

## CENTRAL PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN POLAND

**Tomasz Walek<sup>\*)</sup>**

### ABSTRACT

The publication was devoted to the presentation of prevention programs carried out by the police. Prevention plays an important role in ensuring the personal safety of citizens, which in turn belongs to the constitutional obligations of the state. Democratic rule of law should respond to the objective as well as subjective needs of citizens in this area. Therefore, the basic objectives of criminal policy, and thus preventing and combating crime, must be complemented by reducing the fear of it. The purpose of this publication and discussion of the characteristics of the most important tasks incumbent on the police to ensure the safety of society.

**Key words:** Security, Police, prevention, society.

### STRESZCZENIE

Publikacja została poświęcona przedstawieniu programów prewencyjnych realizowanych przez Policję. Prewencja odgrywa niezwykle istotną rolę w zapewnianiu bezpieczeństwa osobistego obywatelom, co z kolei należy do konstytucyjnych obowiązków państwa. Demokratyczne państwo prawa powinno reagować na obiektywne, jak również subiektywne potrzeby obywateli w tym zakresie. Dlatego też podstawowe cele polityki kryminalnej, a więc zapobieganie i zwalczanie przestępczości, muszą zostać uzupełnione o redukcję strachu przed nią. Celem niniejszej publikacji omówienie i charakterystyka najważniejszych zadań jakie spoczywają na Policji w zakresie zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa społeczeństwu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Bezpieczeństwo, Policja, programy prewencyjne, społeczeństwo.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of sense of safety, as well as the actual safety situation closely related to it increasingly affects the whole life, as well as specific decisions made by residents

---

<sup>\*)</sup> mgr Tomasz Walek, Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w Krakowie, Al. Jana Pawła II 78, 31-571 Kraków, tel.: (48) 012 683 11 86, e-mail: tomasz.walek@awf.krakow.pl.

of large cities. However, it does not only apply to a danger of the threat of international terrorism or armed conflict, but mostly to crime, ranging from mild transgressions, such as vandalism, pickpocketing, through car theft, robbery and extortion, to the activities of organised groups, rape and murder. This occurs not only in the ghettos of metropolises in the Americas and South Africa, but also in European cities. Prevention should be preferred over repression, because, at bottom, many sources of crime, in general, cannot be defeated by penal measures. Preventive methods can be applied early, when criminogenic lifestyles and criminal careers are not yet consolidated. An appropriate action should be taken before a crime is committed, as crime prevention through the impact on the individual that has already committed a crime is a belated response, and its impact is significantly reduced. The action in the context of criminal policy does not mean neglect of repression as a means of influence on society [1]. Crime prevention is not limited to "to prevent or to punish" alternatives, because the two forms of action are essential in every society. The focus on preventing stems from the fact that for many years, it has been an objective of criminal policy. The necessity of such actions on the level of an individual, neighbourhood, municipality and nation is currently closed to doubt.

## **2 SENSE OF SAFETY IN POLAND**

Every year, the Public Opinion Research Centre surveys on the reception of public safety. For almost two-thirds of respondents (64%), Poland is a country in which people live safely [2]. Around the middle of the past decade, after a long period of negative evaluations, the sense of safety began to strengthen; the PORC reported its apogee two years ago, when the positive feedback in this area was expressed by three-quarters of respondents. Currently, the assessment of the safety situation in the country are at a slightly lower level, comparable to that which was recorded a year ago. During last twelve months, opinions on safety in the place of residence have not changed. The satisfaction in this regard is almost general; nine out of ten respondents (89%) are satisfied with the safety level, which is highest rate since the end of the eighties. The sense of safety is more common among better educated respondents, who assess their material conditions well. Living in a small municipality, a countryside or in a town of up to 20,000 people, also enhances positive opinions about the state of safety in the place of residence. Crime threat assessments remain stable. Two-fifths of respondents (39%) fear that they might fall victim to crime, while three-fifths (60%) do not feel such a threat. Concerns for the safety of members of the immediate family are slightly more frequent than personal anxiety; in this case, groups of pessimists and optimists are almost equinumerous (48% against 50%). The sense of safety from the threat of crime is more common among women than men; moreover, it is conducted by less education, living in a bigger municipality and poor assessment of residents' own material conditions. Over the past five years, one in five Poles (21%) has been a victim of a crime. Roughly one in seven (15%) says that he or she was robbed, and one in twelve (8%) experienced a break-in (to home, apartment, summer house, basement or utility buildings). A few were attacked and robbed (3%), beaten or intentionally hurt (2%) or were victims of other crimes (5%) at the same time. Such situations were more often experienced by inhabitants of larger towns, who are better educated, well-off,

unhappy with their material conditions, and religiously non-practising, according to their own declarations. The majority of respondents believe that Poland is a country in which people live safely. In the society, satisfaction with the state of safety in the place of residence and surrounding areas is almost universal; it is more often expressed by residents of rural areas and small urban centres. The opinions of respondents depend not only on personal experience, but also on their social profiles, such as the level of wealth or education. Although more affluent and educated people are more likely to fall victim to crime, their safety assessments are, in general, more positive.

### 3 POLICE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

In order to improve both the sense of safety and actual safety, the police conduct various prevention programs in cooperation with local government bodies. The premise of most of them is to put into practice the philosophy of *community policing*, i.e. the police which are close to members of the local community, who know its problems and adequately respond to them [3]. This is to be accomplished by:

- preventing and reducing crime;
- reducing risks to public order, such as prostitution, vandalism, alcohol consumption in public places, etc.;
- raising the sense of safety in population;
- improving relations between the police and the public;
- improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods.

**The most important central preventive program implemented by the Police in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration is: The government program for reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, under the name of: RAZEM BEZPIECZNIEJ (SAFER TOGETHER):**

The “Razem Bezpieczniej Program” is a formula for a comprehensive and purposive action to reduce events and behaviours that give rise to widespread opposition and insecurity. It is therefore a program of collaboration to improve the quality of life in terms of safety and access to the public good of safety [4]. The program is also consistent with the approved by the Council of Ministers Assumptions for the Development of the National Development Strategy 2007-2015, which include a priority of Establishment of an Integrated Community of Safety System and Cooperation Rules". The document indicates that, in cooperation with local communities, authorities should strive to create effective local safety systems and support efforts to improve local safety, in particular with a view to reduce the most intrusive for the citizens common crime.

**The main objectives of "RAZEM BEZPIECZNIEJ" include:**

- Increase of real safety in Poland.
- Increase of sense of security among the Polish population.
- Prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour by mobilising and actuating activities of the government to cooperate with the local administration, NGOs, and local communities.
- Improving the image and increase of public confidence in the Police and other services working to improve public safety and order.

The main coordinator of the activities carried out within the Program is the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration. For the proper implementation of its tasks, he will create a coordination team, with the support of the Chief Constable. At the regional level, the tasks arising from the implementation of the Program are coordinated by the voivode, with the help of the team; local government units (at the level of the powiat and municipality) should be involved in the program on a voluntary basis; at the level of powiat, the leading role in the implementation of tasks arising from the assumptions of the RAZEM BEZPIECZNIEJ Program should be fulfilled by the starost, chairman of the security and order commission; in municipalities, the tasks of preventing crime and ensuring order are initiated and implemented by the wójt (mayor); as part of the implementation of specific tasks, there can be created working groups composed of representatives of involved entities and experts invited to cooperate; the partners for the government in the implementation of the Program will also include social organisations, churches, religious associations.

**Other prevention programs implemented by the Police in Poland [5]:**

- National Programme for Combating AIDS and Preventing HIV Infections (Krajowy Program Zwalczania AIDS i Zapobiegania Zakażeniom HIV),
- National Programme for Drug Prevention (Krajowy Program Przeciwdziałania Narkomanii),
- National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (Krajowy Program Przeciwdziałania Przemocy w Rodzinie),
- National Program for Prevention of Alcohol-Related Problems (Narodowy Program Profilaktyki i Rozwiązywania Problemów Alkoholowych).

## **4 CONCLUSION**

Ensuring safety is directly connected with the responsibility and competence. The above characteristics of both a sense of safety in the Polish population, as well as the description of existing prevention programs in Poland, allow to draw the following conclusions concerning the opportunities for services responsible for ensuring safety in Poland. Prevention programs should be developed in the effort of cooperation between different entities, where the primary goal is to conduct a safety analysis based on the identification and assessment of threats and risk evaluation, and then to create the effective prevention. All parties involved in the creation of aims and tasks in the field of prevention should interact with each other, based on a common purpose. The group of these entities can include, in particular, in groups of specialised guards: Border Guard, Municipal Guard, ambulance services, as well as institutions and governmental and non-governmental organisations. Specific provisions and guidelines also indicate citizens as partners in the planned activities. The most common methods of cooperation are the exchange of the information, shared services and training, taking action at the request of interacting partners, transfer documentation, assistance, access to resources and measures.

## REFERENCES

- [1] ŻAROŃ Z.: *Prewencja Kryminalna. Podstawowe terminy*, ASD, Warszawa 2003, s. 17.
- [2] CBOS.: *Opinie o bezpieczeństwie Narodowym*, PKJDA, Warszawa, 2013, s.9.
- [3] SKRABASZ A.: *Bezpieczeństwo społeczne*, Wyd. Wyższej Szkoły Zarządzania i Prawa, Warszawa 2006, s. 413.
- [4] JAKUBCZAK R., *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe Polski w XXI wieku: wyzwania i strategie*, Wydawnictwo Bellona, Warszawa 2006, str.56.
- [5] <http://bip.kgp.policja.gov.pl/kgp/programy-prewencyjne> z dnia 10.03.2015r.

Článok recenzovali dvaja nezávislí recenzenti.

