

The Management of Border Protection in the European Union on the Example of the Eastern Border of the Republic of Poland

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to present the synthetic instruments of managing the external protection of the European Union's borders and to analyze the level of this protection on the example of identified threats. The current status of this problem is determined by successive immigration crises, modifications of actions taken by organized crime in the field of cross-border illegal/irregular movement of people and goods. The management of the external border protection is particularly important in Polish conditions in which the eastern border is the most important part of the land border of the European Union and the Schengen area. The conducted research allows to verify the research thesis that in relation to the eastern border of the Republic of Poland the actions taken by the European Union institutions, national authorities and uniformed formations contributed to the increase of the level of its protection, which at the same time increases the safety of cross-border movement of people and goods.

Keywords: management of the external border of the European Union, the eastern border of the Republic of Poland, protection of the safety of cross-border movement of people and goods, cross-border crimes, illegal/irregular immigration, smuggling of goods, arms and ammunition

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Introduction

Political and socio-economic changes taking place in the modern world have contributed to increase the cross-border movement of people and goods. Over the last decades migration processes have changed the spatial range reaching the global level. The pace and dynamics of human movement resulting from the increased mobility of societies have also changed. The image of the world in which we live has largely become the result of migration processes and their consequences. The world of mutual connections in many aspects of life created in the international space beneficial achievements: integration of states, lifting barriers in the flow of goods, services, capital and knowledge, also affecting a significant reduction in telecommunications and transport costs.

The consequence of these positive phenomena was unfortunately the emergence of negative processes related to cross-border crime. It is implemented by organized criminal groups and by individual smugglers. This type of crime is particularly evident in the European Union. A common area of freedom, security and justice in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union consolidating the basic European freedoms in the free movement of people and goods, assumes the abolition of any control of persons, irrespective of nationality when crossing internal borders.

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Europe, striving to maintain an appropriate level of security, in the face of dynamically developing, evolving, organized cross-border crime, was forced to build a system of its protection. Its scope includes institutional consideration, legal regulations and practical tools aimed at minimizing the negative effects of cross-border crime. A research thesis may be put forward that with regard to the eastern border of the Republic of Poland, the activities undertaken by the institutions of the European Union, national authorities and uniformed formations have influenced the increase in the level of its protection, which at the same time increases the safety of the cross-border movement of people and goods. In the article, if possible, basic groups of crimes related to illegal movement of people and goods across the external borders of the European Union and the Schengen area in the section of the Polish eastern border will be identified and analyzed.

1 The system of managing the protection of the eastern Polish border

Threats of cross-border crime occur on all external borders of the European Union and the Schengen area. It is understandable that they take on a different form depending on the type of border space—land, sea or air. The eastern border of this area, which is partly protected by Polish border formations, is a very important element of the entire EU external and internal security system.

Prevention of cross-border crime required common, synchronized action of all Member States, creating an integrated external border management system. The political and legal basis of this system is the EU *acquis*, referred to as the Schengen *acquis* (Rokicka-Murszewska 2000, 78). The recognition and elimination of cross-border crime has been shaped in accordance with the applicable legal regulations and consistent mechanisms of practical operation. Coherence of these two areas allowed to the adoption of an appropriate model of integrated management of external borders and the territory of the entire European Union and the Schengen area.

The integrated management of external borders involves, in practice, the creation of common coordination and operational cooperation, the proper preparation of officers from countries with an external border, the development of an integrated risk assessment and analysis mechanism, the sharing of protection costs between Member States. The view seems to be justified that this management is the entirety of planned and undertaken activities including the decision-making, organizational and monitoring process implemented practically by proper management of human, financial and material resources and information to guarantee broadly understood protection of common territory and ensuring efficient and harmonious border service (Witkowski 2014, 158).

The protection of the external borders based on an integrated action required Member States to adopt specific considerations at the EU and national level. The most important at European Union level is the harmonized cooperation in three areas, covering the activities of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Regulation (EU) 2016/1624)¹, construction and operation of information systems, including in particular the Schengen Information System (SIS) (Regulation (EU) No 1987/2006)² and the biometric information system (EURODAC)³ (Regulation (EU) No 603/2013)⁴,

1. See: Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC. OJ L 251, 16.9.2016, p. 1–76. Prior to 2016, the Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the EU (FRONTEX).

2. See: Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the establishment, operation and use of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 4–23. Since 9 April 2013, SIS has been operating as SIS II, a new generation of IT system which consists of three main elements: the central system, national systems of countries belonging to the Schengen area, and infrastructure connecting the central system with national

3. European Automated Fingerprint Identification System.

4. See: Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the establishment of “Eurodac” for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States’ law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 establishing a European

and as third element common visa policy (Regulation (EC) No 810/2009)⁵.

In the internal dimension, the process of managing the eastern border protection shaped the mutual co-operation of border formations, mainly Border Guards and Customs Service⁶ and Police, Road Transport Inspection and border quality control units, as well as Polish consular services (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Generally speaking, it can be assumed that this system comprising four autonomous, but complementary and interpenetrating areas is as follows:

- the visa system (national consultation and EU Member States consultation) and the use of liaison officers (police and immigration)
- cooperation with third countries (especially adjacent countries) in the field of cross-border crime prevention
- protection of the state border and border traffic control, fulfilled by border-immigration, customs and other services
- internal immigration controls (legality of stay, work and employment of foreigners), carried out by border-immigration and/or other authorized services and institutions (police, employment legality control services) (Suduł 2013, 376).

Management of the protection of the external border, including the Polish eastern border, requires great flexibility and adaptation to changing conditions (Witkowski 2014, 339). It results from understandable processes related to specified foreign and national policy, but also it is a consequence of the constant pressure from criminal groups which responds to difficulties set by border and police services.

In the area of the Polish eastern border,⁷ the most serious types of cross-border crime, which pose political and socio-economic threats to the entire European Union, are identified. These threats include, above all, illegal/irregular⁸ immigration, human trafficking and smuggling of goods, in particular drugs, excise goods, weapons, ammunition and explosives

2 Forms of cross-border crime on the eastern border of Poland

Security and protection of the external border of the European Union is a consequence of the adopted legal regulations, practical solutions and ergonomic operational skills of competent institutions and organizations, and in the first place border and police services at the level of the EU and individual countries. The exploration of cross-border threats argues the foreground role of illegal immigration⁹. This broad concept is understood as crossing the external border in breach of law. Defining the concept of irregular/illegal migration requires referring to the broader aspect of migration, in which the term “immigration policy” is used as a synonym for migration policy and contains two components. The first is the migration control policy—i.e., the rules and procedures governing the inflow of foreigners (selection and entry rules). The second is the foreigners policy for those already located on the territory of particular country (Suduł 2016, 273). As part of these two components, illegal migrants have to be coped with—i.e., with foreigners who, try to cross the border against the laws and procedures in force in a particular country or have got already to the territory and stay within it.

Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice. OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 1–30.

5. See: Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code). OJ L 243, 15.9.2009, p. 1–58.

6. Currently, Customs and Fiscal Service.

7. It is the external border of the European Union and the external border of the Schengen area.

8. The terms “illegal migration” and “irregular migration” are used interchangeably here. However, the first should refer to the illegal crossing of the border, while the second includes a wider range of aspects regarding the immigration process.

9. In the definition of “illegal immigration,” the majority of third-country nationals entering the EU legally enter, present a valid visa or use the visa-free regime, and then unlawfully extend their stay or change its purpose without the consent of the competent authorities. Finally, illegal and irregular immigrants are asylum seekers who remain in the country concerned, even though a final refusal was made on them.

There are a lot of trails used to smuggling people to the European Union. In the most cases, human trafficking takes place on the same trails as drug and weapons smuggling. The threat of the Polish eastern border is distinguished by both several permanent and temporary evolving trails of illegal migration. Specialists from Interpol distinguish several major land trails that directly threaten Polish eastern border (Szumski 2016, 242). The northern trail running from St. Petersburg through the Baltic Sea to Scandinavia and Germany. The organizers brought their “goods” directly to ports (e.g., in Sweden, just a few years ago). The central trail leading through Russia, Ukraine to Germany or Austria. It has two variants: it runs through Poland or the Czech Republic. Prague is usually just a stopover for further journeys, but numerical estimates are alarming—in a ten-million-country country like the Czech Republic, it is estimated that there are almost 230 thousands legal and so many illegal comers. The Balkan trail is mostly used by refugees from the Middle East. It is, moreover, part of a longer route leading from Asia and the Middle East through Turkey to the European Union.

Intensity of illegal/irregular migration processes is determined in many cases by the level of socio-economic development of the target country. Poland, by the majority of migrants, is treated as a transit country, in a very small part as a target country. Target places in the migration procedure are mostly Western European countries.

In the years 2011–2018, a clear upward trend could be observed regarding the number of crossings of the external border by third-country nationals. It should be noted that this was a period of full implementation of control instruments resulting from the shift of the external border of the Schengen area to the eastern border of Poland in December 2007. In practice, this meant uniformity of the border area of the European Union and the border of eastern Poland with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

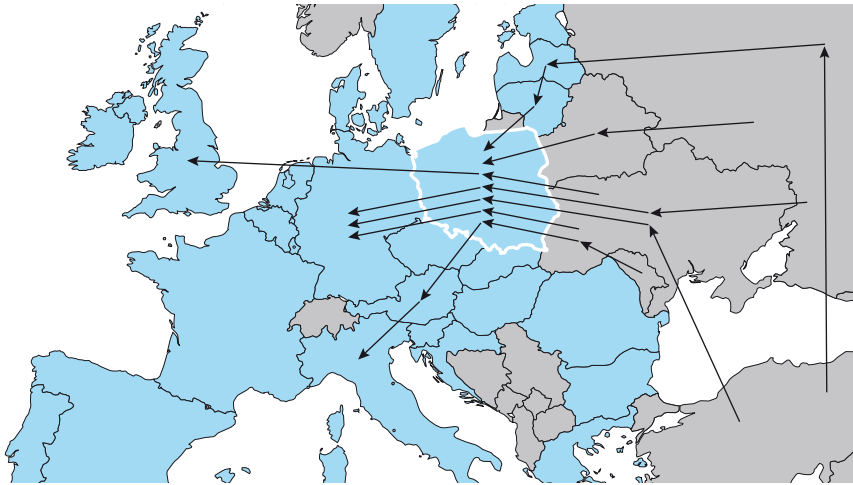


Fig. 1. The most important “routes” used to transfer people to Europe through the eastern border of Poland

Source: Own study based on information published by TVN24 in the year 2019

Tab. 1. Amount of crossings of the external border by third-country nationals upon entering the territory of Poland in selected years

The border section	2011	2014	2016	2018
Russia	668 476	1 670 965	1 162 979	1 143 422
Belarus	3 647 630	3 847 188	3 490 002	3 892 555
Ukraine	5 372 806	7 953 084	10 287 753	9 860 223
Sea border	89 819	67 462	34 235	66 515
Air border	985 139	1 357 334	1 967 131	3 086 403
Total	10 763 870	14 896 033	16 942 100	18 049 118

Source: Own study based on data published by Straż Graniczna, as on 2019.03.18, [@:] <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>.

In the analyzed period, the increase in the number of crossings of the external border amounted to 7 285 243 situations related to the arrival of a third-country national on the territory of the European Union. It is apparent on all sections of the border, although the largest increase was recorded on the border with Ukraine. It amounted to 4 487 427 confirmed facts of crossing the border more. When analyzing a personal movement in the direction of entry to Poland with crossing the external border, at least two conditions that may affect its scale must be considered. Firstly, the adoption in the European Union of uniform regulations in the field of administering entry visas in accordance with the Visas Community Code and, secondly, the abolition of visas for Ukrainian citizens. These circumstances have stabilized the situation related to the practical implementation of the visa instrument as one of the elements of the external border protection. These circumstances have stabilized the situation related to the practical implementation of the visa instrument as one of the elements of the external border protection. The presented data show an increase in the number of crossings of the external border by third country nationals using highway transportation. It amounted to 2 101 264 border crossings in this period, confirming the development of this branch of passenger transport and increasing the number of air connections to Poland. The process of openness and increasing the throughput of the external border of the European Union on the section of the Polish eastern border was unfortunately accompanied by the phenomenon of illegal/irregular immigration. In 2011–2018, it is clearly visible on the border sections with all our eastern neighbors.

Fig. 2. Amount of foreigners apprehended in an attempt to illegally cross the border in the selected years

The border section	2011	2014	2016	2018
Russia	47	99	274	228
Belarus	196	319	329	349
Ukraine	758	1 082	2 065	994
Sea border	0	11	113	15
Air border	174	277	744	452
Total	1 175	1 788	3 525	2 038

Source: Own study based on data published by Straż Graniczna, as on 2019.03.18, [[:] <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>.

In the analyzed period, despite the apparent increase in the number of detentions of third-country citizens illegally crossing the external borders of Poland, it cannot be said that the eastern border of the European Union on the Polish border section is a threat to EU immigration security. It seems reasonable to claim that despite the fact that smuggling trails of people crossing the eastern border of Poland are found out, the threat is much smaller than, for example, the southern route leading through Turkey and Greece or the Mediterranean trail. There was also no confirmation of the creation of a new way of smuggling people through Turkey, Ukraine and Poland. Taking into consideration the positive conclusions resulting from the analysis of the number of third-country citizens arrested during attempt at illegally cross the external border of the European Union on the Polish border section, it should be said that the assessment of the number of illegal immigrants crossing borders and those staying in Poland in the last ten years is not easy to full estimate. This is mainly due to the lack of tools and research methods for the actual assessment of the scale of the phenomenon, which is additionally more difficult of regard the possibility of crossing the internal borders of the Schengen area.

The direct threat to public order and security of the entire European Union is the smuggling of arms, ammunition and explosives (Wojciechowski 2017, 3). The problem is also combating this practice, because there is a multi-faceted problem of an economic, political and social character. In many cases, illegal transactions are carried out not only by criminals, but also unofficially by special services representing also the public interest. In addition, the arms trade market is shaped not only by price, but also by the position of the state in the international system, its alliance and interests in the region.

Poland, like other Member States, reports to the same conditions resulting from threats of arms trade. In Poland, arms, ammunition and explosives are invariably used by organized criminal groups to carry out criminal activities, as well as they are treated as goods in illegal national and international traffic. Arms and ammunition are sourced most frequently from foreign criminal groups, and less often they come from theft of legal arms holders.

Tab. 3. Arms and ammunition derived from smuggling disclosed by Border Guard (and in cooperation with other services) in selected years

Kind of arms	2011	2014	2016	2018
Firearm	25	37	64	35
Gas pistol	14	16	17	20
Other arms	47	39	108	12 504
Combustible ammunition	1 770	4 510	19 227	1 576
Gas ammunition	90	88	32	209
Other ammunition	836	78	8 998	556

Source: Own study based on data published by Straż Graniczna, as on 2019.03.18, [@:] <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>.

According to the analysis of 2011–2018, it can be assumed that the problem of arms trade in the context of cross-border crime in Poland became particularly evident when the armed conflict in Ukraine had broken out. In 2016, there was an increase in the revealed smuggling of firearms up to 64 pieces and the illegal transport of live ammunition to 19 227 pieces. It should also be noted that there was a constant increase in smuggling of so-called other arms, which were a remodeled gas pistols for firearms or replicas of arms. In 2016, 12,504 such cases were found.

This situation has caused a noticeable increase in the demand for goods, technologies and services of strategic importance for the security of the state—i.e., weapons and explosives, uniforms (including specialized: ballistic vest), protection means (helmets), heavy equipment (trucks, construction equipment—that may be used for military purposes). At the same time, these dealings has activated the activities of criminal groups which were involved in illegal arms procurement for resale and smuggling of arms to Ukraine, and also for criminal purposes in Poland. The easiness of relocating in the European Union also entailed the activation of smuggling trails of means used for fighting through Poland. The organization and practice of this smuggling were taken up by both criminal groups and individual citizens of Ukraine who, in the interests of the safety of soldiers participating in military operations, were buying in many European countries, also in Poland, measures of individually protect for soldiers, and then were trying to smuggle them across the Polish border with Ukraine.

In reference to Poland, it is worth pointing out that the national regulations governing the possession of firearms are the most restrictive in Europe. Therefore, in many cases Poland has not become the main smuggling trail or supplier of arms, ammunition or explosives. The law of neighboring countries, i.e. the Czech Republic and Slovakia, is clearly more liberal in this respect, especially with reference to firearms included in the “D” category, as a signal and reconstruction arms (Heleniak 1999, 82). In these countries, anyone who has reached the age of eighteen can acquire such arms. Thereupon, Czech and Slovak arms stores sell a wide range of firearms, both modeled on modern guns, rifles and revolvers, as well as models from World War II. The easiness of modifying this type of arms has resulted in increased interest in its purchase among domestic criminal groups and people involved in its smuggling to Eastern European countries. Another sources of illegal firearms getting on the criminal market in Poland are the firearms fair organized in Belgium. Single pieces are got to Poland also from Germany. Moreover, a significant number of illegally owned and sold firearms are still units of arms from the times of World War II and specimens of homespun arms. At the same time, attempts are still being made to smuggle across the border firearms made on the basis of gas pistols.

“The traditional threat in cross-border relations is the smuggling of goods. In general, it consists of the illegal transferring of goods or foreign currency across the state border without any control and customs duties, or transferring across the border of prohibited items. This comply with the concept of customs smuggling, the aim of which is to avoid customs control during transferring goods . . . across the customs border, when it is obligatory to obtain an appropriate permit or pay customs duty . . . In practice, it consists of evading or attempting to evade customs control of transported goods. One of the type of smuggling is misguiding of the border guards, declaring a different type of goods than actually are transported across the border.” (Witkowski and Suduł 2017, 265)

In the specifics of the eastern border of Poland and the European Union, excise goods, drugs, weapons, ammunition and explosives are goods that are of interest to criminal groups that organize smuggling. Among the excise goods, alcohol, tobacco and petroleum products may be distinguished. The eastern border of Poland and the European Union is an area through which drug trafficking trails are run. The analysis of international drug crime shows the phenomenon of the transit (smuggling) of large-scale drugs and psychotropic substances across the EU’s Polish border in both directions with a predominance of transit from Western Europe to Ukraine, mainly amphetamine, ecstasy pills and cocaine (Bał 2011, 94). The object of import into Poland is mainly marijuana, which cultivating is popular in the territory of Ukraine.

Tab. 4. Drug trafficking revealed by the Border Patrol (and in cooperation with other services) in selected years

Kind of drugs	2011	2014	2016	2018
Amphetamine (kg)	26 329	214 916	374 081	273 658
Cannabis (kg)	1,601	55,441	377,134	441,986
Heroin (kg)	0,153	0,842	0,079	0,0399
Cocaine (kg)	4,156	6,424	19,193	3,920
Marijuana (kg)	457,319	380,289	280,893	158,521
LSD (pills)	5 753	1 800	4 370	3 400

Source: Own study based on data published by Straż Graniczna, as on 2019.03.18, [@:] <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>.

Note: [In the journal European practice of number notation is followed— for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style).—Ed.]

The drug trafficking business is the action of organized criminal groups. In the researched period of 2011–2018, the object of disclosures were similar amounts of amphetamine and heroin. Marijuana is still the most popular among those interested in illegal imports, although a significant decrease from 457,319 kg in 2011 to 158,521 kg in 2018 is to be noted. It should be noted that the main direction of illegal drug import into the European Union are the southern trail and the Balkan trail. The organized crime groups that smuggle people on these trails, bring illegally drugs, mainly heroin from the East to the European Union with a huge profit. Drug trafficking into the European Union in last years has been increasing. This is a threat to the inhabitants of the Member States.

The smuggling of excise goods, especially alcohol and tobacco, is one of the most profitable forms of cross-border crime. It can be divided into illegal imports of these products carried out by natural persons above norms and smuggling, mainly cigarettes by organized criminal groups. This crime results mainly in the reduction of customs and tax duties, which has a negative impact on the budget of both Poland and the entire European Union. The European Commission’s OLAF agency estimates, to a minimum, 10 billion euros annual loss that EU Member States incur due to uncollected tax claims on tobacco products from illicit sources (Lewkowicz 2011, 101–102).

This crime also has a negative impact on producers of the spirits and tobacco industry, reducing its income. It also reduces the taxes paid to the state budget. Another negative element resulting from the smuggling of these products is the social consequences relevant to the threat to health and life of people who are consumers of products from an unknown source. It should be noted that in recent years, the amount of spirits and tobacco products being imported to Poland and the European Union has been increasing.

In the audited period, there are noticeable downward trends in the field of disclosures of excise goods and other commercial products originating from smuggling, mainly through the eastern border of the Republic of Poland. This is most evident on the example of alcohol. In 2011, the amount of these products was PLN 4 489 098, in 2018 this amount decreased by PLN 3 148 316, amounting PLN 1 340 782. It can be assumed that this is the result of stricter regulations regarding the import of excise goods, as well as penal and fiscal sanctions for the disclosed attempts. An important premise of this trend is also price advance for these products in eastern countries neighboring Poland, mainly in Ukraine. The smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco continues to be at a similar high level. In the case of cigarettes, it ranged from PLN 76 860 179 in 2011 to PLN 77 626 426 in 2018, with a significantly higher amount of disclosed cigarettes per annually at PLN 125 895 299 in 2016. The upward trend may be observed in the so-called other commercial products, which mainly include fake goods. The value of their in 2011 amounted to PLN 29 904 425, while in 2018 it was almost twice as high and amounted to PLN 56 628 952. Analyzing this, it may be assumed that the increase in illegal imports in this group of goods is caused by a smaller repression against the violator. Because most often this person can be exposed only to penal and fiscal responsibility.

Tab. 5. Excise goods and commercial products originating from crime disclosed by the Border Guard (and in cooperation with other services) in selected years (in PLN, according to the estimated value)

Type of goods	2011	2014	2016	2018
Cigarettes	76 860 179	74 105 671	125 895 299	77 626 426
Tobacco	49 755 846	57 549 089	91 742 153	68 280 657
Alcohol	4 489 098	2 202 878	2 281 658	1 340 782
Other commercial products	29 904 425	67 406 339	69 653 965	56 628 952

Source: Own study based on data published by Straż Graniczna, as on 2019.03.18, [a:] <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>.

It should be noted that the influence on the development of the phenomenon of illegal import of spirits and tobacco has a large price gap between the European Union and its eastern neighbors. It brings multimillion profits to the organizers of this procedure, especially in an organized form, allocating mainly tobacco products to the markets of Western countries, for example Great Britain or Germany (Kozdra 2016, 49). In the case of smuggling by natural persons, it is often the only source of income in areas with high unemployment level, this applies to the situation on both sides of the border. The circumstance favoring smuggling in this form is social consent, which is explained by the socio-economic situation of the borderland residents. There should be also noticed the ineffectiveness of customs services and other state authorities obliged to counteract this form of crime.

Conclusions

In the changing political and socio-economic conditions, the activities undertaken as part of the protection of the external border of the European Union on the section of the eastern border of the Republic of Poland were orientated on significantly decrease in the threats of cross-border crime. This is clearly visible on the basis of analysis of reported cases of non-compliance with applicable law in the field of immigration and smuggling of goods.

In the case of illegal/irregular immigration, it can be stated that plans to start an alternative trail to smuggling people through Turkey, the Black Sea and Ukraine to Poland have not been confirmed. The plans were not confirmed in the statistics of cases of illegal border crossings registered by the Border Guard. It should also be noted that there is a significant lower risk of illegal/irregular immigration on the Asian-Russian-Belarusian trail that has been functioning over the years. There is no doubt that the number of detentions on the section of the Polish-Belarusian border is incomparably smaller than on the southern trail or the Balkan trail.

The analysis of the phenomenon of smuggling of goods may lead to the division of goods being the object of this crime into three groups. First of all, there are arms and ammunition in which

organized crime is most often involved in smuggling. In this group, there is a significant increase in cross-border illegal turnover in connection with the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine. This event resulted in the arrest of interest in firearms and ammunition for this weapon, although the amounts disclosed do not indicate a significant threat resulting from this practice. A worrying phenomenon is the significant increase in the illegal carriage of so-called other arms, this applies to arms converted from gas pistols to firearms and collector's weapons, as well as exhibits used by reconstruction groups. The second group are illegal goods moved across the eastern border of the European Union on the section of the Polish border are drugs. It seems reasonable considering the statistics of disclosures that this is not a mass phenomenon that could pose a significant threat to EU Member States and their societies. The third group of goods are excise goods and other commercial products. In the case of excise goods, in particular cigarettes and alcohol, it may be said there is stabilization of the scale of smuggling, and in the second case about its significant decrease. When analyzing cross-border crime in relation to these goods, it should be aware that it is to a large extent the result of a specific situation in cross-border areas. It results mainly from the level of social and economic development in terms of the standard of living of the local population.

The conducted research justifies the final conclusion that the activities undertaken within the border protection management of the EU on the Polish eastern border section allowed to control threats resulting from cross-border crime, which in this area does not pose a significant threat to the political and socio-economic interests of the European Union and its Member States.

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