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Remarks

By

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Poland pays major attention to the international cooperation under the INTERPOL channel. This cooperation is especially valued since it provides an effective tool for improving global security. No other organization responsible for police cooperation has managed to gather such a wide range of partners under one roof. This is how INTERPOL is perceived by both policymakers and by law enforcement authorities.

As to the third panel of today's conference – the efficiency of efforts undertaken by the police in Poland, especially with respect to violent criminal offences, largely depends on how the law enforcement procedures are drafted and if they are sufficiently clear, comprehensible, free of flexible interpretations and not affected by political factors. Respecting the rights and freedoms of the citizens is of key importance since human dignity is a universal value, forming one of the pillars of the work conducted by police officers.

For example, in Poland, the use of force in combating violent crime offences is strictly regulated: under law, police officers must respect human dignity, respect and protect human rights, as well as treat all relevant persons in accordance with the principle of equality under the law and not act superior to them. This means he or she must remain impartial and may not act in a discriminatory way, be it against their sex, nationality, race, social status or religion.

Also, neither the guidelines pursued by law enforcement agencies, nor actions performed by them, may be politically driven or may constitute a means for the accomplishment of goals of a particular interest group or a political party. This applies both to the national level, where the police, being a politically independent entity, should conduct their actions exclusively on the basis of democratically adopted regulations, as well as to the international level, where INTERPOL should be utilized as a channel to prosecute serious criminal offences. The apolitical nature of INTERPOL, provided for in the statute of the Organization, is a priority for Poland.

The Polish police is the epitome of a major shift from a repressive authority to a body open to cooperation with the society and local communities. Twenty-five years after the transformation, the police have become an apolitical, objective and efficient formation, which acts on behalf of society and lives in a symbiosis with it. For that reason, the approach to the performance of tasks of the police has also changed, a fact demonstrated best by the gradation of coercive means: from physical force to firearms.

The right to use coercive means is a special competence, which a police officer may use only in accordance with the law, whenever there is a necessity to do so and so as to inflict as little damage as possible. Obviously, the scope of permissible coercion is far greater for serious violent criminal offences than it is for petty theft, and it should be evaluated individually, with acknowledgment of the factors mentioned before.