

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Over the years that I have had the privilege of taking part in the development of the Polish counter-terrorist system at the strategic, tactical or operational level, I have enjoyed working with the commanders and operators of the country's counter-terrorist units, both civilian and military. As part of my foreign cooperation, I have observed the esteem in which Polish counter-terrorists are held in NATO countries. This approval was not a courtesy result. It has been gained through joint operations on land, sea and air. It is worth knowing that the solutions developed in Poland have been and are being implemented in many partner countries. They were created by people who built the foundations of counter-terrorism in our country and are constantly working on improving it. I am far from being over-enthusiastic about this pillar of the Polish anti-terrorist system, but I can see and appreciate the progress that has been made in this area after 11 September 2001.

In the seventh issue of the journal "Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention" (T-SAP) we publish material on the elite "GROM" Military Unit No. 2305. In this way we want to honour the 35th anniversary of its establishment and to offer well-deserved congratulations from the partner service. I recommend an article in which you can read about potential directions for the development of cooperation between the "GROM" Military Unit and intelligence and counterintelligence. I hope that in this way we will trigger discussions on how to improve the anti-terrorist system of the Republic of Poland to make it more efficient, more flexible and more responsive to current challenges and threats.

In an article discussing the data in the annual Europol report (*European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2024*), the most authoritative source of knowledge about the terrorism in Member States, you can find out how the level of these risks is currently shaping up in the European Union. It is the subject of evaluation by all European law enforcement authorities. We asked Polish terrorism experts to analyse it.

A big influence on the scale of the terrorist threat in Europe is what happens in Africa. The migration phenomenon on the eastern NATO's flank and the EU border, artificially induced by Russia and Belarus, would not have reached such a scale were it not for, among other things, the difficult situation in the Sahel region. Political instability in the countries of this part of Africa, humanitarian crises, the growing influence of terrorist groups and mercenary actions increase the risk of destabilisation of the southern flank of the Alliance. In the following expert analysis appearing in this issue you can find out how much of impact this region has on terrorist activity in the EU. The question of whether there will be a revision of the strategy of action regarding this region and direction after this year's NATO Summit in The Hague, remains open.

One of the pillars of the fight against terrorists is blocking the propaganda they disseminate on the internet. Creating the illusion of belonging to a virtual community of fighters for a common cause is an effective way of attracting the next generation of young people. In Poland, the amended Act on anti-terrorist activities implementing the provisions of the *Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online* came into force. According to it, the leading service in this area is the Internal Security Agency (ABW). We are publishing a legal commentary on the provisions of this law concerning orders to remove terrorist content and special measures, i.e. the procedure for issuing decisions on hosting service providers exposed to this type of content. This is the most comprehensive study on this subject in Poland.

The events of the recent years allow us to risk a statement that threat scenarios, which have so far been classified by the services as unlikely, should not be underestimated. One of these is the use of biological agents for hybrid activities. I encourage you to read the article that provides an introduction to the issue of biosecurity. It includes a review and analysis of security and protection of biological agents as well as related technologies that could be used as a weapon or terrorist agent.

I would like to conclude by highlighting the first in-depth analysis in years on the state of the protection of persons and property sector in Poland. Those who operate within the private security sector are a key partner of the services and institutions creating a national anti-terrorist community. Not only public order but also the security of strategic facilities, including critical infrastructure, depend on the strength of these alliances. This is not the first time that the problems and challenges facing the security sector in Poland appear on the pages of T-SAP. The authors of the report, the results of which we present, identify our journal as a valuable source for the industry. Thank you for appreciating our work.

The magazine published by the ABW is becoming an important voice not only in building internal security of the Republic of Poland. We are increasingly effective in promoting the Polish point of view on EU anti-terrorist policy in the EU institutions and agencies. On this occasion, I offer for your consideration the special issue of T-SAP entitled *Terrorist and sabotage threats to critical infrastructure*, prepared in cooperation with the Internal Security Agency and the Government Centre for Security (RCB). This issue, in line with priorities of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, is available online in two languages: Polish and English on our website. We prepared it to support national and EU initiatives to increase resilience of CI to hybrid threats.



<https://abw.gov.pl/pub/terrorism-studies-analyses-pre/15,Intro.html>

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