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The Polish Police in the Light of the Statements of the Police Chief Commanders in 1990-2018

Abstract

The article presents the statements of the police chiefs from the last twenty-eight years, i.e. from the moment of police establishment in 1990 to 2018. At that time, sixteen senior officers were the chiefs of the Polish police. The subject of the analysis concerns the views of police authority on the functioning and organisation of the police service. The author of the article undertook the effort of presenting the transformation of the Polish police force from the perspective of the opinions of the Police Chief Commanders. He analyzed these opinions critically.

Keywords: police, public safety, public order, crime

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“The police who are ashamed of themselves are normal;
The police with a mission are a disease of societies, their cancer”¹

In almost thirty years, the Polish system of protection of public order and security has changed completely. The state of the crime threat and the level of social assessment of the criminal situation in the country have also changed. The majority of factors affecting these changes had an objective nature. However, one cannot ignore the importance of the people who created this latest history of the Polish National Police. There is simply no history without people. The question arises whether the chiefs of this formation as one of the groups of partakers of those historical events had a share in shaping reality or only were they the passive accompaniment. Analysing their initial “exposé”, one should remember the context of the current social and economic situation, objective possibilities and the state of social and professional awareness.

The author intended to present a subjective picture of the development of the Polish police force through the prism of views and opinions of police authority. Another defined issue is the formation of the system of communication with the external environment. It can be argued that the search for the right and adequate to the social needs model of police and threats to internal security were a problematic conceptual undertaking.

In 1989, Poland, and later other Central and Eastern European countries, was a place of profound and revolutionary changes, both economic and socio-political. On the one hand, the principles of free-market and private entrepreneurship began to be introduced into the economic life, but on the other hand, there was a full democratisation of the systemic and legal systems in this part of Europe. Reforms also covered institutions protecting public order and security. A distinctive feature of security organisations in the system of communist states was their incapacitation and politicisation of their activities.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that compared to other countries of Eastern Europe, the socio-political situation in Poland was surprisingly liberal. For that reason, despite many restrictions, the Citizens’ Militia tried to focus on fighting crime, and the effects of this fight were measurable and substantial. Therefore, the transformation of law enforcement bodies started in 1989 had an evolutionary course (Misiuk 2013, p. 120).

¹ Stefan Kisielewski (1997), *Wolanie na puszczy. Pisma wybrane*, Wydawnictwo „Iskry”, Warszawa, p. 34.

In the new situation, Polish society expected the welfare and humanitarian police. Hence, the Police Act of 1990 highlighted the duty of police officers to respect the dignity of citizens and to abide and protect human rights. Due to the inglorious experiences of the past, the authors of the Act reduced the rights of the police significantly. The function of the police as an institution of “public utility”, a serviceable guardian was particularly stressed. Expectations going in this direction were associated with emphasizing the need for a firm “embedding” and tying the police with the environment at the lowest level – the area of residence. Therefore, it was decided to set up the local police. It should be assumed that the brutality of many militiamen in confronting with citizens derived not only from social alienation but also from the sense of the weakness of the law enforcement officer in the face of daily threats.

Building a modern police body

The above expectations were reflected in the statements of the new management of the police – Deputy Chief Commander, Colonel Boguslaw Strzelecki:

“Well, I would like to see the times when our police will deserve to get help from every citizen as a moral duty and an honour. Before that, however, we need to regain public confidence step by step. This is an indispensable condition for a successful service. Only wise, highly trained officers in the reasonably constructed structures of the new police can achieve this goal. It is necessary to acquire a lot of them and they must be very skilled, very predisposed to this work. Then, internal healthy competition will be created and it will be more effective than multi-stage supervision” („Magazyn Kryminalny 997” 1990, pp. 4-5).

However, this period of inventive and organic work on the creation of a completely new police service lasted quite briefly. The time has come for a specific acceleration, which was the first but not the last in the recent history of the Polish police. The newly-appointed on 17th July 1991, the Police Commander-in-Chief, Junior Inspector Roman Hula made quick decisions and rapid changes:

“First there is an urgent need to change the organizational structures of the police. It must be a comprehensive action. It is necessary to start with the calculation and determination of job positions with a division into purely connected with police and civil-law matters... I would like to emphasise strongly – there are no more important and less important departments in the police. All of them are necessary for its functioning. But do secretaries

and typists have to be police officers?... And do all lab technicians working in forensic laboratories perform police activities? As far as logistical departments are concerned, I assume that their executives should be made up of police officers. Police officers should be part of HR, staff inspection, praesidium, etc. The second stage is the determination of the number of police officers and officials needed in each department. This must be done quickly, even before work on the new budget act begins. However, I already know that Traffic Police should have more posts and must develop traffic accident division to conduct investigations on their own. Preventive Police, which in the future will move away from investigations at all, must develop a dense network of local police agencies. This has been talked about since the establishment of the police, and it is only about acceleration and consistency in the implementation of the changes... I would like to emphasise that as in other countries, the specificity of individual units requires from the police officer distinct personality qualities. I am, for example, an opponent of combining operational and investigative tasks.

I emphasize once again – I value all services. I am going to, for example, develop forensics. As far as through its presence on the streets, Preventive Police can provide the so-called social sense of security, but in order to achieve better detection in combating crime, the most important is operational identification. And it depends on good operational work. After all, the police do not have to be visible but effective” („Magazyn Kryminalny 997” 1991, p. 3).

At that time, keywords appeared and were used in subsequent years with the hope of solving problems. These include the reform of endless reorganisation and transformation of police posts into civilian. However, in this stream of words, there was also a bit of self-critical reflection:

“I will say it straight: we are not psychologically prepared for the transformations taking place. The aggression of criminal circles has begun to overwhelm us. We have not yet liberated from the pillory of old social assessments, those from martial law. And yet, we managed to break the barriers of mistrust, which is confirmed by the results of the public opinion survey” (*Ibid.*).

In less than a year, the period of unproductive storm and pressure in the Polish police force ended. On 25 February 1992 a new Chief, Inspector Zenon Smolarek, comes. At the first meeting with the police executives on 2 March 1992, he promises peace and prudence in decision-making:

“In his actions, the Chief Commander wants to rely on wisdom and experience of both Province Police Commanders, as well as directors and middle-level management. He intends to set up a number of teams to gather opinions on the functioning of the police, which will help to draw conclusions and improve police work. The reorganisation so far has stopped at the General Police Headquarters. province headquarters have been intact. But he also understands that the best ideas will not be realized when the money runs out. The most important thing for the police is the matter of liaison and transport, and then social matters. We must give a lot first, and only then we can start demanding” (Cierlica 1992, p. 2).

After two years, the police realised that they had significant technical and logistical backwardness in equipment. At the same time, the share of expenditures on the police in the state budget became increasingly unsatisfactory. Subsequent governments and parliamentarians (consciously or unconsciously) did not express much interest in the issue of public security. Another specific matter that has evolved since then was the tendency to create inside-police commissions and teams that were to reform and create an effective institution². This unwavering faith that, for example, the General Police Headquarters will reform itself and limit its privileges is admirable.

In his next extensive speech, the Police Commander-in-Chief diagnosed the state of the body he headed as follows:

“So I will not complain. It lacks, apart from material resources, a network of informants, which was once airily destroyed. To elevate operational work to the next level, we need to have a source of information in every crime environment. We cannot work on the principle of buying information but on the principle of our own information system; we need to strengthen the work of prevention and traffic units. They should provide basic data for processing by the operational services. All over the world, police are eavesdropping, penetrating criminal environments, and thanks to these actions, they are successful. Of course, technology is also needed, but it will not replace a human being. The automated fingerprint identification system is needed for the Polish police. Almost all European police have it. [...]

I wish there were as many police officers as needed. But as Chief Commander, I realise that not all the simple reserves in the police have already been launched. Not everywhere

² On 10 November 1994, the Police Commander-in-Chief appointed a Council of Commanders at the General Police Headquarters and an advisory team on the modification of the organization and scope of operation of the General Police Headquarters.

they are capitalised on the maximum possibilities of each employee. And having such and no other employment opportunities, I must reach for these reserves. I must ensure better coordination, better circulation of information and more effective control of police officers. In my opinion, there are still too many extraordinary events that testify to a low discipline of service in some units” (Cierlica 1993, pp. 2-3).

The diagnosis was pessimistic. The author pointed out the weaknesses of the police. It turned out that there are many of them. He highlighted the importance of operational work that was neglected after 1990 and formulated a demand for increasing the effectiveness of the organisation through the search for reserves, which was also popular for the times of Polish People’s Republic.

However, they could not be completed, because the attention of the public and police officers was absorbed by an ongoing corruption scandal, so-called “*afera lodówkowa*”. On 7 March 1995, the Minister of the Interior appointed a new Police Commander-in-Chief – Chief Inspector Jerzy Stańczyk, the former head of the Warsaw Police. It was a period when the police began to use, perhaps a bit primitive, but effective tools of public relations. They also tried to change the image of the police chief and the police officers in relations with society.

“There are several problems of equal importance, but the change in the quality of the police service is the most significant to me. I wonder how to reach more than 57,000 police officers who are on the street and convince them that they need to look at their duties differently, adopt a different style of work. Police officers are to protect the citizens and help them. They have to show interest in the situation in which a person in need of help found themselves, to show them care and understanding... This profession, from the first day of service, requires social maturity and sensitivity to what is happening around, a humanistic approach to the issue and iron firmness.

We all have an engraved image of a police officer who sits or dozes in a police car, lurks somewhere near the road to give us a ticket, is reluctant when we report a crime and ask for help and is arrogant when we are the perpetrators even accidentally.

By presenting these facts, I want to make the police aware that we need to change the way we work. In all countries, a police officer maintained from taxpayer’s money serves this taxpayer. The physical presence of a police officer or patrol is not enough. It is necessary to give something more. It is vital to take care of completely unknown people, to work so that they can see our commitment” („*Magazyn Kryminalny 997*” 1995, pp. 2-3).

A year later, the Police Commander-in-Chief spoke about particulars. He started by saying that kindness does not cost a thing and concluded that safety costs. As it can be observed, money in various contexts begins to dominate in the discussion about the future of the police.

“The small number of police officers is the problem concerning the entire country. The government has accepted my comments, postulating an increase in the number of posts to 115-120 thousand. As always, I emphasise the matter of money – it is impossible to buy a sense of safety, but it is also not possible to provide security without money. And this is the basic thesis... 1997 could be a breakthrough for the police. Most likely, this year, the budget for the police will be allocated from the budget of the Ministry of Interior and Administration. This is not an antidote to all the problems of our service, but it will allow for better management of funds and planning of expenses so that together with tasks the funds for their implementation will also appear. Though, I keep repeating that it is necessary to decide to conduct a record system in proceedings, which is a certain step towards procedural opportunism” („Magazyn Kryminalny 997” 1996, p. 2).

At that time, the discussion about financing the Police began, which continues to this day. Conversely, the postulate of increasing the size of the Police Corps as an extensive method of improving the security in the country did not meet the understanding of the then and subsequent government. That is not the way.

A new proposal to improve the state of public security was to be crime prevention, the essence of which was the „Bezpieczne miasto” (Safe City) programme.

“This success is directly proportional to the involvement of the police. There are units where police officers work perfectly with the locals, and there the program decently helps to reduce crime. This is mainly true for medium and small cities. In large cities, however, it takes a long time to implement this programme, but the first positive experiences show that this programme needs to be performed. It is the commanders of the field units that are responsible for cooperation with the society; without their work, there is no chance of achieving significant successes” (*Ibid.*).

Another new head of the Polish police accelerated, especially after the change of government and tragic events in Słupsk.

“Since the transformation of Citizens’ Militia into the police in 1990, there have been several attempts to reform our organisation. No attempt was completed, although the conviction of the need for reforms in the police already predominated. It is impossible to escape

from this reform. We are unable to manage and fulfil statutory tasks with such an institution as we are. Nor can we demand more money and jobs constantly, because society will sooner or later notice that this money and jobs do not always serve to increase the sense of security. The main objective of the reform is to link the police to local communities and this structural connection: local governments would present their expectations, finance the outlined preventive tasks and appraise their implementation. For this, we increase the number of community police officers from 10 thousand to 16 thousand. As a so-called first-contact person, a community police officer should work in an area with a population of 2,500 people” („Gazeta Policyjna” 1998a, p. 2).

In this statement, by repeating various inflexions of the word “reform”, the author tried to convince the reader that from that moment, the revolutionary changes would take place in the police. It is rather doubtful that anybody would believe that. However, it is worth noting that linking the police with the communities at the local level was pointed as a source of success in preventive activities. There also appears a principal basis for many concepts of police reform in the nineties – the community police officer as a mythical figure straight from the Polish People’s Republic; to the surprise worth imitating in the realities of a democratic state.

What measures were about to lead to success?

“We want to achieve this by transforming officers posts in the so-called Logistical Support Police into civilian. This way, in 1997, we achieved the line of 1500 jobs, in the next years, we can raise it to 6,000... I also expect that a significant increase in the number of police officers on the streets will be facilitated by simplification of criminal procedures, the introduction of a record system and the prosecution’s commissioning of actions that are essential and necessary to perform. Estimates indicate that in this way about 30% of police officers who sit behind desks and today perform the role of the administration of the prosecutor’s office will be able to go to the line and be on the street. Essential for increasing the number of police officers on the so-called the first line is the take-over of convoys and escorts by other services. The fact that police officers travel 15 million kilometres in convoys each year when they could be patrolling at that time is unacceptable. The third objective of the reform is efficient management. We started with reform at the General Police Headquarters so that, as a functional and efficient centre, it could lead the reform of the entire police. However, the underlying assumption of achieving this goal amount to the fact that currently there are 24 thousand employees in the General Police Headquarters

and police headquarters, after the reform, there will be half as much. After the Administrative Reform, police officers will go to provincial police headquarters and police stations. By conducting management courses and team training exercises, we prepare these police staff, which will be able to build new police at every organisational level from the police station to the General Police Headquarters. The next stage of the reform is the adoption of procedures in force in the European Union. Finally, our officers are to be better prepared for service... Permanent training of police officers is becoming a necessity. It will be possible to advance to the next levels in the rank not only through primary, non-commissioned and commissioned officers' training but various other types of courses. The psychologists' actions within the police are also to serve better preparation for the duty" (*"Gazeta Policyjna"* 1998a, p. 2)

At that time, a collection of areas requiring changes affecting the success of police reform was completed: the transformation of police posts into civilian, simplification of criminal procedures (record system), convoys, reduction of bureaucracy in the General Police Headquarters and the police headquarters (slogan: "police officers from desks to the streets").

A few days later we had to deal with another change of the head of the Polish police. Jan Michna proposed the long-awaited peace and reasonableness in the planned activities.

"I am realistic, so I will not declare that the police force under my leadership will immediately handle criminals, thereby improving citizens' security. This is a reality and has nothing to do with the spell that declares it will be better right away. The main tasks are: changing the rules of police management, creating favourable legal and organisational conditions for police officers, making better use of these instruments to fight crime, which we already have, and finally changing the attitudes of many officers, their mentality and the level of training achieved. I am afraid that the statement »police reform« has decreased its value since at least the middle of last year. It was a more verbal concept than a real one" (*„Gazeta Policyjna"* 1998b, p. 2).

Police in the system of public administration

However, in the late 1990s, deep political reforms of the state were carried out in Poland, which changed the role of the police in the public administration system. The

“revolutionary” character of these changes consisted, among other things, on the inclusion of the police into the administration centres at the territory level. Therefore, it was necessary to undertake measures adapting police services to operate in a new juridical and organisational environment,

“Certainly, in two basic (areas – from the author) for the police, which are finances and personnel. It will be at the expense of today’s powers of the General Police Headquarters. Since there will be a separation of its financial and personnel powers in favour of provincial headquarters... Management positions in the police should be occupied only by the best officers. The principle of selection will base on competitions, both for the posts of heads of police stations, future district commanders and provincial commanders... I hope that this way, we will soon approach the creation of the chief, who not only will be the best expert but also a manager” („Gazeta Policyjna” 1998b, p. 2).

The implementation of these goals was worse than a vision. As I have already mentioned, in the Polish police force, the panacea for all problems are internal committees managed by not always competent people.

“The fact is that the General Police Headquarters is to be released from all executive functions. There must be complete separation, or as anyone prefers, decentralisation of decisions in terms of human resources matters, security and police management” (Noszczyński 1998, p. 3).

Despite everything, the period 1998-2001 should be considered the most creative and fruitful for the police. At that time, a modern institution operating in a democratic society meeting the standards of the 21st century was created.

“First of all, we have adapted our structures and organisation to the new state public administration. Besides, we have changed, or rather, are changing, the whole philosophy of the functioning of the police concerning local communities. In the sphere of prevention, we are becoming a tool in their hands; they can set goals for us, demand specific preventive actions. Responsibility for general security has passed on to provincial governors – representatives of the government in the territory. However, in the area of prosecution of the most serious crime, we have centralised the divisions fighting against organised and drug-related crime in order to exclude them from the local determinants and possible influences. This model of police has proven itself in many democratic countries. I am sure that the reform will also succeed in Poland... I have always emphasised and still emphasise that the essence of this reform is to departure from the omnipotence of the general headquarters.

We have seen many times in the past that the General Police Headquarters is not able to raise all issues concerning a professional group of 100,000 people. The police reform should primarily be the result of these experiences. On their basis, we have developed and donated mechanisms for the necessary changes (Decentralization of personnel and financial powers ceased to be a cliché)” („Gazeta Policyjna” 1999, p. 2).

In 2001, a period of regression in every area of police activity began. In the social dimension, the reflection of this state was the “Starachowice scandal”. Changes to waste the last years’ achievements have begun.

In his exposé in the pages of the police magazine, the new Commander-in-Chief announced the following changes:

“Changes will be present, and I do not hide, that sometimes they will be essential for the operating of the police. We are working on introducing the system and organisational changes... A change in the financing system should ensure a significant improvement in their functioning. The government agreed to allocate the police budget from the ministry. We showed in 1997 that we can manage rationally. Decentralisation of the police financing system in 1999 complicated the situation. The police had difficulties in managing their money rationally, directing funds for the most necessary investments and planning expenses (Miśkiewicz 2001, p. 3).

There was an intention to manage commanders’ applications similarly.

“(…) we intend to change the rules for their conduct. The change in the composition of the committee is foredoomed. The representatives of the police will have ascendancy in them. The voice of the representatives of local authorities will be only advisory. Applications are part of the company’s personnel policy, which needs to be changed in the police department. Recruitment for managers at various levels is too often accidental” (*Ibid.*).

Of course, an antidote to all problems was another General Police Headquarters’ committee under the same chairmanship as the previous one.

“I want the chief commander’s office to work more efficiently, be more mobile, fulfil the functions and tasks to which it was created, and above all: organising, coordinating, legislative and control. Structural changes in the headquarters will go towards the development of rational internal structures guaranteeing efficient management of the entire police. I have appointed a team of specialists headed by Inspector Z. Chwaliński” (*Ibid.*).

However, the diagnosis of police problems remained similar to that of predecessors: convoys, simplification of criminal procedures, and sending police officers from behind their desks to the street.

2004 was a landmark year for Poland. Since 1 May that year, we became a full member of the European Union. Even before that day, there had been painfully slow efforts to adapt the law and activities of public institutions to EU standards. This process also included the police. There were attempts to use the experiences and patterns of Western Europe police. Thanks to this, the Polish police had been becoming more modern, professional and open. However, some solutions were uncritically transferred to the native soil. Such an idea was to introduce a quality management system in the police.

In 2003, the new Commander-in-Chief claimed:

“I admit, at first I was quite wary about these new procedures. Only after Dutch and German colleagues explained to me what it is all about and what results could be achieved, I became convinced that we should try as well. I am glad that the Headquarters in Gorzów Wielkopolski received the ISO certificates. In many units of the Pomeranian Province, activities regarding the certification of procedures are undertaken. I must say that one of my goals during the term as Police Commander-in-Chief is to create as many units in our police as possible. This promotes more effective work and better well-being of police officers” (Miśkiewicz 2003, p. 3).

Another issue that is included in the concept of modern police administration is strategic management and the introduction of internal communication procedures.

“Recently I got acquainted with the final report of foreign experts who implemented the European Union project in the Polish police under the name »Modeling the flow of data and information within the police«. The conclusions of this report, which emphasises that the industry’s way of thinking dominates the Polish police – prevention, criminal, personnel, etc. must be alarmed. Either we consider only the of units in which we serve – general, province or district police headquarters, and so on. There is a lack of thinking about the police as an entire institution. Police officers suffer from the disturb the sense of identity with the organisation in which they serve. So the diagnosis is brutal. It is happening because nearly 70% of police officers believe that their supervisors would not be interested in their opinions, and over 40% do not understand the meaning of the information sent within the police. It is not because they cannot think. Simply, information, commands, various letters sent from senior units do not have a uniform standard; they are written in such

a language that it is difficult to get an idea not only of the priorities there but often to understand their semantic layer. I see in this report a lot of legitimate observations that should be helpful in the work of the team making a functional and organisational evaluation of the General Police Headquarters” (*Ibid.*).

When it comes to police reality, there was also a pioneering plan to appoint a committee of independent experts, which task would be to present proposals for organisational changes at the police headquarters.

“I have been observing the operation of the General Headquarters for many years, and now, as I am here in the middle for several days, I am convinced that this structure requires changes. Such conclusions result from the talks with office directors, trade union representatives, police officers working at the General Headquarters. A lot can be changed and improved — both in an organisational and functional area. I have appointed a team who works on it. The rethinking and design of the new structure of the General Headquarters will be evaluated by outstanding scientists in the field of organisation and management. They will say whether our concepts are modern, consistent with management standards” (*Ibid.*).

Stating the activities of the police leadership in the period 2003-2005, one can conclude that it finally brought modernity, flexibility and openness to change. However, it was only a form devoid of any content.

After the parliamentary elections in 2005, it was time for explosive changes like negating the current achievements and searching for simple ways to solve severe problems. The associations with the methods of the Cultural Revolution and the ambitions of Great Leap Forward from the time of Mao Zedong involuntarily arise. Even the way of interviewing the new Police Commander-in-Chief (so civilian, after all, we are dealing with a moral revolution) has changed radically.

“How do you want to increase the number of patrols on the streets? Many people have said this before, and nothing has changed,” the journalist asks. — First, I want to hire police officers on all posts that the police have at their disposal based on the Budget Act 103 thousand” („Policja 997” 2005, pp. 4-7).

But the employment of 103 thousand officers does not guarantee that they will patrol the streets. They will get stuck in the papers, go to guard stadiums or convoys – the interlocutor asks ambitiously.

“These papers – we have to stop this. After all, it is possible to prepare a model for one annual report for all units and prohibit the preparation of other statements. Together with the specialists in the criminal procedure, we must look for solutions that would further simplify the conduct of proceedings. It is essential to transfer the investigation to the prosecutor’s office. This is 8000 cases on a national scale, and yet they burden the police officers in the municipal and district headquarters” (*Ibid.*).

There are also traditional problems faced by the police – such as convoys.

“There are three options: giving everything to the Ministry of Justice along with the judicial and convoy police posts, handing over to private companies — if they carry big money for banks and nothing happens, they could also take care of the transport of people who have been decided to arrest or convict. It is also possible to create an organisation that would be subordinated to the Police Commander-in-Chief and as the only one that would have the right to convoy the arrested and convicted. Prosecutors and judges would apply to the head of the “convoy” in their province and commissioned the convoy, paying for it. The Border Guard should take care of foreigners, who should be expelled from Poland. The municipal and district commanders could finally direct people to patrol the streets [...].

We should build a system of institutional preventive cooperation with the self-government. This is a task for my deputy, Chief Inspector Siewierski, who cooperated perfectly with the self-government of Warsaw. I would like local authorities by the Law to build annual and monthly preventive plans together with the police so that they could appraise the police on the implementation of joint prevention arrangements. I am a supporter of the management of responsibility. The New York »CompStat« is the best example of the enforcement of responsibility for the entrusted area” (*Ibid.*).

What remained after this turbulent time – eternal and unchanging problems – but also massive chaos in the institution, staff shortages and, above all, as a result of “divide and rule” policy, lack of professional stability and identification with the company among police officers. It is possible that the police, like the Internal Security Agency, intended to reform based on the theory of chaos and imbroglio.

The change of police leadership in February 2007 was the basis for presenting another vision or direction of the institution. The focus was on traditional topics: a community police officer, measures of evaluation of the work of individual services and the use of opinion polls for this evaluation.

“It would be very good if community police officers would perform only the tasks to which they were delegated. We need to look for ideas and strive to develop such organisational solutions in order to free community police officers from additional responsibilities. [...]

Some measures to assess preventive actions have been developed poorly. Some are even detrimental to the service. They need to be prepared again. We should evaluate a police officer working in Preventive Police based on events that occurred during their service in the area of patrol. We should also check if they respond to visible signs of violating the law... Primarily, we work to create a sense of security in the country. And for this, social research is needed. We will definitely use this tool” („Policja 997” 2007, pp. 4-6).

Political changes in 2007 resulted in the appointment of another new chief of police. The institution and, above all, the officers expected stability and tranquillity in the performance of their duties. Chief Inspector Andrzej Matejuk was a guarantee of these expectations. Using colloquial language to describe the new chief – he was the “recovered” head of the police. He was almost a pensioner when he decided to return to duty. It should also be noted that the position the Deputy Minister of the Interior and Administration supervising uniform services was given to Adam Rapacki, who also returned to the “company”, and for many years was a peculiar signature to the Polish police as the creator of the department to the fight against organised crime.

This philosophy of action has emerged in the first public statement of the new Police Commander-in-Chief:

“I am an opponent of the »sports« rankings, where someone must be first, and someone last. I will not compare one province to another, but the situation in a given province over time. Especially that there are other tools for this” („Policja 997” 2008, pp. 7-11).

In addition, he intended to continue the experience of predecessors using social research to evaluate the work of individual units of the police.

“Social evaluation is the most important thing. The police cannot lock themselves in the circle of their own statistics and prove only to themselves that they work perfectly. We will be analysing how to use the results of these studies and how to broaden their scope because although they are conducted on a very representative group, they indicate only some areas. If, for example, a sense of security is increasing, it would be good to know the contribution

of the police in that process. I also wonder about the use of research conducted in individual provinces, usually with the participation of universities. I will urge, or maybe even commission the commanders to do their research” (*Ibid.*).

In an attempt to ensure the mentioned-above stabilisation in the police ranks, Police Commander-in-Chief proposed using the services of experienced police officers in personnel policy.

“Every company, the police, too, is based on people with experience. We need to think about motivation, of course, financial. Maybe the change in the amount of supplemental pay should be made so that it grows significantly after a certain period in service. I must not lose such people. Because like me, most police officers are passionate about their profession” (*Ibid.*).

At that time, the most significant challenge was preparation to ensure the safety of the largest mass event in the recent history of the country – The UEFA European Football Championship – EURO 2012. It resulted in a huge organisational and professional success of the uniformed services, including the police. Certain standards have been set which have proven themselves and could be in force in the future.

After the next election, despite the continuation of the same political party, the leadership of the police has changed. The Police Commander-in-Chief became Inspector Marek Działoszyński, who had a rather modest experience in managing field units of the police. Based on his decisions, it can be concluded that the main course of action will be the optimisation and rationalisation of the functioning of the police service and more or less successful attempts to modernise the Polish police.

At the beginning of 2014 in a magazine „Policja 997”, he drew attention to:

- increasing the number of police officers in the traffic unit
“As we announced, every tenth officer is on duty in road traffic, because if more than 10 per cent of crimes is related to traffic, the same percentage of police officers should fight them. However, there are still too many victims on the roads. This is why we have proposed legislative changes, such as an increase in traffic fine or suspension of driving licence for speeding twice. I hope the legislator will share our point of view” („Policja 997” 2014, p. 4);
- rationalisation of expenditure
“The rationalisation of expenditure brings results, including a reduction in the number of police stations. In some provinces, fixed costs have been reduced

by even a million zlotys a year. It is money that could be used for material expenses. The reorganisation of the General Headquarters, reducing the number of offices from 18 to 12, also brought savings – about 500 thousand zlotys a month. 148 jobs went to the executive divisions, and this is not the end” (*Ibid.*);

- introduction of modern evaluation and control tools

“In the second half of the year, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration launched a program for standardisation of headquarters and police stations. Thanks to the commitment of logistics and financial services, we managed to use all the resources we had in 2013, even though there was very little time. The program will continue until the end of 2015. We estimate that a billion from standardisation can generate half a billion from external sources – national and European. We finished the audit and started the process of changes in forensics. Forensic laboratories and forensic science technicians will be subjected to the substantive supervision of CFLP (Central Forensic Laboratory of the Police). The efficiency of laboratories is improving, and our goal is to ensure that the workloads in individual provinces are comparable” (*Ibid.*).

In 2015, another change concerned the pro-social aspect of the police. At the first briefing of the management staff, the new Police Commander-in-Chief, Inspector Zbigniew Maj, formulated the leading thesis and the main challenge – “closer to people”.

“This is the foundation of the police's action philosophy under the leadership of Commander Maj. It will be implemented, among others, by strengthening the role of the community police officer, both in terms of promotion opportunities and improving their qualifications. It will also be an element of security maps, which will analyse threats at the local level – both crimes and road accidents and particularly socially harmful offences. Social debates and contacts with local governments – for whose involvement appealed the Chief-Commander – will be an essential source of information supplementing the maps.

– It is in direct contact with citizens that the opinion about the police is forged. Only by listening to their needs and remarks, we will be able to define our priorities accurately – he stressed.

– Threat maps will allow better use of police resources at a later stage.

They will indicate where the police structure works appropriately, and where it needs to be modified, for example, by creating an additional group.

– However, there will be no automatic reconstruction of dismantled police stations. Only those whose creation will be fully justified will be created” (Kryczka 2016, pp. 5-6).

A characteristic feature of every change in the leadership of the police is the internal reorganisation of the General Police Headquarters. The commander under discussion wanted to make his contribution, too. It was decided for instance to include the Bureau of Anti-Terrorism Operations into the structure of the Central Bureau of Investigation of the National Police Headquarters.

However, after two months of quite a turbulent performance of the head of the Police, Inspector Zbigniew Maj was recalled. His successor, Chief Inspector Jarosław Szymczyk, is the first Chief-Commander of the Police, who was admitted to the police in 1990 applying to the Higher School of Police in the so-called recruitment “after secondary school leaving examinations (Matura exam)”. In an interview given in 2018 he stated:

“We must certainly put more emphasis on road traffic safety. Despite the gradual improvement of the situation, nearly three thousand people are killed annually on Polish roads. It is a massive harvest of death. Each of these cases is a personal tragedy, so it is necessary to do everything to improve this situation. We will also pay more attention to fight cyber-crime, and further, we are considering reorganising and strengthening the unit to fight against financial crime, because that is from where organised crime comes, and we need to respond to that. These are the main priorities, but above all, I am of the opinion that the Polish police do not need sudden turns, but a still continuation of what we do, since it gains such high recognition of the society” („Policja 997” 2018, pp. 8-10).

Conclusions

Assessing the twenty-eight years of functioning of the police, their sixteen chiefs and tens of amendments to the Police Act, one can ask the question – where are the Polish police force going?

Presenting the choice of the statements of the highest representatives of the police leadership one can conclude that there was a constant admiration for reforms, while there were no attempts to use the achievements of predecessors, be guided by reflection and distance to reality. Learning from the mistakes of predecessors and continuing the

development of institution are the basic principles of modern management. It is puzzling that many specific issues such as the role of the community police officer, convoys, simplified criminal procedures or more fundamental ones such as relations with territorial self-government, police financing system and transforming officers posts in Logistical Support Police into civilian have been repeated like mantras since 1990, and have not been finally solved until now.

Why is that? Referring to Gabriel Laub's words "we pay so dearly for new experiences because we do not use the old ones".

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