ J. Ziobro, P. Lubiewski, op. cit., p. 46.

¹² B. Wiśniewski, J. Ziobro, T. Zwęgliński (red. nauk.), Racjonalizacja zarządzania jednolitymi formacjami umundurowanymi odpowiedzialnymi za bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne, Tom IX, SGSP, Warszawa 2021, p. 6.

¹³ Vide: R. Jakubczak, B. Wiśniewski (red. nauk.), Wyzwania, szanse, zagrożenia i ryzyko dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP o charakterze wewnętrznym, Szczytno 2016, p. 48.

¹⁴ Z. Ścibiorek, B. Wiśniewski, R. B. Kuc, A. Dawidczyk, Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne. Podręcznik akademicki, Toruń 2015, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵ R. Socha, Teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty dowodzenia organizacjami zhierarchizowanymi, Bulletin of Lviv State University of Life Safety, No 20, 2019, p. 24.

¹⁶ T. Kotarbiński, Traktat o dobrej robocie, Ossolineum, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk 1973, p. 352.

blurred¹⁷. Despite so many terms, the essence of cooperation is “undertaking mutually compatible and complementary activities and having a positive meaning from the point of view of their impact on the achievement of goals”¹⁸. Taking actions together is aimed at achieving a synergy effect that allows to obtain better results and reduce costs, which can be achieved by “combining functions that have so far been performed by each entity individually”¹⁹. The cited perception of cooperation (joint action) is “positively evaluative, as opposed to other relationships and concepts that may be indifferent or hostile”²⁰.

Taking into account the subject matter of this study, which boils down to the cooperation of two states, sovereign entities, participants of international relations, which have the right to “create their own security policy, including building a rescue system at their own discretion and setting the rules of its functioning in their own territory and outside it”²¹, the features characterizing their cooperation should be: autonomy of participants, common goal and voluntary agreement of tasks to be performed.

Bearing in mind the above and the fact that cooperation is a peculiar form of personal relations, taking place both in the management and executive staff

of cooperating entities (treated as a key component of each organization), its effects depend on the individual personality and competence characteristics of the cooperating partners. As Teresa Myjak notes, the willingness to cooperate with each other is determined by, among others, forbearance, empathy, willingness to help, tolerance and patience. On the other hand, the effects are determined by the qualifications of the staff and creativity in solving emerging problems and the ability to create project teams and practice dialogue during teamwork, as well as the mutual respect of members of cooperating teams. An extremely important role in creating cooperation and its effects is played by the managerial staff, who actively supports the executive staff (team) by setting specific and measurable tasks, at the same time leaving space for independent and free action²².

Regardless of the level and scope of cooperation related to shaping security, it covers three main spheres in each case²³:

- information (related to the exchange of information (data) necessary to achieve the assumed goals),
- material (including co-involvement of financial resources and material resources for the achievement of the assumed goals),
- physical (referring to the partners’ interpersonal relations, their mutual

¹⁷ D. Nowak, Wpływ współpracy i współdziałania na wybrane obszary funkcjonowania przedsiębiorstwa – wyniki badań, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego no 736”, *Finanse, rynki finansowe, ubezpieczenia*, no 55, 2012, p. 685.

¹⁸ J. Lichtarski, *Współdziałanie gospodarcze przedsiębiorstw*, Warszawa 1992, p. 13.

¹⁹ D. Nowak, Wpływ współpracy i współdziałania..., op. cit., p. 686.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ J. Ziobro, op. cit., p. 176.

²² T. Myjak, Uwarunkowania skutecznej i efektywnej współpracy zespołowej, „Inżynieria zarządzania. Cyfryzacja produkcji. Aktualności badawcze” 2017, No 2, pp. 185–197.

²³ J. Prońko, Bezpieczeństwo państwa, zarys teorii problemu i zadań administracji publicznej, Bielsko-Biała 2007, p. 68.

relations and attitudes taken by partners towards each other).

In stating the above, and at the same time taking into account the discipline of science in which these considerations are embedded, in further explications we will focus on cooperation understood as “joint operation or providing assistance in the implementation of tasks related to the achievement of a precisely defined, measurable goal related to the full implementation of projects related to the implementation of security tasks”²⁴. At the same time, the main goal of cooperation in all the above-mentioned spheres should be to achieve and maintain a socially acceptable level of universal security²⁵ by taking actions aimed at:

- preventing the emergence and spread of threats (prevention),
- providing properly prepared and equipped forces and means to counter threats (preparation),
- efficient and effective response to (combating) threats.

Diagnosis of bilateral cooperation between Poland and Ukraine in developing societal security

Taking into account the extremely extensive and constantly evolving catalogue of societal security of a cross-border nature and the determinants affecting its provision, ensuring favorable con-

ditions for the existence of society requires strengthening bilateral cooperation with neighboring countries, as well as activities on the international forum within the framework of organizations dealing with the issues of societal security, in particular counteracting natural disasters and technical failures and their effects, as well as broadly understood rescue and civil protection. Providing support under international cooperation should take into account the principle of sovereignty (external and internal), according to which each state is independently responsible for preventing, preparing, responding and removing the effects of threats, and the role of other states should be to support and supplement their activities²⁶. At the same time, providing especially rescue aid “should take place with the maximum alleviation or abolition of restrictions resulting from the existence of state borders”²⁷.

When commencing the exploration of the practical dimension of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of universal security, it should be emphasized that, in accordance with the principle of sovereignty, the basis for its formation should be bilateral agreements concluded by the competent authorities of both countries.

In the context of the above, it should be noted that Poland was the first country to recognize the independence of Ukraine after its declaration of indepen-

²⁴ B. Wiśniewski, System bezpieczeństwa państwa. Konteksty teoretyczne i praktyczne, Szczytno 2013, p. 298.

²⁵ J. Ziobro, Rescue Efficiency Determinants as a Guarantee of Acceptable Security Level, „Security Forum”, No 1/2021, WSB University, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2021, pp. 55-64.

²⁶ R. Ratusznyj, B. Wiśniewski, G.G. Sander, P. Pantya, Introduction to Deliberations on State Security Strategy, „Internal Security”, No 1/2021, Szczytno 2021, pp. 7-18.

²⁷ J. Ziobro, Ratownictwo transgraniczne jako forma współpracy..., op. cit., p. 170.

dence in August 1991.²⁸ The diplomatic relations established at the beginning of 1992 allowed for the development and signing of a treaty between the two countries on good neighborliness, friendly relations and cooperation.²⁹ In this document, the contracting parties undertook, inter alia, to strengthen cooperation “for security and stability in Europe with particular emphasis on regional security”³⁰. In order to coordinate³¹ cooperation, an institutional mechanism was established in 1996 – the Polish-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Coordination Council for Interregional Cooperation (P-U MRKdWM)³². Its main tasks include defining the directions and basic assumptions for the development of interregional cooperation, the development of joint action programs for the development of interregional cooperation and its coordination³³ at the level of oblasts and voivodships. Since 2002, the Council has focused its activities on the field of rescue and civil protection on the implementation of the provisions

of the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in the field of preventing disasters, natural disasters and other extraordinary events and removing their consequences. The aforementioned contract regulated the rules of voluntary provision of assistance by the contracting parties, indicating at the same time³⁴:

- authorities competent to ask for assistance and accept requests for assistance, and their competences,
- areas and forms of cooperation and providing aid,
- the rules for crossing the border through aid resources and staying in the territory of a neighboring country,
- requirements for the transport across the border of rescue equipment and humanitarian aid items,
- principles of managing and coordinating rescue operations,
- rules of bearing the costs of actions and compensation benefits related to losses incurred in their course in equipment and by rescuers.

In addition to the above, it should be added that from 2012 in the structure

P-U MRKdWM a permanent Commission for Rescue and Civil Protection in Conditions of Extraordinary Hazards has been established, which focuses its activity on developing normative and methodological foundations for rescue cooperation and tightening cooperation between rescue services at all adminis-

²⁸ Cf. <https://www.gov.pl/web/ukraina/relacje-dwustronne>, access: 12.11.2021.

²⁹ Treaty between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine on good neighborhood, friendly relations and cooperation, drawn up in Warsaw on May 18, 1992 (Journal of Laws of 1993, No. 125, item 573).

³⁰ Ibidem, art.3.

³¹ B. Kogut, P. Lubiewski, Management and coordination of rescue activities, *Вісник Львівського державного університету безпеки життєдіяльності*, No 17, Львів 2018, pp. 68-73.

³² The functioning of the Polish-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Coordinating Council for Interregional Cooperation was regulated by the Statute of January 26, 1996. Cf. <https://archiwum.msww.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca-miedzynarod/wspolpraca-transgranic/miedzynarodowe-rady-i-k/8268,Ukraina.html>, [12.11.2021].

³³ Vide: Wiśniewski B., Zwęgliński T., Socha R., *The Theory of Commanding*, *Вісник Львівського Державного Університету Безпеки Життєдіяльності*, No 14/2016, Lviv 2016, pp. 47 – 52.

³⁴ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on cooperation and mutual assistance in the field of preventing catastrophes, natural disasters and other extraordinary events and removing their consequences, made in Warsaw on July 19, 2002 (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 166, item 1737).

trative levels. The chairmanship of the commission is exercised by members of the management on the Polish side of the State Police Headquarters of the State Fire Service, while on the Ukrainian side of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (PSUdSN), a representative of regional / district level regional units and schools subordinate to them also participate in its work. The directions and prospects for the development of cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian rescue services in the field of rescue and civil protection, as well as the possibility of using international technical assistance and the implementation of projects under the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument programs and the Polish Aid initiative are discussed at meetings held alternately on the territory of partners. So far, eight committee meetings have been held, the last of which was held by videoconference for epidemiological reasons³⁵.

It should be emphasized that the abovementioned agreement on rescue cooperation laid the foundations, and the activities of the commission contributed to the systematic and creative cooperation of services and entities responsible for developing societal security operating in both countries, both at the central, regional and local levels. On its foundation, a number of contracts and agreements on cooperation and collaboration were concluded, and many scientific and training projects, exercises³⁶, study and advisory visits, rescue and humanitarian aid, as well as investment projects.

Government and local administration bodies at all levels, organizational units of the State Fire Service (PSP), voluntary fire brigades (OSP) and members of the Union of Volunteer Fire Brigades of the Republic of Poland (ZOSP RP) and many other entities from the public, economic and social sector were involved in their implementation.

Taking into account the wide scope of the implemented cooperation, further considerations focused on activities aimed at ensuring an efficient and effective response in the event of the materialization of threats to societal security. They have been undertaken on the Polish side by fire protection units, in particular PSP, TSO, ZOSP RP and supported by the state and local administration, and on the Ukrainian side by PSUdSN structures supported by state authorities and structures established since 2014.

As previously noted, one of the key criteria influencing the effectiveness of rescue operations is the appropriate quality of rescue resources directed to help. In the context of personnel, it includes, in particular, knowledge, competences and skills, physical fitness and endurance as well as mental resilience, perceived as factors enabling the efficient operation of rescue equipment and the implementation of rescue and relief activities. On the other hand, in relation to material resources, it means modern equipment, adequate to the nature of the threat, allowing for quick and safe reaching the scene and providing help.

Polish-Ukrainian cooperation aimed at educating and improving rescue personnel includes many forms and activities undertaken in this matter.

³⁵ <https://www.gov.pl/web/kgpsp/plany-wspolpracy-polskich-i-ukrainskich-strazakow>, [12.11.2021].

³⁶ Cf. T. Zwęgliński, Evaluating exercises effectively, „Crisis Response Journal”, No 16/2/2021, pp. 96-97.

One of the forms involves organizing scientific conferences and seminars by the academic centers of both countries. As part of them, theorists and practitioners dealing with the issues of rescue and civil protection present the results of research undertaken in this area, identifying problems and presenting proposals for their solution. In the past period, fire schools operating in both countries were involved in organizing such undertakings, as well as civil academic centers, which in cooperation with local structures of state and voluntary rescue services and formations, organized many such undertakings. Among the many undertakings of this type organized in the past, one should mention the 3rd International Scientific, and Training Conference entitled "Cooperation as the foundation of effective rescue" organized in 2013 in Arłamów by the State Higher Vocational School in Sanok named after Jan Grodek in cooperation with KG PSP and KW PSP in Rzeszów. During the conference, the "Principles of cooperation between the fire protection units of the Republic of Poland and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in providing mutual assistance in removing the effects of emergency situations" were signed.

An important form of cooperation in developing the staff are projects undertaken by universities and fire schools in the field of education and training, exchange of research and teaching staff and professional practice of students. Activities in this area are based on bilateral agreements concluded by the university management. One of the first was concluded in 2007 between the School

of Aspirants of the State Fire Service in Krakow and the Lviv University of Life Safety of the Ministry of Extraordinary Affairs of Ukraine.

The development of cooperation between industry-specific academic centers of both countries resulted in the signing in 2017 of an agreement between the Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw (SGSP) and the Lviv State University of Life Safety (LPUBŻ) on joint second-degree studies conducted by the Faculty of Fire Safety Engineering at SGSP. The aforementioned studies were created as a specialization called Fire Safety Engineering in the field of Safety Engineering and are conducted in a full-time form. Students from Ukraine take classes in the 1st and 3rd semester of studies and the diploma examination at SGSP, and the 2nd semester at LPUBŻ. Students from Poland and countries other than Ukraine take the 1st and 3rd semester of their studies and the diploma examination at LPUBŻ, and the 2nd semester at SGSP. After graduation, graduates have specialized knowledge in the field of fire and civil safety and receive a Master's degree in engineering, confirmed by diplomas issued by SGSP and LPUBŻ³⁷.

Another form of rescue personnel development is the organization of various types of courses, workshops and exercises during which the participating management and executive personnel improve their individual skills and cooperation in task teams. The organization of this type of cooperation is carried out by various centers at the central, provincial

³⁷ <https://ppoz.pl/index.php/aktualnosci/1668-wspolne-ksztalcenie>, [13.11.2021].

/ regional and local levels using financial support from European and national funds. An example of activities at the national level are exercises conducted under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UMOL) or the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), organized in both countries. Examples include the EU-Carpatex exercises organized in Poland (Podkarpacie) in 2011 as part of UMOL, or the exercises re-certifying the Ukrainian Heavy Search and Rescue Group (MRC) carried out in September 2020 in Ukraine (Kiev) as part of INSARG. In reference to the aforementioned re-certification exercises, it should be added that after its certification in 2014, the Ukrainian side noticed large organizational gaps and training gaps in its system and asked the PSP to mentor the MRC group in 2015-2019. As part of the work undertaken in this matter, the mentor was a representative of KG PSP, and in 2015-2017 the PSP implemented a project under the Polish Development Aid under Polish Development Aid named “Improving the effectiveness of the Ukrainian search and rescue group by increasing the competences of the management team.” The main goal of the project was to prepare the Ukrainian MRC group for recertification. It should be added that the actions taken by the State Fire Service have achieved the intended goal, and the Ukrainian side in 2021 asked KG PSP to continue the supervision of the MRC group and to prepare it for the next recertification scheduled for 2025. KG PSP decided to agree to this request³⁸.

In addition to the above-mentioned examples of activities of national importance, many regional or local projects were implemented, in which the units of the State Fire Service and the TSO and local authorities participated, e.g. the project implemented by the MC of the State Fire Service in Rzeszów in 2013: “Strengthening the institutional potential of cooperation between rescue services from Rzeszów and Uzhhorod through the improvement of rescue and firefighting techniques and the exchange of information and experiences”. As part of the project activities, firefighters from Uzhgorod received respiratory protection equipment and performed exercises in a specialized smoke chamber. Or the international field exercises organized in September 2021 in Ukraine as part of the “EU-CHEM-REACT 2” project. The maneuvers were organized by the International Center for Chemical Safety in Warsaw (ICCSS) and partners from the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine. Poland was represented by units of the State Fire Service from Jarosław, Lubaczów, Przemyśl and Rzeszów as well as units of OSP Ćmińsk, OSP Pabianice and OSP Zielonka. As part of the exercises, the participants developed algorithms for dealing with various types of emergency, including: the spread of dangerous substances on roads, accidents, building fires, elimination of unknown contamination, biological hazards in the border area. One of the objectives of the exercises was to correlate the activities of fire brigades from different countries so that they acted as one,

³⁸ Based on information from the Operational Planning Office and the Civil Protection Bureau of KG PSP.

consolidated team. It should be added that these exercises took place for the first time after a long break caused by the pandemic³⁹.

Transferring the considerations to activities undertaken in the field of improving the quality of the rescue technical potential, it should be emphasized that so far, many investment projects have been implemented, under which the equipment base of rescue entities in Ukraine has been systematically improved. The vast majority of projects implemented in this field concerned projects implemented by units of the State Fire Service, TSO and ZOSP RP in cooperation with local governments at various levels. The financing of the aforementioned undertakings was provided by European and national instruments for supporting cooperation, i.e., the “Cross-border Cooperation Program Poland-Belarus-Ukraine” (PWT PBU) and “Polish Aid”.

PWT PBU has been operating since 2004, supporting development processes on the border of these countries by co-financing various non-commercial projects contributing to the improvement of the quality of life of people living in eastern Poland, western Ukraine and Belarus. One of the thematic objectives of the programme’s interest is security. As part of its achievement, projects related to the prevention of natural and technical disasters and preparation for combating them are implemented, in particular by improving and adapting the equipment of rescue entities and

training their personnel to the needs (resulting from the nature of possible adverse events). During the 17 years of the program’s operation, many pieces of equipment have been purchased and a lot of training and exercises have been carried out. The main goal of actions undertaken in this priority is to shorten the waiting time for the reaction of the services responsible for safety and security. So far, 22 institutions have been involved in the implementation of projects in the above-mentioned scope⁴⁰.

An example of one of the recently implemented projects under PWT PBU is the project entitled “Joint protection of people and the environment through the creation of the Ukrainian-Polish system of prevention and response to natural disasters in the Carpathian Euroregion” with a total value of EUR 1.84 million, with co-financing from European funds of approximately EUR 1.66 million. It is run by the “Carpathian-Ukraine Euroregion” association, and the partners in its implementation are:

- Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Rzeszów,
- State Service for Emergency Situations of Ukraine from the Lviv region,
- State Service for Emergency Situations of Ukraine from Zakarpattia Oblast,
- State Service for Emergency Situations of Ukraine from the Ivano-Frankivsk region.

The material scope of the project includes the construction of a smoke chamber with equipment for the Municipal Police Headquarters in Przemyśl and the purchase of rescue and firefighting vehicles, as well as the organization of train-

³⁹ <https://www.gov.pl/web/kwpsp-rzeszow/miedzynarodowe-cwiczenia-terenowe-w-ramach-projektu-eu-chem-react-2-z-udzialem-podkarpackich-strazakow>, [13.11.2021].

⁴⁰ <https://www.pbu2020.eu/pl/pages/233>, [14.11.2021].

ing for firefighters from the above-mentioned districts⁴¹.

The second mentioned support tool is the “Polish Aid” program managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The implementation of projects under this instrument takes place in cooperation with government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local structures of partner countries. Ukraine, as a priority partner of Polish development cooperation, has been included in it since 2005. Mutual activities include projects related to the transformation of Ukraine, in particular supporting the reform process in the field of decentralization, as well as the development of national and regional crisis management systems⁴².

In the past period, within the aforementioned instrument, many initiatives were carried out aimed at improving the organization and functioning of entities responsible for ensuring societal security, both in the area of investment (material) as well as research and training. Close cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian firefighters resulted in the implementation of a number of projects, which included:

- purchases of specialized rescue equipment, measuring apparatus and equipment for rescuers;
- organization of specialized trainings, including in the field of safety of rescuers, chemical, ecological, water and road rescue;
- improvement and development of teaching resources and infrastructure;

- development and implementation of training programs for members of the Ukrainian rescue services and volunteer firefighters.

Activities in this area were undertaken, inter alia, by organizational units of the State Fire Service, as well as TSO units supported by local governments.

One of the last undertakings in this field is the implementation by KG PSP and SGSP of the project entitled “Regional Rescue Training Centers – support for the education system of the Volunteer Fire Department and professional rescue services in Ukraine”. The material scope of the project includes:

- establishment of Regional Rescue Training Centers throughout Ukraine,
- developing a training program and training instructors in extinguishing internal fires and tanks containing flammable gases;
- providing specialist equipment increasing the safety level of firefighters-instructors.

In the first stage of the project implementation (treated as a model solution), the existing trainer at the Lviv State University for Life Safety was expanded with a “hot” module, enabling the training of firefighters in real working conditions⁴³. In the future, similar trainers will be delivered to Kharkiv, Cherkas and Vinnitsa. They will become the seeds for the creation of regional rescue training

⁴¹ <https://www.gov.pl/web/kwpsp-rzeszow/projekt-wspolna-ochrona-ludzi-i-srodowiska>, [14.11.2021].

⁴² <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/ukraina3>, [14.11.2021].

⁴³ Cf. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/regionalne-centra-szkolenia-ratowniczego---wsparcie-systemu-ksztalcenia-osp-oraz-zawodowych-sluzb-ratowniczych-na-ukrainie>, [14.11.2021].

centers, in which classes will be conducted by trained native instructors⁴⁴.

Continuing the deliberations on Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of societal security, it should be noted that since 2014 its important area has been the multidimensional support for the organization of volunteer fire brigades in Ukraine. According to the assumptions of the administrative reform introduced in this country, one of the priorities of the reconstruction of the state system of societal security is the decentralization of competences by introducing at the local level (newly created territorial communities) tasks related to fire protection, civil protection and security. The adopted direction of reforms and the tasks carried out in this matter are also to serve the development of civil society and the involvement of local communities in shaping their own security. As Ivan Krisa emphasizes, due to the lack of experience in this matter in Ukrainian society, the organization of a system of voluntary rescue units similar to the Polish OSP requires, among others: creating legal and administrative foundations, activating local structures and communities in activities to prevent threats and combating them efficiently, developing and implementing training and certification programs for social rescuers, as well as developing specifications for the technical equipment

of these units and ensuring it⁴⁵. The multidimensionality of the issues necessary to be implemented to enable the achievement of the assumed goal resulted in the fact that many fire protection units operating in Poland, at the central and provincial levels, as well as individual OSPs and the commune self-governments supporting them, were involved in helping to solve them. In this regard, conferences, expert seminars, study visits, exercises and trainings were organized, as well as material support related to the provision of new vehicles and various rescue and protective equipment to the newly created OSP in Ukraine. On the Polish side, many local communities (towns, cities, communes) are involved in helping specific localities in Ukraine under the so-called twin cities (towns). It should be emphasized that at the regional and local levels, there are nearly 450 partnership cooperation agreements between Ukraine and Poland. Localities from all voivodships in Poland and 23 oblasts on the Ukrainian side are involved in the cooperation. The most numerous are the border provinces, with 31 towns in Podkarpacie having contracts with twin towns in Ukraine, and 20 from Lubelskie. In turn, the most active regions of Ukraine are the Lviv and Vinnytsia oblasts, of which 10 cities each have links with twin towns in Poland, and Ivano-Frankivsk and Rivne, where seven such agree-

⁴⁴ Cf. <https://www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc/ukrainscy-strazacy-podnosza-swoje-kompetencje-dzieki-polskiej-pomocy>, [14.11.2021].

⁴⁵ Development of cooperation in reducing chemical hazards, strengthening chemical safety and voluntary fire brigades, MIĘDZYNARODOWE FORUM WARSZAWA-KIJÓW, Warszawa 2017, p. 43. Cf. http://www.iccss.eu/fileadmin/user-files/iccss/Media/Documents/Waw-Kiv/Brochure_pln_final.pdf, [15.11.2021].

ments have been signed.⁴⁶ Apart from border towns, Western Polish voivodships are also involved in helping to establish OSP in Ukraine, an example of which is the Zachodniopomorskie voivodeship. The ZOW ZOSP RP operating in Szczecin actively supports the communities in the Zaporizhia and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts by conducting training and providing equipment (vehicles, rescue and protective equipment) to the TSO units that are being created there.⁴⁷

In addition to help in creating and equipping units with modern equipment, training and exercises, in the past two decades of Polish-Ukrainian contacts, the resources of rescue services operating in both countries also provided support during various disasters that hit both countries by participating in rescue operations or providing humanitarian assistance. Polish rescuers participated, among others in⁴⁸:

- organization and delivery of humanitarian aid (medicines, medical equipment, clothing and blankets) to the inhabitants of Uzhgorod and Zakarpattia affected by the floods (2001);
- providing medical aid to the victims of an air accident in Lviv (2002);

- elimination of the effects of floods in the Sniatyn region, during the 9-day mission, 78 rescuers with the help of their equipment carried out approx. 1665 interventions, consisting mainly in the liquidation of flood waters and pumping out water from key facilities in the city (2008);
- transport of humanitarian aid (food and means to organize substitute quarters), for people injured and moved due to social unrest after the conflict in Crimea (2014 and 2015).

With reference to the above, it is worth emphasizing that not only Poles rushed to help Ukraine, but similar support was also provided the other way around. In 2001, when Poland was fighting the flood in the southern Vistula river basin, the Lviv and Lutsk districts provided humanitarian aid in the form of food, quartermaster equipment and cleaning products. And in 2010, rescuers from Ukraine helped for 10 days in removing the effects of the flood, as it occurred in the vicinity of Sandomierz and Tarnobrzeg⁴⁹.

Conclusions

Summing up, the development of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of universal security over the last twenty years has been very dynamic, regardless of whether it is measured by the number of mutual contacts or by the number of programs and projects implemented. Many entities and bodies at the central, regional and local level participated in their implementation. All the activities

⁴⁶ O. Bogorodecka, Cechy charakterystyczne rozwoju współpracy miast bliźniaczych Polski i Ukrainy, *Historia i Polityka* No 13 (20) /2015, pp. 178–179.

⁴⁷ Пожежні команди ОТГ двох областей отримали спецпорядження з Польщі, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/2801545-pozezni-komandi-otg-dvoh-oblastej-otrimali-specporadzena-z-polsi.html>, oraz Рівненщину відвідала делегація добровільної пожежної охорони Республіки Польща, <https://rivne1.tv/news/81914>, [16.11.2021].

⁴⁸ Cf. Na ratunek poza granicami kraju, <https://www.ppoz.pl/index.php/ciekawostki/25-lat-ppsp/1590-na-ratunek-pozza-granicami-kraju>, [16.11.2021].

⁴⁹ Based on information from the Office of the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service.

undertaken were aimed at a systematic increase in the level of societal security in Poland and Ukraine, as well as in other countries. Considering the constant evolution of threats to societal security and their globalization, international cooperation aimed at counteracting these threats or combating them should be developed.

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