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ECOLOGICAL CULTURE OF POLES AS A DETERMINANT OF A SECURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY IN THE 21st CENTURY

Summary

The paper presents the author's outlook on the process of ensuring the ecological safety, with a particular focus on the ecological culture. The author presented his point of view on the correlation between the ecological culture and the change of awareness of the national security. He also states that the aspect, which conditions a secure development of the society are difficulties in sensibilizing Poles to the role of the natural environment in the social and economic development of the country. In this process there was emphasized the role of the public authorities responsible for promoting ecological education of the children, young people and the whole society. The author stressed that the changes of the model of the ecological culture in our society should influence positively the process of shaping the security of the Polish society in the 21st century.

Key words: *ecological culture, ecological security of the state*

Introduction

The natural environmental risks in Poland result not only from the poor structure of our economy, but are also still determined by poor ecological awareness of Poles and their non-ecological habits in everyday life. The amendments of the law themselves cannot help much without a deep transformation of the social habits or daily conduct of all citizens. It is no surprise that the subject of pro-ecological behaviour is more common in the social dialogue, media and educational system. It is worth considering what is the influence of the ecological culture of Poles on the life security and the development of the society in the 21st century.

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1. Ecological culture and the security of the state.

The terms “ecological culture” and “security” are seemingly not connected, especially if we consider security through the prism of traditional (specific to Realism) view on the risks to the security of the state as a political unit in the arena of international relations.

The dynamics of changes in the social and economic life in Poland after 1989 made us aware of more risks to the security of the state. Apart from the typical political and military risks there appeared also social, culture, economic, ecological risks etc. This was reflected in the definition of the term “security”. There has been a redefining of the risks specific to the survival of the nation within the given territorial limits into the risks to a free development and disturbance of satisfying the existential and behavioural needs of the society.

Janusz Stefanowicz’s words are pregnant in this context. He proves that: “Firstly, the contemporary times which, together with the progress of civilization, bring increasing number of risks have changed the understanding of security. In the past it was comprehended strictly in the military context, but today it has spread on consequential non-military aspects – political, economic, ecological etc. Secondly, the teleology of security has changed. It is not just a primary will to survive, but also a protection of the state welfare and the citizens, a protection of liberty and identity – also the structural one – constitute the functions of the security policy.”¹

It is also worth citing Józef Kukułka, who listed the fundamental values that constitute the national security:

- survival (in the ethnic and biological context);
- territorial integrity (in the physical, national and state sense);
- political autonomy (in terms of the system, sovereignty and freedom of affiliation);
- life quality (in terms of the standard of living, level of the social and economic development, and the cultural system)².

It should be emphasized that the Author claims himself that the survival of the nation is the priority of each state. Each of them is

¹ J. Stefanowicz, *Przedmowa*, [in:] J. Stańczyk, *Współczesne pojmowanie bezpieczeństwa*, ISP PAN, Warszawa 1996, p. 7.

² J. Kukułka, *Bezpieczeństwo a współpraca europejska: współzależności i sprzeczności interesów*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe”, issue no 7, Warszawa 1982, p. 34.

prepared to submit any other needs to this value. It seems quite obvious, because the nation may exist without the state, but the state cannot exist without the society which constitutes the nation³. Therefore, any attempts of protecting various needs of the society lose their sense in the face of a risk to the survival of the nation itself. It is also essential that “a risk to any of the four mentioned values leads to confining the vital interests of the states, which means a weakening of the national security”⁴.

It can therefore be concluded that in a situation when there are no risks to the survival of the nation or the territory integrity of the state and its sovereignty, then the life quality of the society should be a priority for the public authorities. There appears an ideal space for showing the social development needs, as well as emphasizing the sensitivity of the society itself to the problems of the environment, where people want to live and develop. Is it justified to talk about the ecological culture of the society?

The term “culture” is not homogeneous and unambiguous itself, because it evolves with the social changes. Without a deep consideration of the etymology of the term it may be stated that the culture is “a whole complex of the human activity, material and non-material, values and accepted ways of conduct, objectified and established in any communities, transferred to other communities and next generations.”⁵. As highlighted by Urszula Świętochowska “...all the people are the creators or holders of some culture, and different cultures shape different people. Each culture is equal and equivalent. They should be respected, not neglected, and not judged negatively. Nowadays, the cultural universalism, especially in the Central Europe is identified with the standards of a democratic state, market economy, open society and righteous law”⁶.

“Ecology” as a commonly used term is associated with a study which

³ The lack of understanding for this fundamental rule creates a problem with interpreting such terms like the security of the state or national security. These terms are often used as synonyms in literature, however the semantic differences are significant. See more: Marek Z. Kulisz, *Determinanty bezpieczeństwa państwa jako organizacji społecznej*, „Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa Międzynarodowego”, Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa, Wrocław 2013, p. 135-151.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 34.

⁵ J. Szczepański, *Elementarne pojęcia socjologii*, PWN, Warszawa 1972, p. 78.

⁶ U. Świętochowska, *Kultura w konfliktach globalnych*, [in:] *Tożsamość kulturowa, kwestie narodowościowe i polonijne*, (ed.) A. Chudobski, Wydaw. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 1998, p. 50.

deals with correlation between living organisms and environment, where those organisms live. However, the connection between ecology and nature is commonly noticeable, precisely the functioning of the nature and the results from the disturbance of this functioning experienced by the human or even the whole biosphere.

Therefore, the terms “culture” and “ecology” are definitely connected by a subjective dimension related to the human behaviour in the environment, where people live and want to develop, which actually determines “ecological security” as an objective dimension. The term “ecological security” itself is also ambiguous, dependant on the analysts’ attitude towards this matter. However, following Marek Pietraś, it may be assumed that the ecological security means “the condition of the social relations, including the content, forms and ways of organising the international relations, which not only limits and eliminates the ecological risks but also promotes positive acting, permitting the realisation of the values significant to the existence and development of the nations and states.”⁷

Whatever this term is called, its essence should be shaping of the social and economic development conditions in such a way that it is possible to restrict the negative influence of this development on the environment which we live in. Nowadays it is obvious to everyone, however was it always like that? One must be aware that from 1989 the security policy of the Polish People’s Republic⁸ did not take into consideration the ecological risks, which did not mean that they did not exist. On the contrary, the economic development in the PRL period generated real risks to the natural environment, but they were not taken into account in the process of ensuring the security of the state. At that time the only thing, which mattered was the risk to the territorial borders of the state from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Therefore, despite the legal standards concerning the protection and shaping of the natural environment,⁹ the fight against the ecological risks did not play a

⁷ Marek Pietraś, *Bezpieczeństwo ekologiczne w Europie. Studium politologiczne.*, Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lubin 2000, p. 85.

⁸ Hereinafter: PRL.

⁹ An example may be the Act of 31 January 1980 on environmental protection and forming of the environment (Journal of Laws No 3, item 6). The act was repealed on 1 October 2001,. Under the terms of the Act of 27 July 2001 on implementing the act – Environmental law, act on waste and amendments to some other acts (Journal of Laws No 100, item 1085).

significant role for our security policy, and even the social and economy policy. One third of the society lived in the area, where the environmental pollution standards were repeatedly exceeded. In industrial and energy companies the systems for reduction of sulphur dioxide or nitrogen oxides were lacking, and almost half of the cities in Poland drained wastewater straight into the rivers. Suffice it to say that the material loss which the society bore as a result of the environmental pollution were estimated at 5-10% of the gross national income. Whereas the investment costs in the environmental sector remained only at the level of 0,3-0,5% of the gross national income¹⁰. It certainly had its negative impact on shaping of the ecological culture of the Polish generation at that time, which consequently influenced significantly on transferring bad habits and patterns of conduct to the next generations. A prominent example may be the problem with implementing the waste management. In Poland the Act on Waste of 27 April 2001¹¹ determined the waste management so that it ensures life and health protection of the people and the environmental protection according to the rule of sustainable development, particularly the waste prevention or reducing waste and its negative influence on the natural environment, and also waste recovery or disposal. Moreover, from 13 September 1996 there was an Act on Maintaining Cleanliness and Order in Communes¹², which regulated in detail the communes' tasks and duties of the properties' owners concerning maintaining cleanliness and order, and also the conditions of collecting waste from the owners and its management. However, it did not bring any significant results. Garbage piles were lying not only in the ditches, but also on the wastelands, and even in the forests, which polluted and defaced the environment and became a social plague along with the fast economic growth, particularly the era of plastic and foil bags. A new concept of waste management was implemented on the basis of the provisions in the Act of 1 July 2011 amending the Act on Maintaining Cleanliness and Order in Municipalities and certain other acts¹³. The most important mental

¹⁰ *Polityka ekologiczna państwa na lata 2009-2012 z perspektywą do roku 2016*, Ministerstwo Środowiska, Warszawa 2008, p. 4. See more: *System finansowania ochrony środowiska w Polsce*, Konferencja Narodów Zjednoczonych w sprawie zmian klimatu w Polsce COP19, Ministerstwo Środowiska, Warszawa 2013.

¹¹ Journal of Laws No 62, item 628 with further amendments.

¹² Journal of Laws No 132, item 622.

¹³ Journal of Laws No 152 item 897.

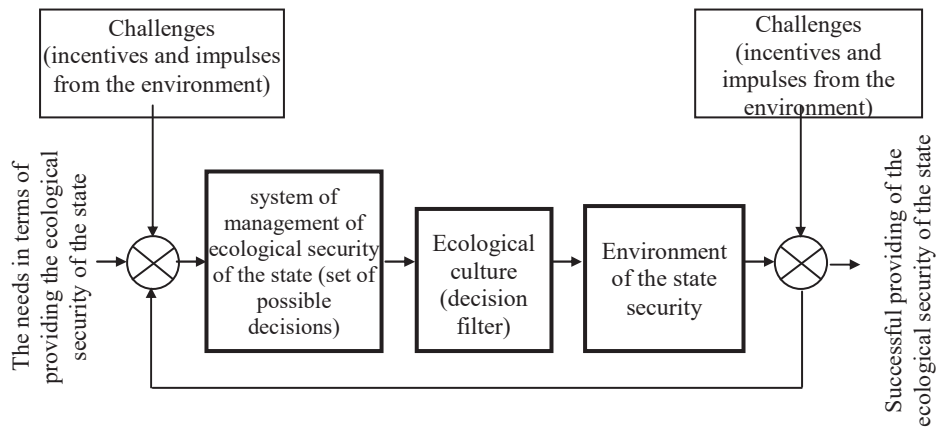
change was the provision which stated that with the beginning of 2013 the communes became the owners of the waste produced on their territory. Therefore, the communes took full responsibility for the waste management, produced by their residents. The only thing left was to convince the citizens of the concept...

It should be emphasized that the dynamics of the social and economic changes in the state and the multidimensional nature of the chances and risks (real, potential and hypothetical) coming from the security environment require from the public authorities rational decisions made in terms of the whole system of environmental security administration. Those decisions should be based on the sustainable development principle and influence the social and economic environment, including the natural environment, in such a way that it simplifies not only obtaining the conditions for survival of the nation within stable, inviolable territorial borders of the state, but primarily creating the conditions for a free development of the state in all social fields. However, this development cannot lead to destruction and degradation of the environment, where the society lives. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the environmental pollution in Poland results not only from the problems of the industrial infrastructure, specificity of transport or agriculture, but also insufficient ecological awareness and low level of ecological culture of Poles. Therefore, the role of public authorities in the process of administration should be an impact on the society, which can change the traditional non-ecological habits of the citizens¹⁴.

Such a process depends on the decisions made within the system of the state security administration, including the subsystem of the ecological security administration. It is worth to realise that those decisions are conditioned by a specified pattern of “ecological culture” of the authorities that make those decisions. This process may be illustrated by a praxeological model, based on so called chain of actions (Kotarbiński’s trio) – Fig. 1.

14 See more: B. Poskrobko, T. Poskrobko, *Zarządzanie środowiskiem w Polsce*, Wydaw. PWE, Warszawa 2012.

Figure 1. The praxeological model of the influence of the ecological culture on the process of ensuring the ecological security of the state



Source: Own elaboration

The system of ecological security administration of the state aims at ensuring the ecological security. The ecological culture is a peculiar filter for all possible decisions made by the public authorities involved in the process of ensuring the ecological security. The filter should “pass” only accepted patterns of ecological behaviour in terms of the environmental policy (the ecological policy of the state) and model types of ecological acting. The ecological culture seen this way will allow the aim – to influence the security environment so that it is rationally possible for the society to achieve a fast social and economic development, keeping at the same time the most valuable resources of the environment for the future generations, which is the essence of the ecological security of the state.

A very important element of this model of administration is rationality of the accepted solutions in terms of the cost/result. On one hand, the model has to provide a maximum area of the ecological security (an area without environmental risks or the one, where the impact of the risks is inappreciable and possible to compensate), and on the other hand this result must be obtained with the limited funds destined for this purpose from the budgets of the subjects involved in this process¹⁵.

¹⁵ The *rationality of the management process* of the ecological security of the state means the way of conduct of the public authorities, taking into consideration the goal and restricted funds, which leads to maximum effects, with specified expenditures (the

The ecological culture should be therefore strongly rooted in the process of ensuring the security of the state or in other words, the level of the ecological security is the result of the performance of the security service provided by the public authorities, according to the condition of the ecological culture of the whole society¹⁶. We must realise that the essence of the ecological culture comes down to the awareness of the individuals, social groups and the whole nation, which influences the ecological decisions through an impact on the following factors:

- constructs, values and ecological policy standards;
- habits, traditions and ecological policy patterns;
- emotional responses to the ecological policy of the state;
- assessment of the facts, phenomena and ecological processes¹⁷.

It should be remembered that the elements of the ecological culture are a result of cause and effect relationships between specified environmental conditions, where a human lives in, and their aiming at a fast social and economic development, which has a negative impact on the environment. At this point the value system of the ecological culture results mainly from the social sensitivity of an individual (social groups) to the environment, without which no individual or social group cannot exist. This symbiosis of a human with their environment is defined as a social ecosystem.

2. Evolutionary changes to the ecological culture of the society

The public authorities, when creating the conditions of the social and economic life, influence the change of the social value system, however it cannot be totally obtained through e.g. formal orders or dispositions. The problems with the mental attitude of the society towards the waste

rule of the greatest efficiency) or causes the minimization of the expenditures for the required effect (the rule of thriftiness).

¹⁶ See more: M. Z. Kulisz, *Współdziałanie administracji publicznej w procesie wdrażania Polityki Ekologicznej Państwa*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo – wielorakie perspektywy. Człowiek – Społeczeństwo – Państwo w sytuacjach kryzysu*, edited by Małgorzata Kuć, Teresa Węglarz, Wydaw. Wyższej Szkoły Bezpieczeństwa, Poznań 2014, p. 257-272.

¹⁷ See: Z. Blok, *Czynniki determinujące kulturę polityczną oraz modele kultury politycznej*, [in:] *Teoretyczne i metodologiczne problemy badań nad kulturą polityczną*, (ed.) Z. Blok, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Instytutu Nauk Politycznych i Dziennikarstwa Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Poznań 2005, p. 66.

management, which was mentioned earlier, are a strong example. The changes of bad habits which are destructive and contaminative to the environment that we live in cannot be top-down “programmed” through legal standards or action programmes, because the unpredictability of the human factor makes the system of the social values not always directly proportional to the specified life conditions. The social responses result from an inner confidence about a necessity of social and economic changes (or a lack of them), adequately to the dynamically developing conditions of the environment. A strong example of such responses is the dialogue in the media on the validity of the soundproof screens along our roads, which, on average, increase the investment cost even by 10%. Meantime, all the screens are assembled according to the provision of the environmental decision by the Regional Environmental Protection Directorate¹⁸.

It should be remembered that the changes of non-ecological habits do not take place dynamically by way of “incentive – immediate reaction (action)”. The changes in the value system should be considered as a long term structural evolution of the society, seen over the years, and even a few generations. It does not mean that the dynamic changes of the natural environment (particularly negative) do not bring significant incentives that influence the value system of individuals, or even specified social groups. It is particularly evident especially in the period of sudden changes caused e.g. by reforms’ elements of the social and economic system of the state, when the reforms bring negative changes to the natural environment, a consequently those negative changes cause sudden social feelings, shock, and even a social outcry. Then the local, regional, and even international communities are ready for sacrifices, restrictions and additional expenditures to achieve the goals of the social and economic development, but with the use of a strategy that reduces negative results to the environment, and even compensates the losses

¹⁸ The Regional Environmental Protection Directorate is a body of the government non-integrated administration appointed in each province under the terms of the Act of 3 October 2008 on publishing information about the environment and its conservation, public participation in the environmental protection and environmental impact assessment (Journal of Laws No 199 item 1227 with further amendments). The Regional Environmental Protection Directorate realises tasks in terms of environmental impact assessment, environmental protection and the area Natura 2000, as well as preventing the damages to the environment and repairing them, environmental management in the closed area and information on the environment in the area of a specific province.

caused by the development. An example may be the UN Convention on Climate Change of 1992¹⁹ and the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 as an international agreement on preventing global warming²⁰.

It is worth to emphasize that the comprehensive changes of the social value system are a complex process, resulting from the impact of the existing social institutions and different interests of the group concerning the social and economic life, and in consequence different ways of perception and interpretation of these phenomena, which are further influenced by the incentives and impulses coming from the constantly changing environment (Fig.1).

Moreover, one must be conscious that the societies of the particular states are not a homogeneous monolith. It is not difficult to notice that even within one nation there are significant differences in perception of the environment or defining the development priorities. Within the free development or expression of thoughts and views there crystallize and evolve various subcultures, which create their own culture circles and systemic solutions, including the ones concerning secure existence and development. The cultural conditioning of security policy manifests not only with the national identity level, emotional relationship with the state, historically shaped attitudes and behavioural patterns, but also the experience of past generations or contemporary understanding of the national interests²¹.

In this regard it is worth to emphasize the effort of the EU to alter the perception of the human role in shaping the structure of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, which was to influence the support of the proposal of reducing the emission of CO₂ by the member states. However, it is worth to mention that all 28 member states are responsible for only 10% of the global CO₂ emission into the atmosphere. The biggest issuer of carbon dioxide is China (28% of emission), the United

¹⁹ This convention was ratified in Poland in 1996r. (Journal of Laws of 1996 r. No 53, item 238).

²⁰ This protocol was ratified in Poland in 2005 (Journal of Laws of 2005 r. No 203 item 1684).

²¹ J. Stańczyk, *Kulturowe uwarunkowania oraz wyzwania dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego oraz międzynarodowego*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo człowieka a wielokulturowość*, edited by J. Dębowski, E. Jarmoch, A. W. Świdorski. Katedra Filozofii i Socjologii Polityki Akademii Podlaskiej w Siedlcach. Drohiczyńskie Towarzystwo Naukowe., Wydaw. Akademii Podlaskiej, Siedlce 2008, p. 120.

States (14%) and India (7%)²². Therefore, only the USA and China, which did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol, emit 42% of the global CO₂ emission. It means that despite the general increase of the CO₂ emission into the atmosphere²³, the EU is not able to win the fight against the climate change when making decisions independently. Taking the above into consideration, Poland vetoed the drastic proposals of the EU on the CO₂ emission reduction: by 25% by the year of 2020, 40% by 2030, 60% by 2040, and by 2050 even 80-95%.

Despite the fact that we are one of the biggest issuer of CO₂ among the member states, a solidary acceptance of such drastic restrictions would reflect in the Polish economy by 2030 in the following ways:²⁴

- the electricity cost increase by about 20%;
- a necessity of pro-ecological investments of 92 billion Euro;
- a decrease of the economic growth pace by about 1% a year;
- a liquidation of economic sectors like: metallurgy, automotive industry, manufacturing of artificial fertilisers;
- the unemployment increase by 0,5% a year.

Reducing CO₂ is possible through lowering the energy intensity of our economy (2,5 times bigger than the average in the EU), but on the other hand, if Poland wants to maintain the high pace of economic growth, it could not accept such severe CO₂ emission standards. The pressure from the highly developed countries of the EU, like France or Germany is naturally understandable, because pro-ecological investments are particularly profitable for France – as a producer of nuclear plants or Germany as a main producer of solar panels.

Discussions at the subsequent conferences on climate (in 2012 in Qatar, 2013 in Poland and 2014 in Peru) led to the situation where the USA and China adopted their own ecological goals, and the EU itself showed more understanding for the Poland's concerns. By the decision of

²² Source: <http://naukaoklimacie.pl/aktualnosci/dwutlenek-wegla-spektakularna-historia-wzrostu-56>, (accessed: 14.07.2015).

²³ The average concentration of CO₂ in the air in 2013 increased by 0,74% in relation to the previous year. It is not a big annual growth, but in relation to the times before the Industrial Revolution this growth constitutes 142% of the value from the pre-industrial period. Source: <http://naukaoklimacie.pl/aktualnosci/dwutlenek-wegla-spektakularna-historia-wzrostu-56>,(accessed: 14.07.2015).

²⁴Source: <http://www.forbes.pl/artykuly/sekcje/Wydarzenia/prad-zdrozeje-o-20-proc--po-unijnej-redukcji-emisji-co2,11755,1>, (accessed: 14.07.2015).

the EU of October 2014 there have been maintained the provisions on reducing the CO₂ emission by at least 40% by the year of 2030 against 1990, but less affluent countries of the EU, including Poland, will be less burdened with the costs of these ambitious goals of the climate policy²⁵.

Interestingly, the research done by Zespół Badań Społecznych in TNS Polska prove that currently 74% of Poles notice the need of reducing the greenhouse gases emission, and over half of them claim that it should be done as soon as possible or in the nearest future. This approach has been explained by the respondents with an intention to ensure a better future for the next Polish generations²⁶. In this regard there has been a huge change of the attitude towards the historical conduct patterns in the context of contemporary understanding of the national interests of Poland.

Therefore, it may be stated that on one hand the historical and cultural conditioning influence the nation's perception of its environment, and on the other hand the incentives and impulses coming from the environment are those factors which influence on shaping specific values in the society, including the perception of the natural environment's problems. The differences in the development, dividing the certain regions of the state or particular nations are also significant.

3. Ecological security in the National Security Strategy

The strongest incentives always come from the closest environment, but due to such factors like, for example, globalisation, a strong influence of the distant environment is also noticeable. Therefore, if we accept that every social group, every nation and state create their own ecological sensitivity circles, then those circles influence one another directly or indirectly, according to the theory of the cultural diffusionism²⁷. Therefore, there is not only one homogeneous type of ecological culture of the state, because the ecological culture of even a small social group is determined by the culture of its members, and in a given political, social and economic system of the state there exists a model of ecological

²⁵ The final agreement of the EU countries' leaders states that the share of energy from renewable sources of total electricity consumption within the whole EU will be 27 % in 2030, but this result will not be binding at the same level for all the member states.

²⁶ Source: http://www.mos.gov.pl/arttykul/7_archiwum/23795_ekologiczny_obraz_polakow.html, (accessed: 14.07.2015).

²⁷ J. R. Garlicki, A. Noga-Bogomilski, *Kultura polityczna w społeczeństwie demokratycznym*, Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2004, p. 17.

culture, which is a resultant of all the cultural circles created by particular citizens, social groups, or whole nations.

From this point of view it is worth to look at the policy of shaping the national security. An important role is played by the National Security Strategy of the Polish Republic, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 17 October 2014, and approved 5 November 2014. In the document in the section “Economic activities in the field of security” it was defined that:

- Activities increasing the ecological security will be concentrated on the improvement of the environment’s condition, preserving biodiversity and adaptation to the climate changes;
- Adaptation to the changing climate and hydrological conditions requires the implementation of new systemic solutions, among others targeted at minimising the results of natural disasters and extreme weather events – a flood prevention and improvement of the crisis management system have a particular meaning in this context;
- Water management must be a priority on a scale of the whole economy;
- Educational campaigns which popularize the environmental protection, preserving biodiversity and adaptation to the climate changes²⁸.

Therefore, it has been clearly stated that not only the environment’s condition, including the climate and hydrological changes (that is why the rationality of water management has been mentioned) but also the broadly defined ecological education are significant elements determining the national security. It is totally understandable, because without the social support there is no possibility to achieve priority strategic goals of the ecological policy of the state, and this support may be obtained only when the ecological culture of our society changes.

4. Ecological education

It should be emphasized that the ecological awareness, which conditions a certain level of ecological culture of Poles was already analysed in the early years of the system transformation. According to

²⁸ See: Section 105 of the National Security Strategy of the Polish Republic 5 November 2014.

the CBOS data the level of concern about the condition of the environment was the highest in the 1990s and started to drop notably in 1999. Despite some fluctuations, particularly in 2006 and 2008, in 2011 almost half of the Poles (46%) declared a concern about the condition of the natural environment in our country. However, only 27% of the interviewees declared a concern about the environment in their neighbourhood. It may result from the fact that 67% of the respondents feel that their acting may positively influence the natural environment in their place of residence. Interestingly, since 1992 the percentage of Poles who declare this point of view has been still increasing. It is worth to emphasize that in the years 2009-2011 the greatest changes were observed in case of declarations concerning: sorting household waste – 74% of the respondents claimed that they sort the rubbish (an increase by 18%), and the use of disposable foil bags – 83% of the respondents claimed that they take a reusable shopping bag when they go shopping (a decrease by 25%)²⁹.

Since 2010 similar research has been conducted by the Ministry of Environment³⁰. Regular surveys on the ecological awareness and behaviour of Poles enable tracking of the changes in the society and planning adequate reacting of the public authorities in terms of ecological education (through e.g. national social campaigns). The latest “Research on the ecological awareness and behaviour of Poles” realised on the order of the Ministry of Environment by Zespół Badań Społecznych in TNS Polska in October 2014 shows that 76% of the respondents believe that the protection of the natural environment may have a positive impact on

²⁹ Katarzyna Wądołowska, *Zachowania proekologiczne Polaków*, Wydaw. Fundacja Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa, March 2011, BS/23/2011, p. 1-12.

³⁰ It should be remembered that according to the provision of Article 5 of the Act of 4 September 1997 on departments of government administration (Journal of Laws of 2007 No 65, item 437 with further amendments) each minister is obliged to initiate and elaborate the policy of the Council of Ministers in relation to the department they administrate and submitting initiatives and drafts of normative acts in this field at the Council of Ministers meetings. According to the subject of this paper, among the public authorities, the role of the Minister of the Environment deserves to be emphasized, due to the fact that he bears a wide responsibility – administration of two departments: “environment” and “water management”, initiating the aspects of the ecological policy within the Council of Ministers and coordinates all pro-ecological actions of the state at the lower levels of administration. See more: M. Z. Kulisz, *Zarządzanie bezpieczeństwem ekologicznym na szczeblu administracji rządowej*, [in:] *Społeczeństwo i ekonomia. Dwudziestolecie przemian w państwach bałtyckich 1991-2010*, (ed.) R. Droba, J. Zieliński, Akademii Podlaskiej, Siedlce 2010, p. 327-338.

the economic development of the state. Moreover, more than 70% of the respondents positively evaluate the condition of the environment in their neighbourhood, and over 60% has a positive opinion on the condition of the environment in the whole state. Over the past four years the number of people who sort household waste regularly has increased up to 68%, and 53% have assessed positively the changes in terms of waste management in Poland. The fact that the respondents notice positive effects of the amendments to the Act of 13 September 1996 on Maintaining Cleanliness and Order in Communes³¹ is an undoubted success.

Taking into account the existing remarks, the educational campaigns promoting the protection of the environment should be considered significant to positive changes in terms of the ecological culture of our society. In this field the Polish educational system plays an important role, in which the elements of the ecological education were implemented already in primary school.

Efforts done by the National Forest Holding "The State Forests"³² for promoting common knowledge of the forest environment and sustainable forest management. The entity prepared an educational offer addressed not only to children and young people, but also adults. For the purposes of the forestry education the employees of the National Forest Holding "The State Forests" (PGL LP) created over 6.500 objects, including:

- 66 centres of forest education,
- 1013 educational pathways (didactic),
- 301 forest education chambers,
- 545 educational shelters (green classes),
- 106 parks and dendrological gardens,
- 1840 educational points,
- 2676 other objects³³.

These objects, located in the particular areas of the Regional Directorates of State Forests and forest districts, are used by 1.5 million people each year (children, young people and also adults), and all the necessary information can be found on the website of the General Directorate of

³¹ Source: http://www.mos.gov.pl/arttykul/7_archiwum/23795_ekologiczny_obraz_polakow.html, (accessed: 14.07.2015).

³² Hereinafter: PGL LP.

³³ Source: <http://www.lasy.gov.pl/edukacja/edukacja-w-lp>, (access 15.07.2015) .

State Forests³⁴ or on the websites of particular regional directorates or even forest districts.

An educational role of the State Forests Information Centre (CILP)³⁵, which issues magazines like *Głos Lasu* and *Echa Leśne*. Information on the forest economy and environmental protection, and the role they play in the human's life is included in numerous catalogues, brochures and folders issued by CILP. Moreover, a lot of regional directorates of the State Forests publish their magazines on a particular region, which they manage.

In this process there should be emphasized a good cooperation between the State Forests and the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management³⁶. The cooperation resulted in Leśny Wortal Edukacyjny (Forest Educational Vortal) "Las Rysia eRysia" as an ecological and forest education platform. It includes three services:

- for primary school children, classes 4-6,
- for intermediate school children,
- for teachers³⁷.

Such an extensive forest education explains matters on biodiversity of the forest resources to the public at large (particularly the young generation) and their influence on the environment and climate. Undoubtedly, it builds a perfect foundation for evolutionary changes of the awareness of the young generation in terms of common responsibility for the condition of the environment that we live in.

It is also worth to mention that in September 2013 the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (NFOŚiGW) adopted the "Ecological Education Strategy of NFOŚiGW for the years 2013-2016 with a prospect of 2020" as one of the partitive strategies indicated in the "Action Strategy of the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management for the years 2013-2016 with

³⁴ www.lasy.gov.pl

³⁵ Hereinafter: CILP.

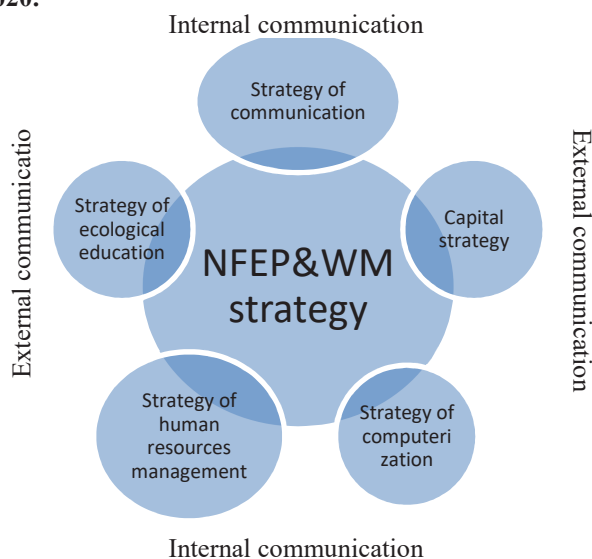
³⁶ Hereinafter: NFOŚiGW. It was appointed under the terms of Article 386 of the act of 27 April 2001 Environmental Law (Journal of Laws No 62, item 627 with further amendments) as an environmental institution, as well as a state legal person according to Article 9 Section 14 of the Act of 27 August 2009 on public finance. The National Fund and its regional branches constitute a system of funding the environmental protection, which involves among others co-financing the ecological education and actions promoting pro-ecological attitude.

³⁷ Ibidem.

a prospect of 2020.”. The Ecological Education Strategy is a kind of complement and specifying of the Action Strategy of NFOŚiGW, and this means that the goal, priorities, perspectives and tasks of the Action Strategy of NFOŚiGW have direct influence on the realisation of the Ecological Education Strategy. Moreover, the Ecological Education Strategy constitutes an element of the strategic goal of NFOŚiGW in terms of the improvement of the environmental condition and sustainable resources management by a stable and effective support for environmental initiatives and projects³⁸.

The Ecological Education Strategy constitutes a practical aspect of the actions taken by NFOŚiGW for creating modern forms of the ecological education to reach the society in the most effective way. The placement of the Ecological Education Strategy in the system of the strategic documents of NFOŚiGW is illustrated by the following diagram.

Figure 2. The elements of the Action Strategy of the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management for the years 2013 – 2016 with a prospect of 2020.



Source: Strategia Edukacji Ekologicznej Narodowego Funduszu Ochrony Środowiska i Gospodarki Wodnej na lata 2013-2016 z perspektywą do 2020 roku, NFOŚiGW, Warszawa 2013, p. 1.

³⁸ www.nfosigw.gov.pl/o-nfosigw/strategia/ (access: 15.07.2015).

It has been assumed that the Ecological Education Strategy should reach the society in the best possible way so that it can change non-ecological behaviour and perpetuate the new one as a positive trend bringing new patterns of the ecological culture in the future.

Therefore, the main goal of the strategy is to increase the ecological awareness, change the social attitude, including children and young people. This acting involves three priorities:

- Providing the funds' sources and improving the effectiveness of the ecological education projects funding;
- The cooperation with the Provincial Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management in order to realise the common strategy;
- Extensive consultations in order to reach modern solutions in the field of the ecological education³⁹.

The results of the strategy will not appear immediately, because education reaches young generation faster and shapes its attitudes positively in the future. The real problem is the change the adults' habits. The intensive educational and informational activity of the Ministry of the Environment, especially NFOŚiGW since 2010, has brought positive symptoms of changes, which have been already noticed in the results of the research conducted by CBOS or Zespół Badań Społecznych in TNS Polska, ordered by the Ministry of the Environment.

Conclusions

To sum up, the problem with security of the fast social development of the state is to provide such development conditions that the values of the nature stay preserved, and at the same time the elements of the economy, which influence the environment negatively as a result of investment backwardness, are improved. For the widely promoted sustainable development of the state not only investments for modern pro-ecological technology and water management are essential, but also a great ecological awareness of the society. This awareness may be shaped in an evolutionary way through the ecological education process addressed to children, and also broadly defined informational campaign

³⁹ *Strategia Edukacji Ekologicznej Narodowego Funduszu Ochrony Środowiska i Gospodarki Wodnej na lata 2013 – 2016 z perspektywą do roku 2020*, Warszawa 2013, p. 18.

in order to sensibilize Poles to ecological challenges and change of bad habits, and even generational habits which harm the natural environment. All these actions should alter the ecological culture pattern of our society, which in consequence will positively influence the process of shaping the social security of Poland in the 21st century.

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