

***Crime prevention in Poland
18 years after the transformation***

by

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1. There is no general or abstract normative rule (act, decree), which would regulate the issue of crime prevention in Poland. There is neither a bill nor any political initiative in this field. However, it does not seem that such a normative act is necessary. The sphere of responsibility for security in Poland is characterised by the diffusion of competence and the duties in the field of preventive actions are set out in various normative acts (see further). Such a state of affairs makes it difficult to establish a clear division of competence and responsibility. In order to amend the law it is sufficient to make particular acts more precise.

If a centre for coordination of prevention, so necessary in Poland, were established on the basis of existing regulations through decisions issued by central administrative bodies (which seems feasible), then solving this matter by means of legislation, as sometimes suggested, would be unnecessary.

Another argument supporting the passing of a general normative act is the need to regulate the legal status of subjects dealing with prevention as well as to define statutorily the sources of financing preventive actions. In the context of the reality in Poland, it is important to consider the necessity to regulate the principles for the financing of preventive activity.

I am opposed to granting special powers to citizens conducting crime preventive actions in organised groups in their local neighbourhood. Members of such groups should be given the rights of the so-called man on the street (the right to act in self-defence and in higher necessity, as well as to detain a perpetrator caught red-handed).

The task to prevent crime has been statutorily assigned to the following subjects:

- the Act on the Police passed in 1990 art. 1 section 2 defines the fundamental tasks of the police. Although the commentators of the act criticised the imperfect formulation of the tasks of the police, it is generally felt that its tasks as regards crime prevention have been relatively well stated. Among the seven most crucial tasks the legislator stated in point 3 are the *"initiation and organisation of activities aiming at prevention of perpetration of criminal offence and misdemeanours as well as crime stimulating phenomena and cooperation with state and self-government bodies and public organisations in this field."*
- the act of 1997 on communal (municipal) guards specifying their task to perform duties in the field of public order protection resulting from acts and regulations of the local law (art.10 section 1) rules among others the necessity of *"informing local community about the state and types of dangers as well as initiating and participating in activities aiming at prevention of perpetration of criminal offence and misdemeanours as well as crime stimulating phenomena and cooperation -with the state and self-government bodies and public organisations"*

- the tasks in the field of crime prevention have been also assigned by statute to bodies of territorial self-governments. Since the democratic principles concerning the organisation of territorial authorities were reactivated in Poland, the powers in the field of order and public security have been divided between state and self-government bodies.¹ These tasks can be performed by a self-government which can undertake actions or make use of their powers as regards the state police. The self-government is perceived mainly as a potential source of financing and coordinating activities, development or rebuilding of infrastructure and technical means of communication. The territorial self-government's tasks concerning the providing of security to the citizens have been – since 1990 (the act on a territorial self-government) – broadened many times which justifies submission of a proposition about progressive communalisation of security in Poland as particularly essential changes were introduced in 2001 in the result of the administrative reform of the country carried out in 1998. Communes (basic level of territorial self-government and the tripartite administrative division of the country) should provide security to citizens as a part of their fundamental tasks. They may do it by establishing their own services like communal guards (compare previous point). The *poviat* (the second level of the administrative division of the country and self-government) self-government is burdened with the most important tasks. The *poviat* council was obligated in 2001 to adopt a *poviat* programme of crime prevention and protection of citizens' security and public order. In the aforementioned renewal of the act on territorial self-government a new institution responsible for public order and security was introduced – a commission for security and order. As assumed, these commissions should perform functions similar to prevention councils in other countries but mostly they restrict their activity to the performance of minimum of the statutory tasks or even only activities of symbolic character. They are extremely rarely a creative factor as regards issues of public security. The adopted solution making the commission an advisory and consultative body of a *starosta* (an executive body of a territorial self-government on a *poviat* level) instead of a body coordinating the public security system was totally wrong.

On the basis of the analysis of the normative acts in force, one may state that the issue of crime prevention is also discussed in other normative acts, like the Act on Public Prosecutor's Office, Juvenile Crime, Province Offices' Statutes. These shall not be closely discussed in this paper, as they do not introduce duties of specific bodies in the field of prevention.

In Poland few books have been published on crime prevention. Many books are not available because of the place of their publication and the limited circle of addressees as is in the case of publications (very often handbooks) in the Police High School (the only Police High School in Poland)² Significant books were published by the Institute of Public Affairs (non-

¹ Recently: R. Głowacki, K. Łojek, *Zagadnienia prawne policyjnych działań zapobiegawczych. Wybrane aspekty* (Legal Issues of Police Preventive Activity. Selected aspects), Szczytno 2005.

² For example : R. Głowacki, K. Łojek ; *Zagadnienia prawne policyjnych działań zapobiegawczych. Wybrane aspekty.* (Legal Issues of the Police Preventive Activity. Selected aspects) Szczytno.

governmental organisation). They primarily contain the texts of the speeches on crime prevention delivered during the International Self-government Workshops organised in Krakow in 1998, 1999, 2000³ and the results of the study of the Research Unit on the Reform of the Police and Common Security, working in this institute from 1997 to 2000.⁴ Only three monographs devoted to his matter have been published.⁵ It is worth mentioning that there are publications co-written by both scholars and policemen.⁶ Moreover, one needs to mention a number of articles published by academics in legal or criminological magazines as well as police press articles prepared by police journalists or experienced policemen.⁷

2. Many countries have appointed special committees at a central level to coordinate prevention, promote the best programmes and finance local initiatives. They are carried out at the Ministry of Justice, Home Affairs etc. Establishing such a body would certainly facilitate the exchange of information and strengthen the effect of positive examples which are spread through the entire country. On the basis of the analysis of the solutions adopted in other countries and the situation in Poland, one might consider whether it would be useful to establish a new subject to deal with the coordination of the activities in the field of prevention on a central level. In Poland the state and self-governments do not take full advantage of the possibilities that could occur through the cooperation of state and non-state subjects as regards security. The causes for such a situation are both of objective and subjective character. Considering the present state of legal solutions, we should, first of all, include among objective causes, legislative drawbacks which do not allow the explicit determining of legal principles of cooperation (e.g. a very general regulation on cooperation). Among psychological barriers there are mainly simplistic thinking, belief in the ineffectiveness of actions or about their purely symbolic character, or finally a general lack of understanding. In such a situation the establishment of a nationwide organisation might improve that cooperation. Among the reasons for the failure of efforts so far, mainly undertaken by the Police Headquarters, is the fact that social and especially political awareness associates the prevention of crime, similarly to repression, with the police and their duties. The influence of politics on the issue of security, which is not typically Polish, makes decision makers, and parliamentary politicians especially, inter-

³ J. Czapska, W. Krupiarz (ed.), *Zapobieganie przestępczości w społecznościach lokalnych* (Crime Prevention in Local Communities), Warszawa 1999; J. Czapska, J. Widacki (ed.) *Bezpieczeństwo lokalne. Społeczny kontekst prewencji kryminalnej* (Local Security. The Social Context of the Crime Prevention), Warszawa 2000; J. Czapska, H. Kury (ed.) *Mit represyjności albo o znaczeniu prewencji kryminalnej* (The Myth of Repression or: the Importance of Crime Prevention), Kraków 2002.

⁴ J. Widacki, M. Mączyński, J. Czapska (ed) *Local Community, Public Security, Central and Eastern European Countries under Transformation*, Warszawa 2001.

⁵ A. Baładynowicz, *Prewencja kryminalna* (Crime Prevention), Warszawa 1998; T. Cielecki, *Prewencja kryminalna* (Crime Prevention), Opole 2004, J. Czapska, *Bezpieczeństwo obywateli. Studium z zakresu polityki prawa* (Citizens' Security. A Study in Legal Policy), Kraków 2004.

⁶ In 2007 a 3 volume work was published on selected aspects of the police and self-government activity in the field of providing security, also in the form of preventive actions.

⁷ In 1998 inspector T. Cielecki (Ph.D.), the former police commanding officer of Kielce province, conducted a survey in all province and regional police stations in Poland. The subjects of the survey were specialists on crime prevention.

ested in striking ideas and often, populist slogans. Another argument is based on drawing attention to the fact that crime prevention must remain local so any central body is redundant. The misunderstanding results from a different view of centralised bodies, which opponents regard as an organ administering prevention centrally in Poland – and we have bad memories of such bodies from the past.

In the 1990s the Chief Headquarters of the Police prepared a project to establish a body to coordinate activities in the field of crime prevention on a central level, however, it has never gained enough political support. It seems that a National Forum for Crime and Pathological Phenomena Prevention should be established with non-governance powers which would deal with finding professionally prepared educational material etc., as well as promote the best ideas, and therefore it should inform and coordinate, educate, inspire local preventive programmes, monitor the initiatives already in place, make information available about the situation in Poland and abroad, and incorporate Polish activities in this field into the 'European Crime Prevention Network'. The Forum might organise research and prepare and assess legal regulation projects and even independently prepare long-term programmes to improve security in particular spheres e.g. prevention of violence in schools, and make expert reports commissioned by state organs or commission other people to prepare such reports.⁸

In Poland two national (central) programmes to provide security have been established in which prevention played a crucial role. The State Programme for the Improvement of Citizens' Security of 2002 was a comprehensive proposition to improve security in the country. Ministers of Internal Affairs and Administration, Justice, Finance, Economy, Labour and Social Policy, Treasury, Education and Sport, Science and Culture and National Defence have been obligated to act within this programme. It was supposed to ensure the improved cooperation of the Police and public prosecutors' office, and create conditions to act effectively for them. In this respect the programme had to be assessed critically, as those 'conditions' were mainly limited to information, though positive effects of the annual 'Safe Commune' competitions must be emphasised, in which territorial self-government institutions carrying out particularly valuable projects in providing security received financial awards. The successive rounds of the competition enjoyed greater and greater popularity, measured by the number of entrants. It was a form of financial support for local prevention initiatives although the instructions for granting awards raised some controversy. It was a form of awarding programmes which were already being realised, as only programmes that had been going for at least three months were evaluated. There was no initiative for financing the best projects thus giving inspiration through contracts. Among controversial propositions included in the programme 'Safe Poland', an idea to regulate 'citizens' guards' by a statute must be mentioned.

⁸ cf. J. Czapska, *Bezpieczeństwo*, p. 297-298.

In December 2006 the Prime Minister unexpectedly signed a new resolution of the Council of the Minister which set up the government programme to limit crime and antisocial behaviour 'Safer Together', which will be realised in 2007-2015.⁹ 3m zloty (about € 810.000) a year were allocated for the realisation of the project. Emphasis is placed on the creation of integrated local communities. For example, in the second half of 2007 particular attention was drawn to such issues as town security maps and forming housing estate groups, domestic violence, and security in schools. The chief coordinator is the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration who is assisted by representatives of the Chief Headquarters of the Police and selected ministries. Throughout the country the activity of working teams should be coordinated by *voievodes* (or province governors, executive bodies of the highest level of the administrative division of Poland). Also the intensification of cooperation within EUCPN (European Crime Prevention Network) is being contemplated. Among the initiatives mentioned in the programme, the establishment of the bank of Good Practices must be praised. This will help self-governments, citizens' organisations and territorial units of the Police to find programmes useful in their area. Another positive point of the programme is the budget allocation for donations to organisations of public utility and the co-financing of local self-governments on the basis of the agreement between state and self-government administration for projects related to security. It is worth mentioning that the programme provides for it being monitored and evaluated. Due to the short period of time which has passed since the programme was created, it is difficult to assess its performance. It seems that too important a role has been assigned to the representatives of the Police, which may in future lead to their dominance in the realisation of these programmes. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration is able to ensure the effective coordination of activities. In the system of crime prevention in Poland it is important to realise that particular ministries gained much autonomy, which favours rivalry. What is more, problems with coordination appear between the Police and self-governments¹⁰.

The realisation of that programme falls within the period of return to centralising tendencies in the organisation of the Police. Moreover, nowadays the Polish Police base their vision of work on the theory of 'authoritarian intervention and symbolic justice'. That stage in the development of the police is critically described as 'symbolic cooperation with society' which means that the police expect society to provide both initiative and assistance, being themselves interested only in their image in the eyes of society.¹¹ Turning the Police off the road to decentralisation and union with a self-government within the so-called mixed model and re-

⁹ <http://razembezpieczniej.mswia.gov.pl/>. It is difficult to foresee the fate of the programme in connection with the victory of former opposition in the parliamentary elections.

¹⁰ In Poland, being a uniform country, there exists one state Police.

¹¹ T. Cielecki, Koordynacja systemu zapobiegania przestępczości przez samorzady lokalne (Coordination of the System of Crime Prevention by Local Self-governments), w :A. Szymaniak (Ed.) Samorząd a Policja. Kształtowanie bezpieczeństwa lokalnego (Self-government and the Police. Shaping Local Security.), Poznań 2007, p.36-37.

treating to a centralistic model becomes a decisive factor in the obstruction of social and self-government initiatives over cooperation with the Police.¹² For example, provisions allow for concluding an agreement between self-government organs and the police concerning financing by the former of a post of a district constable for a period of minimum 5 years (compare point 4). From 2000 – 2003 self-governments transferred means to finance 740 posts, and at the same time in the police *poviat* units, the number of district constable posts was gradually reduced by 1355¹³ to increase the number of the patrol and reactive policemen.

The difficulties in the realisation of tasks in the field of crime prevention also arise from the attitude of policemen towards it; less than a half of the policemen consider preventive activity most important when providing security is concerned, 10% consider it totally worthless and 20% do not think such activity to be important.¹⁴

3. The Police are the first to be included in the group of players dealing with crime prevention. Apart from them, either individually or in cooperation with the police, other non-government organisations, the Catholic Church, municipal guards, informal citizen organisations, local self-governments are engaged in prevention. The potential of private security firms for the protection of people and property is still exploited only to small extent although (rare) successful attempts are evident. For example in Kraków since 2002, a quality certificate for the best private security firm for the protection of people and property has been awarded. The principle of the competition is to stimulate private security firms working in Kraków to act in support of activities improving citizens' security. The aim is to choose the best working firms which assist the city in its attempts to improve security. The certificate confirms the high quality of the services provided and particular engagement in strengthening citizens' security in cooperation with the city.

As the result of preventive actions undertaken by the police, we can observe greater cooperation of the police with other subjects. According to the policemen surveyed in 1998 - specialists in prevention - the cooperation between educational and healthcare units is best arranged, between territorial self-government bodies and public prosecutors and courts. 30% of the respondents positively evaluated the cooperation with social welfare and 40% the cooperation with the church and administrators of houses and flats.

General information is scarce about actions undertaken by non-government organisations, government and self-government administration, specialised educational and healthcare units. Making the actions of various subjects autonomous is highly disadvantageous, impedes or

¹² T. Cielecki, *Koordinacja*, p. 40.

¹³ T. Cielecki, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁴ B. Hołyst, *Psychologia kryminalistyczna (Criminal Psychology)*, PWN 2004, s. 1363. It seems that such attitudes are the result both of the training as well as the practice. In the evaluation of the policemen's work used by superior officers and units.

successfully hinders preventive actions. The lack of sufficient information makes policemen who deal with prevention undertake spontaneous preventive actions, instead of ensuring co-operation of specialists in a given field.

In Poland there is a lack of reliable and up-to-date information about the number of prevention programmes being implemented and their effectiveness.¹⁵ Police programmes are relatively well known. From 1991 to 2000 the Police Headquarters in provinces handed several descriptions of various programmes on prevention to their units, ranging from individual ones to the complex project "Safe City". Implementation of pilot projects for prevention began in 1993. The police project "Safe City" has been conducted in the whole country with varying intensity since the beginning of 1995. The project included some suggestions for preventive actions, defined principles, forms of activity and its structure. It primarily recommended to respect the principle of founding projects on surveys of needs and threats in local communities. It addressed cities, communes and residential areas. Within the framework of the "Safe City" project a variety of subprojects are conducted depending on local needs. The most fundamental goals of the projects can be analysed on the basis of their names: Safe Home, Street, School, Business, Residential Area, Fun, Holidays, Relax, Neighbourhood Watch (the Neighbourhood Project to Counteract Crime), Police Educational Project in Schools. Preventive projects also concern fighting alcohol abuse, monitoring of dangerous places, influencing mass media, managing children's and young people's free time.

Province structures of administration, the police and other participants were to hold coordinative meetings due to the lack of a government body to coordinate an interdepartmental combat against crime. The concept of the "Safe City" project corresponds with the standards applied by well-known British projects, for instance The Safer Communities Partnership, The Strategic Partnership, The Safer Cities Project. The initial 9 year period of implementing crime prevention activities in Polish police – quite consistent in the theory phase – was not so consistent in the realisation phase. Despite various ups and downs, the programmes recommended by the Prevention Bureau of the Chief Headquarters for province headquarters appeared to be quite consistent, beginning with the presentation of strategy, then dispersed initiatives and finally comprehensive long-term prevention programmes. However, the implementation of those propositions appeared to be much worse. Sometimes that period is quaintly described as 'leaflet prevention' because on the most part the activities consisted of preparing information materials on different subjects related to security (mainly the flat, public transport, car parks and the road to school).

¹⁵According to the T.Cielecki's report, in 1998 the police in Poland were carrying out 1268 preventive projects. They were conducted by 80% of regional and province police units. The full complex "Safe City" projects were carried out by 10% of police units, more than 8 projects by 5%, from 5 to 8 by 20%, from 1 to 4 projects by 44% of units.

In 2007 in relation to the state programme 'Safer Together', the Police introduced a programme called 'Safe Cities', in which they plan to intensify their activities in small and medium-size towns in the following spheres on the basis of threats identified in the research conducted this year in January: security in public places and residential areas, in schools, means of public transport, on roads and in running a business activity.¹⁶

The preventive projects conducted nowadays in Poland have two basic aims: to inform and to educate. A gradual transfer towards projects of a new generation, with wide scope, clear planning and assessment elements can be seen, but they are still exceptions in comparison to the programmes duplicating errors of prevention programmes described comprehensively in world literature; occasional actions, the lack of good diagnosis prior to the selection of the programme and the lack of an evaluation of the course of the action and its effects.

Poland has relatively large number of school educational projects. One can define these as typical for primary prevention. Their form varies from typical meetings with young people or children in the classroom, meetings with children in small groups with the use of tapes, films, colour books and to drama shows for kindergarten children. Children also have an opportunity to participate in interesting meetings with policemen or guards in the form of a play. All of them are to serve the children's preparation for defence against different dangers. Education of teachers and parents is another supplementary element. In some centres preventive programmes are devoted to combating drug abuse among young people. Unfortunately, we are not familiar with any attempt to evaluate them.

Among preventive projects, education of adults in the risks of victimisation, establishing confidence telephones by the police is distinctly less frequent. The percentage of projects counteracting concrete risks in specific areas is surprisingly small. It is rare to encounter: tackling dangers in stadiums, burglary at summer houses, taxi drivers' self-defence, and prevention of poaching. There are few projects notified for enhancing security for the elderly. Relatively speaking, the marking of bicycles is more frequent.

Some of the projects conducted in Poland were directed to improve security and order in specific regions. They comprise creating secure zones, squares and similar places. Their common aim is to ensure security in certain parts of cities. In appointed regions the number of police patrols, often together with municipal guards. During meetings with inhabitants, dangerous zones and ways of liquidating them are specified, lighting is improved, places of special danger monitored, other subjects are encouraged to improve security and order. The essence of these projects is comprises of two elements: intensive patrol control and using district constables according to their duties specified within the framework of *community policing* theory.

¹⁶ Policyjny program ograniczania przestępczości i aspołecznych zachowań w małych i średnich miastach „Bezpieczne Miasta” (The Police programme to limit crime and antisocial behaviour in small and medium-size towns 'Safe Cities'), Warszawa 2007.

Introduced in October 1998, one of the most complex projects is the system of police domestic intervention called "Blue Cards". This is a project to counteract domestic violence allowing the supplementing of police actions with real preventive procedure carried out by a district constable accompanied by social services units.

As has already been mentioned here several times, the most dominant among the realised preventive projects are those which are of an informative and educational nature. They need to be categorised as typical means of primary prevention, i.e. directed towards society as a whole, as potential victims or perpetrators, less often directed towards changes at community level. Decidedly fewer projects belong to secondary prevention, and prevention directed to perpetrators or victims of crimes is exceptional. Neighbourhood Watch projects, together with secure zone projects or reorganising the function of a district constable, can be rated as means of both primary and secondary prevention.

Second Generation CPTED is becoming more and more popular though as far as the implementation of this programme is concerned, one can make a thorough study of the weaknesses of Polish activities. The research projects are being carried out by 5 universities of technology and the Police High School, the results of which are publications, scientific conferences, a supervision of implementation as well as cooperation with the Police in selected cities. The Integrated Project for Security, realised on the basis of Dutch experience by the Police in Kraków in cooperation with several universities in that city, became an illustrative example. However, this issue is only hinted at in the programme 'Safer Together'; it is also omitted in the coordinating actions of the Chief Headquarters of the Police: nor does much information unfavourable towards innovation reach the local self-governments. Programmes referring to CPTED are only implemented in some places mostly where there is a long tradition of cooperation between the Police, self-governments and academics.

4. In 1991 the Police Headquarters announced new strategy for counteracting crime, prepared a year earlier. Although it referred to preventive activities within the framework of criminal law and penitentiary prevention as of prime importance, it also very strongly stressed the necessity for a parallel development of activities within situational and social prevention. According to the police concept it was agreed that a district constable would fulfil the basic preventive function in local communities. The strategy also referred to the experience of Western European countries. A district constable should be the most basic player who is responsible for cooperation with local communities in order to prevent crime. This would be a police officer of so called first contact, serving in a specific area. In November 1997 the Police Commander in Chief appointed a team to introduce the project "My district constable". The project included the idea of building a new model of a district constable, a manager of the area of duty, who makes close contact with community. The basis for that was the order of the Chief Police Commanding Officer in 1995. In 2007 a new regulation was issued concerning forms and methods of performing tasks by a district constable and the supervising officer of district constables.

Each new Chief Police Commanding Officer aims to restore the function of a district constable, so far without much visible success. Out of a 100,000 policemen in Poland, we have approximately 9000 district constables. According to the modest evaluation, in order to realise the function of a protector of a certain district, there should be about 16,000 of them. The lack of success in creating a real district constable implementing the idea of *community policing* in the Polish police results from several fundamental causes.

Self-governments have so far shown friendly interest in supporting this institution, however without concrete actions, especially in the sphere of financing. As of January 1st 1999 the legal situation changed so much that the new regulations provide for financing additional posts of district constables by self-governments for at least 5 years on the grounds of the agreement concluded with a province police commanding officer. Until mid June 1999 there was one such agreement concluded, although a number of self-governments expressed their interest in such possibility. Reducing the number of municipal guards and designating the money saved in this way for additional posts in the police has become an undesirable phenomenon on a national scale. Unnecessary rivalry appeared. Policemen race to diminish the expenses of their actions, only to distance themselves from the expenses of maintaining municipal guard and to take over money designated for them. This is not the way. Both services, the police and guards could perform a number of duties provided they cooperate reasonably. In the situation where the role of a district constable has not been sufficiently specified, such a change of a guard into a policeman may lead to the situation where some of the duties of ensuring order in a commune will be left without adequate provisions. Undoubtedly, such an attitude was accepted by the representatives of territorial self-governments since the tendency ended after two years and at present in Poland, the number of communal guards formed optionally by self-governments is growing.

One of the causes of failure connected with the introduction of the new model of district constable is the notorious imposition of additional current tasks on them (for instance to conduct preparatory proceedings), which impedes the realisation of preventive functions in their districts,¹⁷ the lack of stability of the job caused by personnel fluctuation which leads to difficulty in getting properly acquainted with their district, acceptance by local society, anonymity of a district constable, all of which destabilise the system of professional training.¹⁸ Moreover, the attitude of many district constables is not without significance as they, perceiving the low prestige they enjoy in the Police, treat their function as a temporary stage to a career in the inquiry and investigation section.

¹⁷ The findings of the report of The Prevention Bureau at the Police Headquarters indicate that approximately 50% of work time of a district constable is devoted to duties which require them to leave the borough.

¹⁸ M. Stefański, Rola dzielnicowego w procesie kształtowania poczucia bezpieczeństwa (The role of a district constable in the formation of the feeling of security), in: A. Szymaniak (Ed.) *Samorząd*, p. 150.

The third element which must be underlined, is the incorrect training of district constables in Poland which results in the lack of competence and skills which are necessary to carry out preventive projects. As long as a district constable neither enjoys an appropriate position in the Police hierarchy nor has motivation to work (prestige and remuneration), it is difficult to expect a breakthrough in the treatment of a district constable, who has been described in the press as 'rubbish-bin for everything'.¹⁹

5. Citizens' commitment to preventive projects can be arranged in various ways.²⁰ One of the typical ways is the participation in the Neighbourhood Watch (NW). In Poland at the beginning of the 1990s they were mostly organised by the police; later such activity was also carried out by communal guards and self-governments. Examples were mostly taken from Great Britain. According to surveys conducted among policemen - specialists on crime prevention – in 1998, 44 out of 1268 projects were the Neighbourhood Projects to Prevent Crime. This is very few, however one has to consider that the qualification criterion has an extremely formal character²¹.

It is not possible to define what part of Polish society is involved in similar initiatives. As research shows, more than a half of Polish people declare to provide neighbourhood help in defence against victimisation (55% in 1995 and 61% in 1996). It is not easy to state what part of these declarations mean more than the friendly watch of a flat or an exchange of conventional courtesy. Prevention projects aim to prompt people into a friendly interest in their neighbours, to break anonymity, to undertake collective actions in order to improve the standard of living in the closest surrounding neighbourhood. Except for the simplest conventional actions this is the behaviour that people should learn. Such education might be supported by the high confidence that the Police enjoy in society.²² The Polish people's attitudes towards preventive activities are incoherent because they simultaneously involve supporting groups of neighbours' assistance, and expressing the expectation that the state, to which we pay taxes, should act and protect us effectively.

I am not in favour of creating paramilitary groups in the form of institutionalised citizens' patrols.²³ I oppose providing prevention groups with special rights. Members of groups should

¹⁹ M. Dębicki, *Marzenia dzielnicowych* (The District Constables' Dreams), *Gazeta Wyborcza* z 8 października 1997.

²⁰ If citizens were asked about the most frequently implemented preventive measures, they would most often point to passive forms of behaviour, for details compare J. Czapska, *Private Initiativen als Mittel der Kriminalitätskontrolle In Polen*, In: J. Obergfell-Fuchs & M. Brandenstein (Ed.) *Nationale und internationale Entwicklungen In der Kriminologie, Festschrift für Helmut Kury zum 65. Geburtstag*, Frankfurt 2006, p. 507-508.

²¹ Only the projects which have been precisely named as such by their creators and participants have been included to the Neighbourhood Projects. Possibly many other preventive projects, which have not been named as neighbourhood ones, are also based on co-operation of inhabitants.

²² For details compare. J. Czapska, *Private*, p. 531-532.

²³ On the subject of citizens' patrols and their history compare J. Czapska, *Private*, p. 511-516.

have the rights of the so-called every man: the right to self-defence, to act in the state of higher necessity, to detain the perpetrator *in flagrante delicto*. With the extension of their rights without any training or after a short course, a serious danger may rise due to the limited possibility to control their conduct. While exercising special rights or transgressing them in the case of intervention, members of paramilitary groups constitute danger for other citizens, for bodies of security and order, and finally for themselves. In the meantime the support for such initiatives in Poland must be taken into account, which resulted from the specific understanding of the principles of a democratic state by some citizens and is especially disturbing in this context. In the aforementioned government programme 'Safe Poland', legal regulation of citizens' guards was planned as an important element of the social support for the security activity. These plans ended in only a catalogue of regulations which may give legal grounds for functioning of such forms of citizens' self-organisation in the light of the binding law. It did not come to the legitimisation of citizens' paramilitary groups by the state in the form of a new law regulation.

6. Cooperation with foreign partners has existed since 1990. It was mainly seen in the training of Polish specialists on prevention, as well as in foreign visitors to Poland who assist the practical realisation of specific projects in our country. In the process of the training of the Polish police, Great Britain's assistance project which has been conducted since 1990 within the framework of The Know-How Foundation has been of essential significance. Considering the fact that most of the domestic and foreign training has initially been based on our British contacts, it is not surprising that many of the approved solutions in Poland were similar to the British solutions. Moreover, Polish policemen have visited the United States, France, Germany, The Netherlands etc. Policemen from Chicago taught Polish policemen in two big provincial cities how to organise police actions in CAPS system. The educational program for children called 'Live Normally' first conducted as a pilot project in Chełm, and later also introduced in other regions of Poland, has been realised according to Dutch models. Danish SPP project served as the basis for partial preventive actions in Kielce. In the former province of Zielona Góra the Dutch police assistance in the organisation of prevention has led to joint street patrols of Polish cities. Permanent cooperation has existed between The Dutch Police Institute in the Hague and the Police Headquarters in Warsaw. Common preventive actions have been conducted with our Eastern neighbours.

The input of foreign experience into the creation of strategies for preventive activity in Poland has been well documented by one of the Police Commander in Chief's advisors. A. Przemyski paid attention to the fact that at the beginning of 1990s we used foreign models, adapting them to Polish conditions. Today on the grounds of ideas worked out in other countries, the

Polish police are trying to find their own methods of acting.²⁴ Thus joint research projects undertaken by Polish researchers and policemen together with foreign partners within the framework of European grants are of great importance.

Despite positive evaluation of European cooperation for the development of research and activity in the field of crime prevention, it is necessary to point to fundamental difficulties, which encompass:

- a) the lack of coordination of actions undertaken by various subjects, both at the central level where different departments are responsible for particular aspects of prevention; Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Internal Affairs and Administration, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and subjects acting in one specific area,
- b) the lack of stable and transparent forms of financing of preventive projects
- c) the lack of ready methods of evaluation of realised projects, and therefore "everyone has to learn a lesson".

In order for crime prevention to be successfully conducted in Poland, there are several fundamental conditions to be fulfilled. Firstly, it is necessary to establish a new model of a district constable, implementing the idea of *community policing* in local communities. The need to reform the police education system is connected with it in order to introduce crime prevention as one of the subjects of training at an elementary level, as well as a series of training for specialists on prevention at all levels of police structure. Secondly, it is necessary to alter the law regulation of the commissions for security and order in *poviats* to take better advantage of the knowledge of the experts employed in them. Thirdly, it is important to establish a system of monitoring preventive actions, and relations with citizens, especially with reference to receiving information about crime. Next, it is vital to allocate larger sums of money for prevention or at least to establish permanent sources of financing of preventive actions and clearly determine the principles of allocating them to stimulate local initiatives in the field of crime prevention. Finally, it is necessary, as stated earlier, to appoint an organisation to coordinate the policy of counteracting of crime and serve as the centre of information and exchange of experience.

Crime prevention is a subject of increasing popularity in Poland. With a little exaggeration one could almost say it is becoming fashionable. It takes many years of reasonable and successful education to create citizens who are aware of their partial responsibility for security, and that sometimes even the simplest precautions may greatly increase security. It will take a

²⁴ A. Przemyski, *Community policing po polsku (Community Policing the Polish Way)*, in: J. Czapska, W. Krupiarz (ed.) *Zapobieganie przestępczości w społecznościach lokalnych (Crime Prevention in Local Communities)*, Warszawa 1999.

long time before we see these effects. If only one could make politicians take interest in the status of prevention, we could support this process with supplementary propaganda actions. Success in this sphere is hard to achieve because certain politicians reveal tendencies to undertake short-lasting and more striking action, and as said before, prevention of crime is fundamentally a cooperative work.

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