

PREPARATION OF THE POLICE IN THE FIELD OF COUNTER-TERRORISM IN OPINIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNTER-TERRORIST SUB-DIVISION OF THE REGIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN CRACOW

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Abstract

The article explores the opinion of officers of Independent Counter-Terrorist Sub-Division of the Regional Police Headquarters in Cracow (ICTS RPH) on police counter-terrorism preparedness in Poland. In view of the many clandestine activities in the field of counter-terrorism, it was concluded that only the assessment of those involved in counter-terrorism can be reliable. It is assumed that only knowledge of the issue gives proper basis for reliable conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, the opinions of one of the sixteen ICTS RPH in Poland were chosen as the subject of the study. The research aim was to determine how officers evaluate the activities of the Police in the field of counter-terrorism in Poland, and what change(s) would they recommend? The study was conducted using the diagnostic survey method. The empirical research has a sample representing 96% of the surveyed population. The theoretical part locates ICTS RPH in the hierarchy of counter-terrorism authorities in Poland and explains its legal regulations. The structure of the ICTS RPH and selected aspects of its activities are also described in that section. Empirical studies have shown that officers bound the effectiveness of counterterrorism operations to the quality of training. They also made recommendations for changes to improve counter-terrorism operations.

Keywords: Counter-terrorism, Regional Police Headquarters, Crisis management, Poland, Cracow.

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INTRODUCTION

The current scope of security policy in Poland is determined by two events: the COVID-19 epidemic, which has contributed to the global economic crisis, and the war in Ukraine, which has caused global tension, including an increase in the activity of terrorist organizations. Those problems make it necessary for public administrations to revise their view of the issue of threats - both in national and international context, especially right now, when the danger in the form of the outbreak of war, large-scale armed aggression, or terrorist activities is highly probable.

In the face of unstable international relations, and recently announced CHARLIE CRP alert by Polish Prime Minister, the problems related to migration policy, and related terrorist and counterintelligence threats, an extremely important practical aspect is the preparation of those institutions which are responsible for state security, including the police (Zarządzenie nr 389 PRM 2022). Keeping in mind the principle that any errors in preparation for combating threats manifest themselves in a situation of materialized danger, it should be considered an important issue to assess the state of preparation of the counter-terrorism units to perform their own tasks. It is assumed that it is the training systems that should ensure that at the time of the occurrence of a crisis situation into rapid and effective action by officers. Thus, the subject of empirical research are officers' opinions on the security policy of counter-terrorist preparation in Poland based on the example of social research conducted within the framework of the Independent Counter-Terrorist Sub-Division of the Regional Police Headquarters in Cracow (ICTS RPH). During the conducted empirical research, the desired directions of changes concerning the anti-terrorist system are also sought (including recommendations for action that could improve the quality of the training system for officers).

The purpose of the article is to analyze the opinion of officers on the preparation of the police to combat terrorist threats on the example of the ICTS RPH in Cracow, taking into account the training system at the local, national and international levels.

The main research problem was formulated in the form of a question: do the officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow consider the preparations to combat terrorist threats in Poland sufficient?

Thus, the research question should be broken down into questions concerning:

1. the quality of the preparation system;

2. the implementation of the qualifications gained, i.e. the usefulness of the knowledge obtained during preparation in subsequent counter-terrorist activities;
3. possible recommendations for preparation or implementation.

The main research assumption is as follows: officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow consider the scope of preparation for counter-terrorist threats in Poland (scope of preparation SP) to be sufficient, which is reflected in their assessments of the completeness and manner of preparation of training (completeness and manner of training CMT), the usefulness of the knowledge gained during preparation (usefulness of the knowledge UK) and in recommendations for changes in the preparation system (changes recommendations CR). A: $CMT \wedge UK \wedge CR \rightarrow SP$. The main assumption will thus consist of three specific assumptions:

1. In the evaluations of officers, the completeness and manner of preparation of training (CMT) makes it possible to consider the extent of preparation to combat terrorist threats in Poland (SP) sufficient. A1 $CMT \rightarrow SP$.
2. In the evaluations of officers, the usefulness of the knowledge gained during the preparation (UK) indicates a sufficient scope of preparation to combat terrorist threats in Poland (SP). A2 $UK \rightarrow SP$.
3. Lack of recommendations for changes in the preparation system (CR) indicates sufficient scope of preparation to combat terrorist threats in Poland (SP). A3 $RC \rightarrow SP$.

The indicators that will be used to establish the correlation between the variables, thus enabling the verification of the first assumption, will be the responses of officers on: satisfaction with training (fig. 15), evaluation of the substantive preparation of training (fig. 16), and evaluation of the technical level of training preparation (fig. 10).

The indicators that will serve to establish the correlation between the variables that will allow verification of the second assumption will be the officers' responses on: evaluation of the usefulness of the knowledge/skills acquired during training to carry out official activities (fig. 17), satisfaction with training (fig. 15), and evaluation of the level of use of the acquired knowledge in practice (fig. 11 compared with figs. 9, 12, 14).

The indicators that will be used to establish the correlation between the variables, thus enabling the verification of the third assumption, will be the officers' responses on: evaluation of the correctness of the functioning of

the ICTS RPH in Cracow in the field of combating terrorist threats (fig. 6), evaluation of the possibility of introducing changes that would contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the activities of the ICTS RPH in Cracow (fig. 7), and evaluation of the need for legislative changes in the field of counter-terrorism (fig. 8).

For the purpose of this article, a survey was conducted using the diagnostic survey method. All officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow who were stationed on the territory of the surveyed unit at the time of the empirical research - between April 15 and 22, 2022 - were included in the survey (the survey did not include only those officers who were rotated on duty in the border areas due to the outbreak of war in Ukraine). The survey questionnaire was distributed to 55 officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow and all of the respondents correctly completed the survey questionnaire.

The aim of the empirical research was to verify the detailed research assumptions, as well as the main research assumption. The questionnaire included 20 questions, which took the form of closed (single and multiple choice) or open-ended questions. Respondents were asked whether current legal regulations enable the ICTS RPH in Cracow to effectively carry out activities in the field of combating terrorist threats. Respondents were also asked to indicate the level of effectiveness of training conducted at the local, national and international levels in the context of their daily service and participation in operations to combat the terrorist threat. Respondents assessed the level of the ICTS training system and listed suggestions for changes that would modernize and improve the in-service training system for ICTS officers, as well as the counter-terrorism system in Poland. The final part of the survey included questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (i.e., respondents' age, education, place of residence, length of service, and length of membership in the ICTS team). It should be noted that only men were included in the survey due to the specific nature of ICTS's activities - to date, no women are on duty in the Cracow subdivision.

The minimum sample size was calculated using the following formula:

$$N_{min} = \frac{N_p(\alpha^2 \cdot f(1-f))}{N_p \cdot e^2 + \alpha^2 \cdot f(1-f)}$$

N_{min} - minimum sample size,

N_p - the size of the population from which the sample is taken,

α - the assumed confidence level for the results,

f - the size of the fraction,
 e - assumed maximum error.

$$N_{min} = \frac{59(2.05^2 \cdot 0.5(1 - 0.5))}{59 \cdot 0.04^2 + 2.05^2 \cdot 0.5(1 - 0.5)}$$

The minimum sample size should be 54 officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow. The research was therefore representative, since the study involved 55 officers (Babbie, 2019). During the research, the technique of participant observation was also used - one of the authors of the article participated as an observer in the training sessions of ICTS RPH in Cracow.

This article consists of an introduction, two substantive chapters and a conclusion. The introduction presents the methodology of the empirical research conducted, as well as a review of the literature. The first chapter of the article analyzes the determinants of police activity in the face of terrorist threats with particular reference to ICTS RPH in Cracow. The second chapter presents the results of empirical research conducted on the assessment of the preparation of the ICTS RPH in Cracow to combat terrorist threats. The last part of the article presents conclusions from the conducted research.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of the functioning of the Police in Poland has been frequently addressed in scientific works. By December 1, 2022, 124 monographs and more than 2,500 scientific articles on the subject had been published.

Monographs are mostly focused on the analysis of the functioning of the Police in Poland from a historical perspective. These studies covered the process of formation and activities of the Police (in particular, the State Police) in local and regional dimensions (Musiał, Romanowska-Pietrzak, Soltysiak, 2019; Razigraêv, 2019; Majchrzak, 2020; Pietrzkiwicz, 2019; Kania, 2019). Some monographs focused on the contemporary activities of the police, showing the general functioning of this institution within the system of public administration (Dana, 2017) and security and public order (Czupryński, Falecki, Kochańczyk, 2021; Rajchel, Dubois, 2017), and publications detailing various aspects of the activities undertaken by officers of this formation. The latter group includes monographies that address the problem of police activity in preventing and combating infectious diseases (Socha, 2020), ensuring safety in traffic (Rajchel, 2019) and during soccer

matches (Dobrowolska-Opala, 2018). Only three of the monographic studies dealt with the problem of police activity during crisis situations (Stawnicka, 2019; Pawlaczyk, 2021; Stelmach, 2016), but only one of them deals with the activity of this formation in the fight against terrorism (Olech, 2022).

The problem of police activity (Majer, Seroka, 2017; Wawrzusiszyn, 2022) - including anti-terrorism in particular - was also addressed in numerous chapters of edited monographs. Some of them analyzed the role and general tasks carried out by this institution in Poland's anti-terrorist system (Czarnota, 2021; Lorek, 2019; Jankowska, 2016; Petrykowska, 2021), as well as on the background of solutions adopted in other countries (Cyrkun, 2021; Cupryjak, 2018). Several chapters of edited monographs undertook to present the origins and historical conditions of the activities of police divisions and subdivisions in preventing and combating terrorism in Poland (Dabrowska, 2015; Potkański, 2017). The edited monographs also analyze detailed aspects of police activity on the occasion of: mass threats to life and health of people in public buildings - including aspects of the command of police detachments (Stelmach, 2018; Stępiński, 2018; Beczyński, 2022), countering and combating terrorism in objects that are part of critical infrastructure - for example, at the Świnoujście Gas Port (Cupryjak, 2016; Olender, 2016), as well as combating acts of criminal terror (Beczyński, 2022). Some chapters present the ways to conduct operational activities (Herbowski, 2017; Helnarska, Motrycz, Stryjek, 2021), or the standardization of police prevention programs in this regard (Kordaczuk-Wąs, 2017). Certain chapters of the edited monographs also presented the problem of cooperation of the Police with other security institutions and organizations during the conduct of counter-terrorism activities, specifically with the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland (Kamiński, 2018; Lasoń, 2016; Stefaniuk, 2016; Jankowski, 2021).

The problem of historical aspects of the functioning of the Police (Szkonter, 2020; Palacz, 2019) and the role and general tasks carried out by this formation within the framework of the Polish anti-terrorist system (especially in the phase of crisis response) was also addressed in scientific articles (Ocieczek, Samiczak, 2022; Lorek, 2017; Maciejewski, 2020). In this case, the attention of researchers was primarily focused on: identification of terrorist threats at the regional level (Cupryjak, 2018), educational contributions of police organizational units to counter-terrorism activities (Zubrzycki, 2020), dealing with hostage situations (Setecki, Ćwik, 2015), responding to terrorist attacks with firearms (Batkowski, Truchan, Zubrzycka, 2015), and countering and combating

“lone wolf” terrorism, cyber-terrorism, bioterrorism and ecoterrorism (Gradoń, 2017, Chochowski, 2019; Graszka, Szemraj, Bijak, 2015). It is worth noting that to date only one scientific article has been published in a scientific journal indexed in international databases - it addressed the problem of counter-terrorism solutions used by the Police in Poland in the context of contemporary forms and methods of operation of terrorist organizations (Liedel, 2018).

From the point of view of the subject matter of this article, it should be emphasized that a significant part of the above publications became obsolete in connection with the enactment of the Law on Anti-Terrorist Activities, which redefined the legal conditions for conducting anti-terrorist activities by the Police in Poland (Letkiewicz, 2015; Jankowska, 2016; Baczar, 2016; Lasoń, 2016; Wilk-Jakubowski et al., 2022a; 2022b). In addition, to date, no scientific work has been written on the activities of the Police in combating the terrorist threat at the regional level, as well as on the assessment of the state of preparedness of the officers of this formation to undertake activities in the above area. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to fill the gap identified in the literature.

2 DETERMINANTS OF THE POLICE ACTIVITY IN THE FACE OF TERRORIST THREATS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE INDEPENDENT COUNTER-TERRORIST SUB-DIVISION OF THE REGIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS

The Republic of Poland, as a state based on democratic values, has a hierarchical system of institutions responsible for ensuring anti-terrorist security. It has created a network of legally and organizationally interconnected bodies and institutions that take pre-emptive, reactive and stabilizing actions in the occurrence of a terrorist threat (Wilk-Jakubowski, 2019; Harabin, 2021).

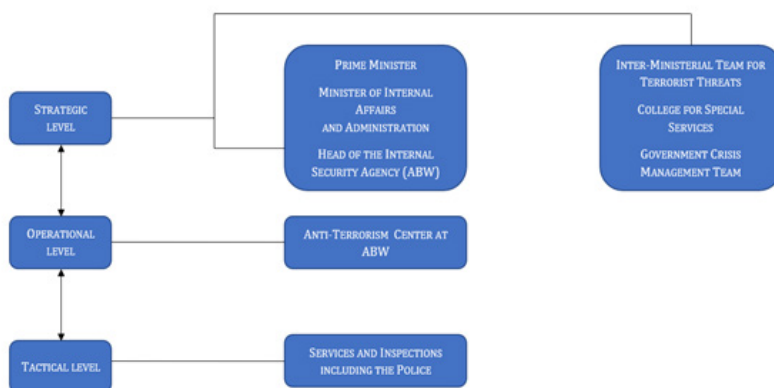
Based on the theory of multi-level governance, the anti-terrorism system in Poland consists of three levels: strategic, operational and tactical (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, 2022). At the strategic level, the most important decisions and directions of anti-terrorism policy are made. That level includes: Prime Minister (PM) – responsible for the creation of the system; Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration (MIAA) - responsible for preparation, response and reconstruction; and Head of the Internal Security Agency (ABW) - responsible for preventing terrorist activities. The strategic level is completed by three consultative and advisory bodies: Inter-

Ministerial Team for Terrorist Threats (IMTTT), College for Special Services (CSS) and Government Crisis Management Team (GCMT)(Masiul, 2014).

The operational level is concerned with carrying out tasks concerning the exchange of information between all entities involved in the state's anti-terrorist system. The operational level is formed by the Anti-Terrorist Center at the ABW (CAT) (Order No. 102 of the Prime Minister of September 17, 2008).

The tactical level is carried out by national services and institutions (NSI) participating in the anti-terrorist protection of Poland (see Figure 1). The main entities carrying out the task of ensuring Poland's security and anti-terrorist protection are the services subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, i.e. Police, Border Guard, State Fire Service, State Protection Service, special services, i.e. ABW, Polish Armed Forces, i.e. Military Police, GROM, 1st Special Commando Regiment, Marine Special Operations Unit - FORMOZA, General Inspector of Financial Information, Customs Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

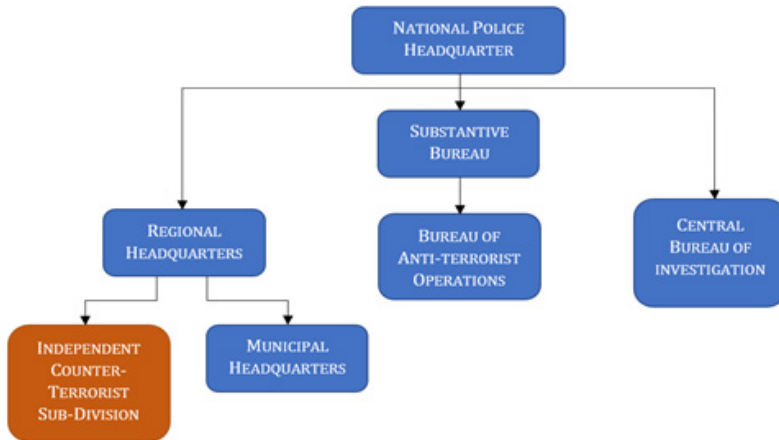
Figure 1: *Levels of anti-terrorism system in Poland*



Source: own elaboration based on Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji 2022.

Within the framework of the operations of the Police Headquarters, the entities carrying out anti-terrorist tasks are the Bureau of Anti-Terrorist Operations, the Central Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Anti-Terrorist Operations and the Independent Counter-Terrorist Subdivisions of the Police, which are the subject of the article (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Location of ICTS RPH in the structure of the police force



Source: own elaboration based on *Ustawa o Policji 1990*.

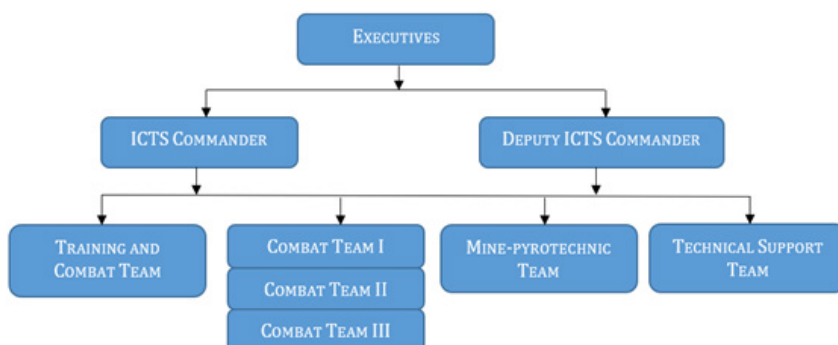
At the level of regional commands specialized units were established – the Independent Counter-Terrorist Subdivisions of the Police, whose activities include physical counter-terrorism through reconnaissance and combat operations, as well as public education for countering terrorist crime (Zarządzenie nr 19 2015).

The organizational and full-time structure of the Independent Counter-Terrorist Subdivisions of the Police is determined by the regional commander (see Figure 3). In Cracow, 59 police officers serve in the analyzed unit. According to Order No. 10 of the KGP dated March 27, 2019 on the organizational and full-time structure of the Independent Counter-Terrorist Subdivisions of the Police, in the case of the ICTS in Cracow, the numbers of full-time positions and posts are as follows (Zarządzenie nr 10 2019):

- executives (ICTS Commander 1 FTE, Deputy ICTS Commander 1 FTE),
- training and combat team (team/section leader 1 full-time position, specialist 1 full-time position, instructor 8 full-time positions) primarily performs the same tasks as other combat teams, but in addition to that, there are instructors in the ranks whose task is to develop training programs and professional development programs for SPAP officers, and it very often happens that officers of the training team are instructors in a particular field such as diving - they prepare analysis and demand for training and recruit future candidates for service,

- combat team (with an identical distribution of posts in each team i.e. team/section leader 1 post, specialist 1 post, assistant 8 posts) is sent at the time of a threat, e.g. a terrorist, to active operations; in addition to officers who are part of combat teams, the commander, deputy commander and officers from the technical support team also take part in actions,
- the mine-pyrotechnic team (team/section leader 1 FTE, specialist 1 FTE, assistant 8 FTE) is responsible for the implementation of mine-pyrotechnic operations, i.e. reconnaissance and neutralization of explosives and improvised explosive devices,
- the technical support team (specialist 1 FTE, assistant 2 FTE, duty officer 4 FTE) is responsible for providing the appropriate equipment needed to carry out the tasks of the ICTS; the support team takes an active part in purchases conducted for the ICTS Cracow, for example during the conclusion of contracts for the purchase of specialized vehicles or military equipment.

Figure 3: *Organizational structure of the Independent Counter Terrorist Sub-Division in Cracow*



Source: own compilation based on Order No. 10 of the Regional Police Commander, dated on March 27, 2019, on the organizational and ethical structure of independent counter-terrorist subdivisions of the Police Department.

Police officers on duty at ICTS take part in the highest risk actions, so a great emphasis has been placed on their preparation for counter-terrorism operations. During training, they master: tactical operations, martial arts, shooting, diving, parachute jumping, high-altitude rescue, protection of persons, operations with explosives and IEDs. The implementation of

international projects co-financed by the EU also contributes to improving their competence. An example is the project entitled. "Effective together. ICTS with PSP against terrorist threats" implemented from July 1, 2020 to May 31, 2022 by officers of ICTS RPH in Cracow together with counter-terrorist services of the Silesian, Świętokrzyskie and Mazovian garrisons, as well as officers of the State Fire Service (JRG-6 KM PSP Cracow) and officers of the Police of the Czech Republic from the Special Unit from Ostrava (Mątecki, 2021).

The priorities of counter-terrorists are to combat terrorist threats by: apprehending persons suspected of planning, preparing or committing terrorist crimes, holding hostages, seizing facilities where civilians are present, combating threats with explosives or other dangerous items to the health and life of citizens. The experience and level of professional training of police anti-terrorist officers and specialists are crucial for fighting back criminals. The ICTS also provides an active special convoy of especially dangerous criminals, assists in protective actions of important personalities and suppression of riots. The most important actions in which the Cracow ICTS RPH actively participated include:

- securing the visit of Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis in Cracow and on pilgrimage routes throughout Poland including the security operations conducted for World Youth Day in 2016,
- protection of presidents in the form of personal protection, tactical support group, anti-sniper and mine-pyrotechnic protection,
- securing the funeral of the presidential couple at Wawel Castle in April 2010. The operation was demanding and complicated due to the participation of a large number of foreign delegations, thus increasing the risk of terrorist threats in Malopolska region; anti-terrorist units from other regions of the country participated actively in securing this event, as well as JW. 2305 GROM and BOA KGP. It is worth noting that the security area was demanding in terms of the number of facilities along the route of passage and stay of foreign delegations and national authorities (i.e., from the Wawel Castle, through the national and international airport in Balice, industrial plants along the route of passage, stadiums, penitentiary centers, to dams on the nearby Dobczycki and Czorsztyn Reservoirs),
- participation in securing events with an increased risk of terrorist threats, i.e. EURO 2012, visit of the US President, meeting of the Governors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the NATO Summit.

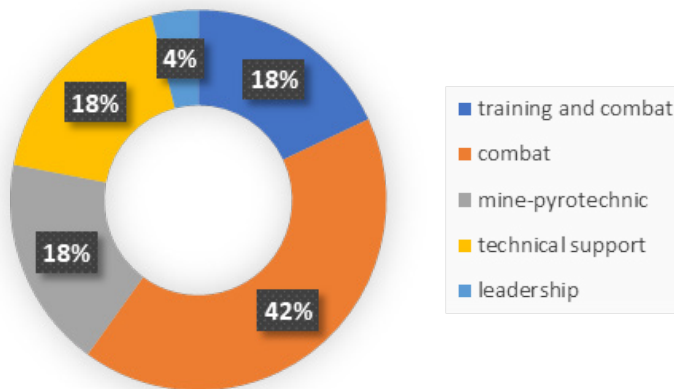
The activities of the ICTS in Cracow do not focus only on securing important events, visits or escorting dangerous criminals. Officers, due to their experience and professional training, perform rescue and other activities on a wide spectrum. They are the ones who are called in first when a crisis situation arises, whether there is a threat of a natural disaster or technical failures, and other threats to human health or life. An example of one of the rescue operations of the ICTS RPH in Cracow was the failure of a chairlift, on which several skiers were stuck. Officers then provided assistance using rope and ladder techniques to evacuate the people.

ICTS RPH officers in Cracow also took part in protecting the Polish-Belarusian border during the migration crisis, which began in July 2021 (Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, 2021). Officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow were on rotational duty during this crisis situation until June 30, 2022. Based on participatory observations conducted by one of the authors of this article, they primarily undertook medical activities on the battlefield (they were responsible for providing first aid). Given their professional experience - they complemented the activities undertaken by the Border Guard and the Polish Army.

3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The survey was conducted over the course of May and April 2022. Fifty-five officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow took part in the survey: 23, i.e. 42% operating in combat teams, 10, i.e. 18% in training and combat teams, 10, i.e. 18% of technical support and 10, i.e. 18% in mine-pyrotechnic teams, 2 persons, i.e. 4% were representatives of management (see: Figure 4).

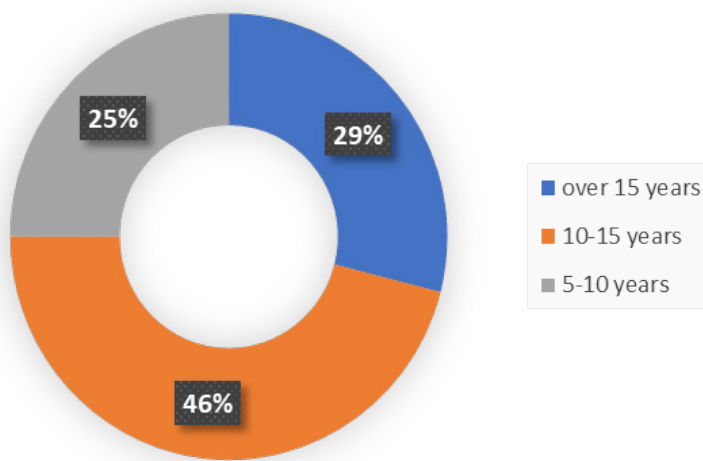
Figure 4: *Percentage distribution of assignment of officers to ICTS teams*



Source: own compilation based on empirical research.

To the initial question on the length of service, 16 people (i.e. 29% of the total respondents) declared work experience of more than 15 years (see Figure 5). 25 (45%) of the respondents were located in the 10-15 year range. 14 (25%) officers indicated a length of service in the range of 5 to 10 years. This meant that there are no officers with less than 5 years of service in the Cracow ICTS. The indicated question was intended to give a non-direct answer on the reliability of the answers obtained. This is because it was assumed that the extent of work experience may transfer into the extent of knowledge possessed by officers, and thus the quality of their recommendations. Length of service of more than 5 years was considered sufficient to know the specifics of the profession.

Figure 5: *Length of service*

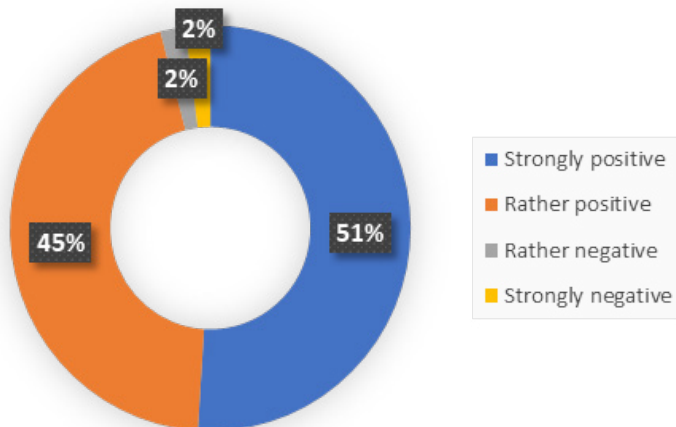


Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

The survey shows that the vast majority of respondents positively assessed the activities of the ICTS RPH in Cracow in terms of combating the terrorist threat (see Figure 6). The “definitely yes” option was selected by 28 (51%) of the officers surveyed, while “rather yes” by 25 (45%). The opposite opinion was selected by 2 people i.e. 4% of the representatives of the surveyed group (the sum of options: “definitely not” and “rather not”).

Figure 6: *Evaluation of the activities of the ICTS in terms of combating terrorist threats*

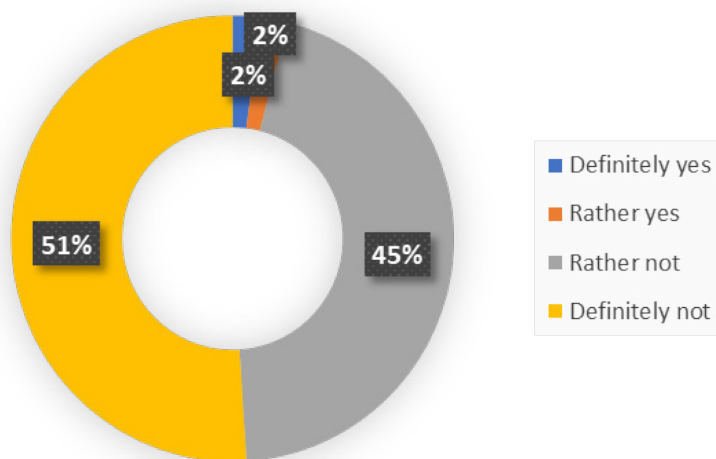
Respondents' answers to the question: How do you assess the activities of the ICTS RPH in Cracow in terms of combating terrorist threats?



Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

The above findings appeared to coincide with the answers to the question: is it possible to introduce changes that would, in effect, contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the activities of the ICTS RPH in Cracow in combating the terrorist threat? The vast majority of respondents felt that it was not possible to introduce changes that would contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the ICTS RPH Kraków's (see Figure 7). 28 (51%) respondents chose "strongly negative" in response to this question, while 25 (45%) chose "rather negative". Only 2 people (4% of the total number of respondents) expressed the opposite opinion on this matter (selecting the answers "strongly positive" and "rather positive"). Those who indicated a "strongly positive" or "rather positive" option were given the opportunity to indicate possible changes. 1 officer suggested increasing the number of training courses in cooperation with other units, while the other indicated that the budget should be increased in order to modernize ICTS units.

Figure 7: *Changes to increase the efficiency of ICTS operations* Respondents' answers to the question: in your opinion, is it possible to introduce changes that would, in effect, contribute to increasing the effectiveness of ICTS RPH's activities in combating the terrorist threat?



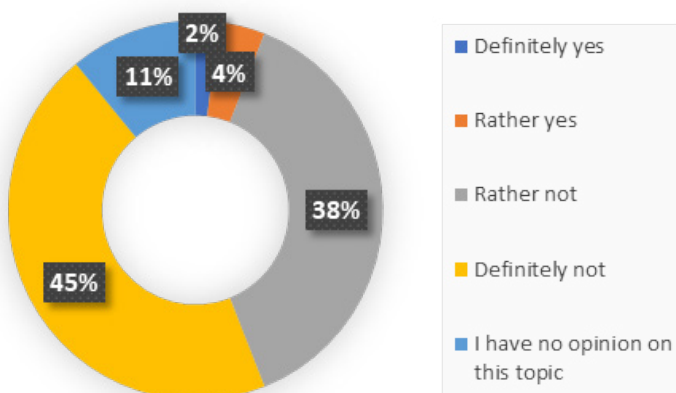
Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

The answers given in this way corresponded with the findings on the evaluation of legal regulations and the scope of training and qualifications of officers.

Respondents were asked whether there is a need for any changes in the current legal regulations relating to the activities of the Independent Counter Terrorist Subdivisions of the Police, which would result in an increase in the effectiveness of their activities. Respondents mostly expressed the opinion that changes in this regard are not needed (see Figure 8) by selecting the option “definitely not” – this answer was selected by 25 (45%) respondents, and 21 (38%) respondents answered “rather not”. Only 3 (6%) respondents had an opposite opinion on the matter (choosing both “rather yes” and “definitely yes” options), with 2 people proposing “increasing the budget for modernizing ICTS units”, and one person suggesting “separating ICTS officers from the laws that apply to every police officer”. 6 (11%) respondents did not express their opinion on this issue.

Figure 8: *Assessment of the need for changes in the current legal acts regulating ICTS activities*

Respondents' answers to the question: in your opinion, is there a need for changes in the current legal regulations relating to the activities of the Independent Counter Terrorist Subdivisions of the Police, which would result in an increase in the effectiveness of their activities?



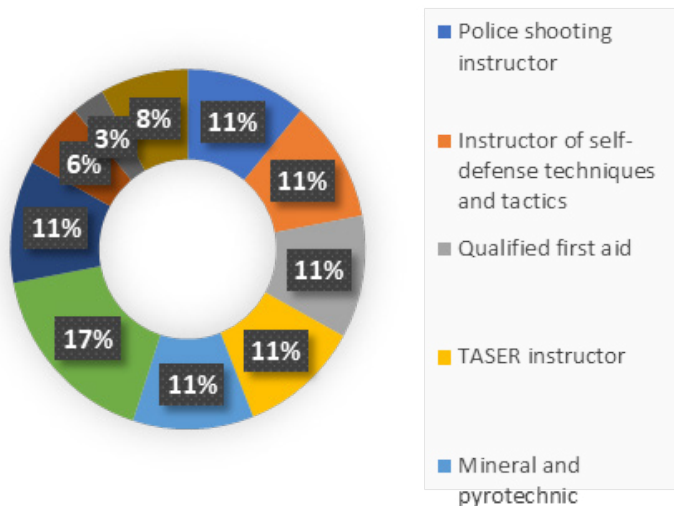
Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

The positive assessment of the preparation of qualifications held by the officers corresponds with the findings on the scope of the courses completed by the officers of the ICTS RPH in Cracow (see Figure 9). The survey question on this matter was open-ended. Respondents were asked to provide the names of the courses and qualifications they had completed in the service. The largest group in the unit were officers with altitude courses - 15 (17% of all qualifications) of the respondents. The next largest groups were respondents who are: police shooting instructors - 10 officers (11% of all qualifications); instructors of self-defense techniques and tactics - 10 (11% of all qualifications) officers; officers who have completed courses in qualified first aid - 10 (11% of all qualifications); officers who are instructors in the use of the TASER electric stun gun - 10 (11% of all qualifications), respondents with a completed course in mine-pyrotechnic recognition - 10 (11% of all qualifications) and battlefield medicine - 10 (11% of all qualifications). In the surveyed group, 5 people (6% of all qualifications) were respondents with the title and qualification of a paramedic, followed by 7 officers (8% of all qualifications) who indicated driving technology as their qualification. The smallest group

was made up of respondents with unmanned aerial vehicle qualifications - 3 officers (3% of all qualifications).

Figure 9: *Courses and qualifications of ICTS officers*

Respondents' answers to the question: what courses and qualifications do you have?

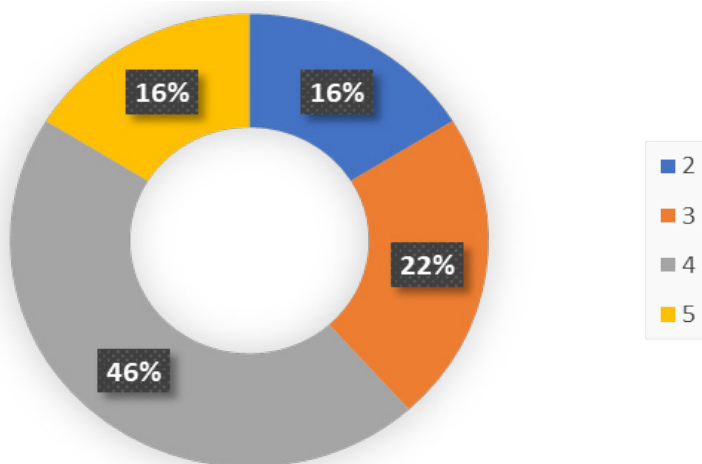


Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

In the following question of the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the level of counter-terrorism training organized by the KGP in technical terms. The vast majority of respondents - as many as 45% (25 officers) of the surveyed group - rated the level of organized training at "4" (see Figure 10). 12 officers (22%) constitute the group of respondents who assessed the level of organized training at "3". The highest value - "5" - was circled by 16% of the surveyed group, i.e. 9 respondents, while another 16% of respondents rated the level of organized training at "2". No one in the surveyed group marked a value from 0-1.

Figure 10: *Evaluation of the level of training courses organized by the KGP in technical terms*

Respondents' answers to the question: how do you rate the level of counter-terrorist operations training organized by the KGP in technical terms? Please circle the appropriate number (number 0 means the lowest value while number 5 means the highest value).

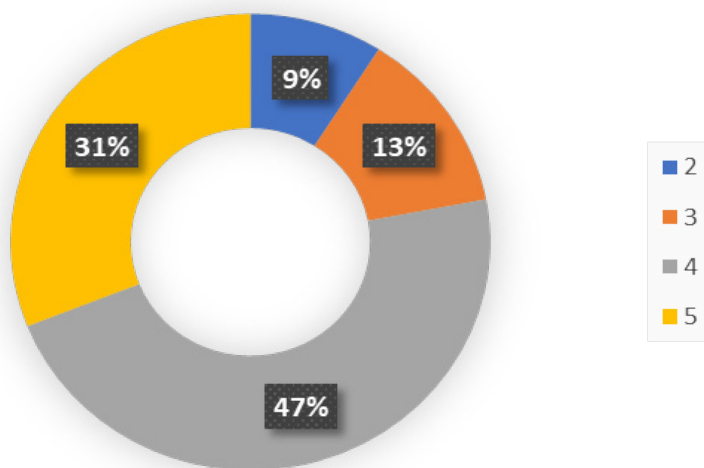


Source: own study based on empirical research.

Respondents were also asked to rate the usefulness of knowledge/skills acquired through specialised trainings during their service. The vast majority of respondents - 47%, or 26 officers - rated the possibility of using the acquired knowledge and skills while on duty at "4" (see Figure 11). The highest value - "5" - was indicated by 17 respondents (31% of officers), while 7 participants of the surveyed group (13% of officers) rated the usefulness of the acquired knowledge and skills in the performance of daily duty at "3". Five officers - representing 9% of the surveyed group - marked the value "2". In this question, as in previous ones, none of the respondents answered with a score from 0-1.

Figure 11: *Evaluation of the usefulness of the knowledge/skills acquired while on duty*

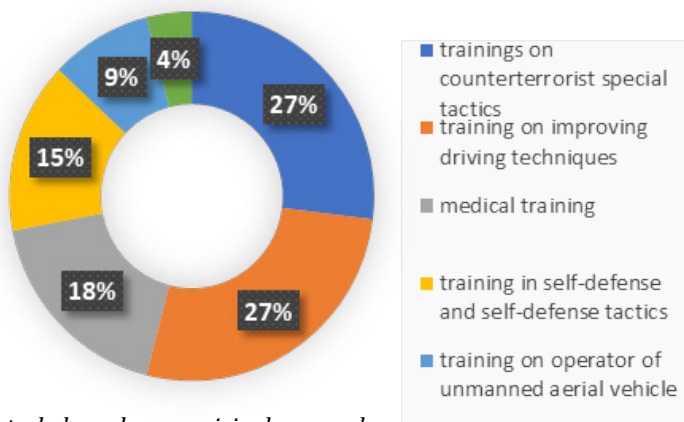
Respondents' answers to the question: how would you rate the usefulness of the knowledge/skills acquired while on duty? Please circle the correct number (number 0 indicates the lowest value while number 5 indicates the highest value).



Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

Another open-ended question followed this one on the survey questionnaire. In response to it, respondents were able to indicate the knowledge from which training was used by them most often during the implementation of operational tasks. Respondents most often indicated “training in special counter-terrorist tactics” and “training in improving driving techniques” (each indicated by 15 officers). 18% of the representatives of the surveyed group (10 officers) indicated “medical training,” while 15% (8 officers) indicated “training in self-defense improvement and tactics” (see Figure 12). Also mentioned in response to this question were “unmanned aircraft operator training” (by 5 officers, i.e. 9% of the representatives of the surveyed group) and “emergency command training,” which was indicated by 2 officers (4% of the total number of officers surveyed).

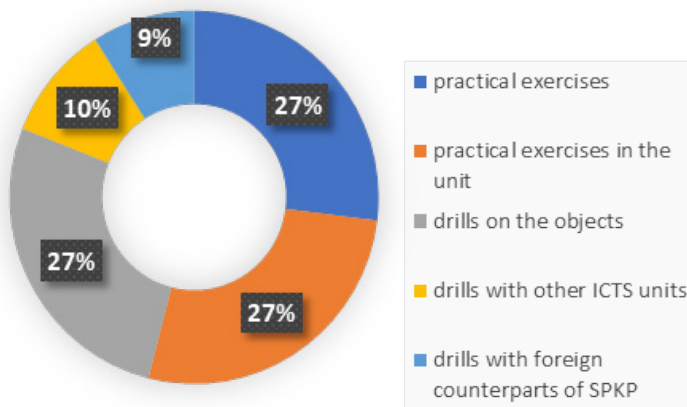
Figure 12: *Usefulness of training in daily service*
Respondents' answers to the question: knowledge from which training do you use most often during operational tasks?



Source: own study based on empirical research.

Respondents were also asked to answer the question: what forms of training on counter-terrorist operations they consider to be most effective. The results (see Figure 13) were as follows: 15 officers (a combined 81% of the total number of respondents) indicated answers: “practical exercises”, “practical exercises in the unit”, “exercises at facilities” as having the greatest effect during their service. The remainder of the respondents indicated “exercises with other ICTS units” (10% of the surveyed group, i.e., 6 officers) and “exercises with foreign ICTS counterparts” (9% of the surveyed group, i.e., 5 officers). None of the respondents chose the answers: “theoretical training” and “theoretical discussion of procedures at briefings.”

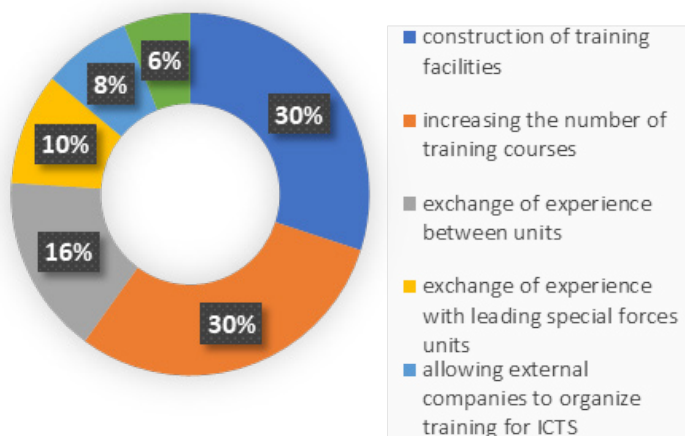
Figure 13: *Forms of training on counter-terrorist operations*
Respondents' answers to the question: which forms of training on counter-terrorist activities do you consider having the greatest effect? Please mark 3 which you consider most effective.



Source: own study based on empirical research.

Respondents were then able to indicate suggestions for changes in the counter-terrorism training system. Recommendations were expressed by 50 survey participants. In response to this question, 30% of the representatives of the surveyed group (15 officers) indicated the answer “construction of training facilities”, another 30% (15 officers) were in favor of increasing the number of training courses (see Figure 14). 16% of respondents (8 officers) wanted more “exchange of experience between units,” while 10% (5 officers) saw “exchange of experience with leading special forces units.” In response to the aforementioned question, some respondents indicated the need to “allow external companies to organize training for ICTS” (4 officers, or 8%) and to “standardize knowledge” (3 officers, i.e. 6%).

Figure 14: *Suggestions for changes in the counter-terrorism training system*
Respondents' answers to the question: if you marked "definitely yes" or "rather yes" in your answer to question 13, please indicate your proposals for changes in the counter-terrorism training system.

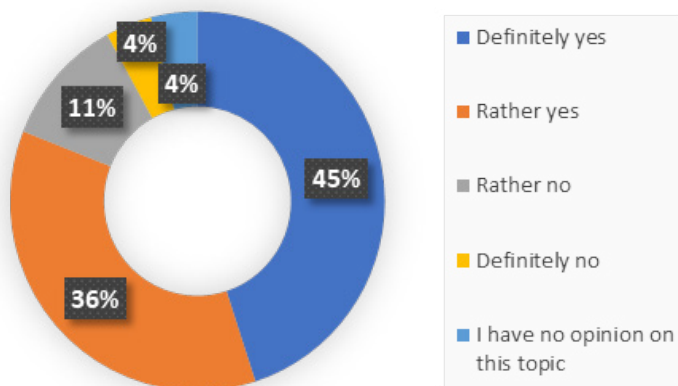


Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

Thus, it should be concluded that the officers evaluate the substantive side of training positively. This is evidenced by the belief that they have the right range of competencies, as well as a positive assessment of the usefulness of the knowledge they have in counter-terrorist activities. What they expect concerns the form of training, with particular attention paid to cooperation in training activities with other units responsible for counter-terrorist activities in Poland. Taking in account legal acts, respondents recommended increasing the budget for modernizing ICTS units and separating ICTS officers from the laws that apply to every police officer.

Figure 15: *Evaluation of the degree of satisfaction with the training provided by the unit or RPH*

Respondents' answers to the question: are you satisfied with the level of training provided by the unit or RPH?

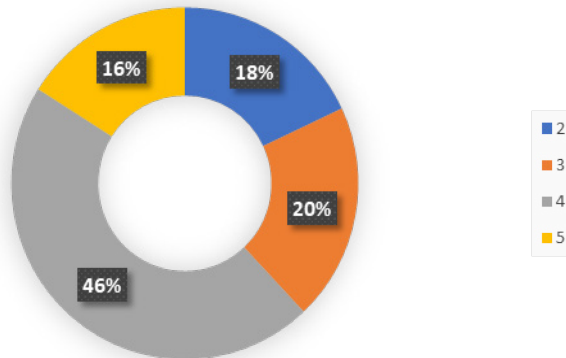


Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

The majority of the representatives of the surveyed group - 25 respondents (45% of the total respondents) marked the answer "definitely yes", followed by 36% of the respondents (20 people) - indicated the answer "rather yes". 4% and 11% of the surveyed group (2 and 6 officers) negatively assessed the level of training provided by the unit or KGP. 4% of the respondents (2 officers) did not express their opinion on the subject.

Figure 16: *Evaluation of the level of training organized by RPH in terms of content*

Respondents' answers to the question: How do you assess the level of counter-terrorism training organized by the KGP in terms of content? Please circle the appropriate number (number 0 means the lowest value while number 5 means the highest).

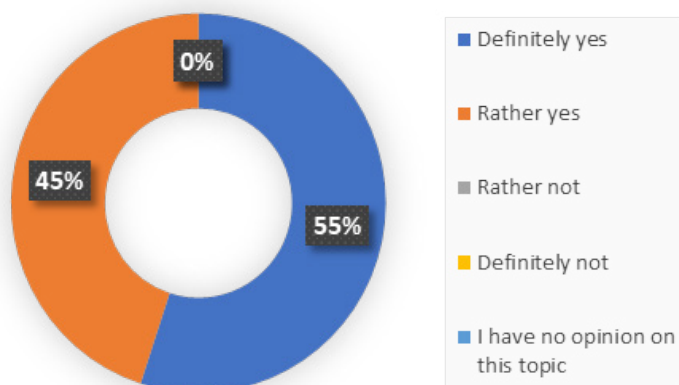


Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

The majority of respondents - 46% (25 officers) - rated the organization of training at a "4". The next highest - with a share of 20% (11 officers) - was the group of respondents who rated the organization of training at a "3" level. The highest value of "5" was marked by 16% of the surveyed group, i.e. 9 respondents, while another 18% (10 officers) of respondents rated the level of organized training at "2". No one in the surveyed group marked a value from 0-1.

Figure 17: *Use of knowledge and skills acquired during training for the purpose of official tasks*

Respondents' answers to the question: have you ever participated in an operation where the knowledge and skills acquired during training contributed to the safe execution of the task?



Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

All of the respondents confirmed they were using the knowledge and skills acquired during training in the execution of official tasks. More than half of the respondents (55%, 30 officers) marked the answer “definitely yes,” and the rest of the group - 45%, 25 officers - selected the option “rather yes.”

As a result of the research, it became possible to verify the main assumption. Verification was based on an analysis of the variables assigned to the assumption. If the percentage of variable values in the form of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” or values 4-5 exceeded 50%, the variable was assigned a positive value. Where values 1-2 or “definitely no” and “rather not” responses exceeded 50%, the variable was assigned a negative value. In other cases, no value was assigned to the variable. Obtaining a value above 50% for the sum of the variables assigned to an assumption was considered as confirmation of it. The results of the evaluation of the variables are presented in the attached table below.

Table 1: Results

Assumption	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Confirmation yes/no
a1 CMT→SP	fig 15 81%>50%	fig. 16 66%>50%	fig. 10 62%>50%	yes
a2 UK→SP	fig. 17 100%>50%	fig. 15 81%>50%	fig. 11 78%>50%	yes
a3 RC→SP	fig. 6 96%>50%	fig. 7 96%>50%	fig. 8 83%>50%	yes
A: CMT∧UK∧RC→SP	Yes			

Source: own elaboration based on empirical research.

CONCLUSION

It should be emphasized that the implemented training courses which were organized by the Police Headquarters, Regional Police Headquarters and through international projects aimed at improving the competence of officers in combating terrorist threats were considered by the majority as satisfactory and useful in their daily service. The respondents indicated in the survey questionnaire specific directions that, in their opinion, could significantly enhance the effectiveness of their operations.

First and foremost, the seniority-diversified composition of the team should be emphasized - thanks to this, the training of younger officers is carried out by senior instructors, and at the time of retirement the more professionally experienced officers are replaced by officers trained by them. In ICTS RPH in Cracow, this has a positive impact not only on the training system, but also on the strengthening of ties between team members, which should be considered extremely important in this type of formation.

The survey showed that the vast majority of officers evaluate the training system positively, however, there were also answers scoring low on the implementation of in-service training, which, as the answers in further questions showed, is mainly related to the low budget allocated for training and the lack of standardization of knowledge at each level. Subsequent questions focused on the application of knowledge and skills acquired during training and courses by officers.

Respondents emphatically stressed that participation in training and courses definitely has a positive impact on their further service - undoubtedly, raising qualifications and the opportunity to obtain authorizations in

specialized courses, such as battlefield medicine or operation of unmanned aerial vehicles, for example, translates into the safety of the unit. It is very important to emphasize that in the opinion of the respondents, service in ICTS requires specialized knowledge and skills that will enable them to perform their duties effectively, contributing to the safety of the entire team taking part in the operation.

The vast majority of respondents took the position that current legal acts do not require amendments. Only individuals expressed a different opinion on this issue (they argued, among other things, that there is a need to separate ICTS officers from the laws that apply to every police officer). According to the respondents, the changes that should be made to improve knowledge and skills and thus sustain the officers of ICTS units in full readiness for operations are: the construction of training facilities (from the Author's observation, this is one of the most important proposals for change, since the large-scale exercises currently held by ICTS officers require closing and securing the facilities where training operations are conducted). One such example is the exercises conducted at the ICE Congress Center and the M1 Shopping Center in Cracow - special centers would allow cyclical training and would definitely facilitate the organization of training). Another proposal for change was to allow external companies to organize training - the external market is certainly more attractive in terms of organizing specialized training, such as deep-sea diving or mine-pyrotechnic work. Allowing private entities to organize training - in addition to undoubtedly positive aspects, such as the organization of training in interesting places, and the possibility of using the best equipment on the market - is also associated, in the first place, with the need to increase financial outlays for training (this element was mentioned twice by the respondents in this survey); secondly, the access of external entities to the training of special police units may also be associated with shaky security. Respondents during the survey repeatedly stressed that training - both in the context of combating the terrorist threat and counter-terrorist operations - requires greater cooperation between ICTS units, but also the exchange of experience and information between special forces units and their international counterparts.

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