MYKOLO ROMERIO UNIVERSITETO

VIEŠOJO SAUGUMO AKADEMIJA

PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER (37) Nr. 4

Research Journal

TURINYS

PUBLIC SECURITY COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Dominyka ARDINAVIČIŪTĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail doardinaviciute@stud.mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0009-0005-0325-2064

Rasa DOBRŽINSKIENĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail rasa.dobrzinskiene@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6590-4164

Abstract. The topic of public security communication opportunities and challenges in social media is relevant, because social media help to spread information faster and communicate with that part of society that uses and follows information in social media. As a result, these media become a strategic communication tool for public security institutions, disseminating relevant information and strengthening the responsibility and transparency of institutions in communication with the public. This communication depends not only on technological capabilities, but also on the ability to combine legal, ethical and professional principles, because only in this way can it be ensured that public security communication in social media would be a sustainable tool for institutions to strengthen public trust in them. Therefore, the object of the study is public security communication in social media, and the goal is to analyze the opportunities and challenges of public security communication in social media.
After reviewing the scientific literature and conducting research, it can be noted that the communication of public security institutions is very important, because in this way the sense of public security and trust is ensured, and social media constitute an important medium for the rapid dissemination of information. Although the public sees and evaluates this communication positively, institutions face significant challenges when communicating via social media – disinformation, lack of resources and time, limitations of algorithms. In order to ensure public security more effectively, consistent communication, communication formats that meet the needs of the public, and targeted work to combat misleading information are necessary.
The quantitative data on public security communication in social media suggests that both the public and public security institution representatives recognize the significance and potential of these platforms, yet their assessments diverge in several respects. The public generally evaluates institutional communication positively— most respondents find it useful and trustworthy—while also emphasizing that institutions should post more content. In contrast, representatives of public security institutions highlight different core difficulties, including limited resources and time, the need to address misinformation, and reduced reach caused by platform algorithms. The comparison also indicates that the communication formats currently used by institutions across various social media channels do not fully align with societal expectations, which implies that the opportunities offered by social media are not being utilized to their full extent in this field. To improve the situation, communication should be better tailored to public needs and the practical possibilities available.

Keywords: public security, communication, social media, society.

Introduction

Ensuring public security is one of the most important functions of the state, helping institutions to ensure public welfare, stability, and trust in the institutions themselves. In order to properly perform this function, it is very important to know how to communicate with the public. In today's information society, effective communication between state institutions and civilians on social media is becoming a strategic tool. Communication on social media allows public security institutions to reach large audiences more quickly and disseminate relevant information urgently, but at the same time poses a number of challenges: the rapid flow of

information, the threat of disinformation, and public criticism require efficiency, professionalism, and caution. Effective communication can strengthen public trust, while improper implementation can undermine it. Therefore, these media are becoming a strategic communication tool for public security institutions, disseminating relevant information and strengthening the accountability and transparency of institutions in their communication with the public. This communication depends not only on technological capabilities, but also on the ability to balance legal, ethical, and professional principles, as this is the only way to ensure that public security communication on social media is a sustainable tool for institutions to strengthen public trust in them.

Communication on social media is frequently discussed in scientific literature. In general terms, communication is analyzed more broadly by V. Navickienė et al. (2023). The theoretical basis of media and their use in law enforcement agencies is analyzed by Nigel G. Fielding (2023). The document "Guidelines for Communication about Services Provided by Public Sector Institutions and Customer Service" by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania discusses the basic principles of communication, limits, and ethical guidelines for using social media. However, no information or specific examples of public security communication on social media and their opportunities and challenges have been provided to date. There is a lack of specific analysis and systematic analysis of how to use social media effectively to provide information and strengthen trust between institutions and the public.

With this in mind, the **object** of the research is public security communication on social media. The **aim** is to analyze the opportunities and challenges of public security communication on social media.

To achieve this aim, the following research **tasks** are formulated:

1. To discuss the theoretical aspects of public security communication.

2. To analyze the role of social media in contemporary public security communication.

3. Collect and compare quantitative data on the attitudes of the public and public security institutions' communication representatives towards communication on social media.

The research **problem** is that although social networks provide public security institutions with the opportunity to communicate with the public much more effectively, the question remains how to turn these opportunities into a real effective tool, while managing the challenges that arise.

Research **methodology**. The research was conducted using an analytical method applied to the analysis of scientific sources. The social network content analysis method was also used to analyze the posts on the social network accounts of official public security institutions. The questionnaire survey method helped to reveal how certain groups of people perceive communication through social media.

The concept of public security

A safe environment is one in which human rights and freedoms are upheld. A sense of security determines the behavior and quality of life of individuals, as well as the social and political stability of the state and the trust of its citizens in its legal and institutional mechanisms (Tumalavičius, 2017). Alfonsas Laurinavičius (2001) argues that creating a safe environment is the main focus of police activity and policy, which should be directed towards helping people to create a safe environment by promoting mutual trust and thus forming the view that a sense of security is one of the greatest human values. Public security is part of national security, which includes: public order, internal service, fire and civil protection and rescue operations, state border protection, the circulation of weapons, ammunition, explosives, and special means, and

the protection of persons with protected person status (Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, 2023). This means that public security plays an important role in society. This is confirmed by the provisions of Lithuanian law. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that the state is responsible for ensuring the security of its citizens, therefore the area of public security is an integral part of the implementation of constitutional rights and freedoms. The National Security Strategy states that in order to ensure public security, it is necessary to maintain public security, economic and social stability, ensure environmental protection, and develop capabilities to respond to external and internal risk factors, dangers, and threats. The strategy also notes that an effective public security system is essential for internal security and prosperity.

Public security and its proper enforcement depend on several factors. First, effective public security requires the proper establishment of human rights and freedoms in the state (Tumalavičius, 2017). Only in a secure state can human rights such as the right to life, health, a safe environment, etc. be properly guaranteed and protected. These provisions are implemented by a system of public security institutions: policy makers and coordinators, institutional services such as the police, fire and rescue services, border guards, and supervisory and control bodies (courts, ombudsman institutions, etc.). Secondly, the process of ensuring public security may also give rise to unlawful restrictions and violations of human rights and freedoms. For this reason, it is important to enshrine the principle of proportionality of public security measures in the legislative process and to create the necessary mechanisms for the protection of human rights and freedoms. Ultimately, effective public security is determined by the proper application of the law—how public administration entities carry out their duties and powers, which they must perform properly and without violating legal norms (Tumalavičius, 2017).

Thus, public security in Lithuania is a necessary condition for a safe environment in which human rights and freedoms are effectively implemented. it is part of national security, covering public order, civil and fire security, rescue operations, border protection, and control of special measures. The Constitution obliges the state to ensure the security of its citizens, therefore the field of public security operates on a legal basis (from human rights standards to basic laws and subordinate legislation). In practice, all institutions need consistent, ethical, and coordinated communication (including social media), as it directly affects the behavior of the population, trust, and the effectiveness of crisis management.

The role of social media communication

A large part of contemporary communication and media theory originates from the general social sciences, including history, anthropology, economics, psychology, and sociology, which emerged in Western Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (McQuail, 2005). Scientists describe communication as a term in their works in very different ways; there is no single defined opinion on how the concept itself should sound. In the context of public security, communication can be understood as the targeted transmission of information from institutions to the public in order to ensure a sense of security, respond quickly to threats, and strengthen public confidence in public security institutions. It is emphasized that communication is the foundation of an organization: it ensures common patterns of behavior and allows for the development of ethics, law, and general social order. Thus, communication is more than just the transfer of information—it is a set of relationships in which signs, language, codes, and social rules ensure social harmony and the individual's belonging to the social organism.

Informing the public is a responsible public communication activity, planned and carried out in accordance with the principles of legality, accuracy, timeliness, proportionality, and ethics. The goal of the communication process is to provide verified information in a timely and clear manner, which would help protect lives and property, thereby maintaining order, reducing risks, and strengthening public confidence in state institutions so that the public feels safe in their environment. In practice, this means analyzing audiences and risks and adapting clear messages and information (message map) (Covello, 2006). This approach helps to attract the audience's attention by providing accurately formulated and relevant information.

Social media play a significant role in people's lives, as individuals use these media to communicate, share information, and build communities. The social network itself is a means of communication within the platform, allowing users to freely communicate and reach large audiences, establishing connections with them. The effectiveness of messages depends on proper preparation (clear policies, templates), clear updates with clearly marked corrections, and the very important aspect of partnership with the media and other important state institutions. When disseminating public security information, it is important to use hashtags (messages marked with a specific topic on social media) and geotags (messages marking a location) (e.g., # Flood_Kaunas), as they allow you to reach your target audience more quickly (Young et al., 2020). Strategic use of hashtags can help filter content during extreme situations (Silver, Andrey, 2019). The role of social media as a communication infrastructure is detailed in the CWA 18005:2023 guidelines. They state that in order to achieve the desired result: the headlines of the warnings must consistently indicate the type and intensity of the threat, as well as the type of message itself (e.g., new warning/update) and a clear plan of action on what to do in that situation ("Prepare to leave" or "Evacuate now") ; the message should include a visual plan to attract more attention, provide the necessary contacts who can provide information or assistance; provide information in several languages, if possible; use pre-prepared message templates and visual consistency. Such a standardized format is necessary in order to guide people's behavior in a targeted and rapid manner during crises or extreme situations (CWA 18005:2023). Social media should complement, not replace, official public warning systems (OASIS, 2010).

Communication via social media and in crisis situations is a relevant phenomenon, as government institutions can monitor how individuals receive certain information, and social network participants can also provide important information when addressing necessary issues (Wang et al., 2021). Studies show that during unexpected crises, the public tends to rely more on real-time information posted on social media than to wait for reports from traditional media (Bonson et al., 2015). It's also pointed out that social network analysis makes it possible to model public behavior in a crisis environment based on user posts, reactions, and interactions. This only confirms that the development of targeted communication on social media provides greater accessibility and wider dissemination of information. In crisis situations, videos, maps, infographics, and other types of visual material (Ling et al., 2015), which attract users' attention more than long informational texts. This material can be prepared in advance so that it can be shared as soon as it becomes relevant during a disaster (Young et al., 2020), thus avoiding additional work during a crisis and speeding up the process of informing users. The network of social media followers should be improved every day so that in the event of a disaster, it becomes an effective tool for disseminating information (Olson et al., 2019). Such a pre-formed audience ensures that important information reaches as many people as possible during a crisis, as a timely message can have a direct impact on people's security.

Therefore, communication as a process should be considered one of the most important factors in the socialization of modern society. That is why it is important to establish appropriate

relations with the public in public security communication, without applying pressure or hostility, but rather attempting to establish empathetic relations. Social network communication is the totality of connections between people or organizations, and social media/platforms are the digital environment in which these connections become visible, supported, and expanded.

Social media communication opportunities and challenges for public security

In today's world, communication on social media has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it provides public security communication with the opportunity to reach users quickly and effectively, facilitating the exchange of information. On the other hand, it is a very easy medium in which misinformation, propaganda (Vosoughi et al., 2018), and negative opinions spread quickly, Therefore, it is very important to increase resistance to negative information and teach people how to recognize lies. It is not always easy to adapt to a specific audience, as each social network participant has their own attitudes and opinions, so it is not easy to teach them to trust only official sources. Empirical studies show that a small proportion of messages become extremely popular, often characterised by great structural diversity, and can have a significant impact on public reactions, but these reactions are not always positive and can cause panic among consumers or social chaos (Calo et al., 2021). Therefore, when performing public security functions, it is important to learn how to implement them properly, what should be improved or changed so that public security meets all the necessary criteria and does not cause anxiety among consumers. In addition, methods that help to quickly deal with emerging problems should be continuously improved.

One of the biggest challenges is the spread of disinformation on social media, which distorts risk perception, undermines the reputation of institutions, and weakens public trust. Misinformation itself usually takes the form of a multifaceted campaign with a predetermined financial, political, or other goal. Such campaigns are particularly conducive to the social media environment, where misleading messages spread quickly, attract people's attention, and increase the activity of such dissemination. In the digital ecosystem, disinformation is defined as the deliberate dissemination of inaccuracies or distortions, often presented as news, in order to achieve political goals. W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingston link this phenomenon to the erosion of institutional legitimacy (2021). The spread of disinformation is intensifying in a hybrid media system, where popular social media topics and artificially inflated stories are transferred to traditional media, thus expanding the audience for misleading content.

When performing public security functions and monitoring order on social media, it is important not only to monitor and moderate content, but also to analyze how and who promotes the spread of disinformation and to combat its spread. Combating disinformation means identifying misleading messages and responding to them (Calo et al., 2021). One could imagine that an artificial intelligence system could help flag questionable content or that legislation could define disinformation, but this is not a mechanism for combating it. An effective response requires identifying the actors and their motives – ranging from unintentional misinformation to strategically planned operations. Early detection of disinformation is crucial to minimising damage and consequences (Shu et al., 2020).

Another particularly serious problem is cyber attacks related to social media. Such attacks pose a structural risk to public security communications in Lithuania, as they can compromise the integrity of official accounts by damaging, destroying, deleting, or altering electronic information, as well as promoting the spread of misleading messages and undermining public confidence in public security institutions. The National Cyber Security Centre (NKSC) recorded 3,874 incidents in 2024, about 63% more than in 2023, which indicates a problem area

that needs more attention. Based on this, it can be assumed that attacks against official government accounts and communication channels on social media will be carried out in the future. Therefore, the prevention of information dissemination should be strengthened, incident policy procedures should be clearly described, and the knowledge of employees who work with social network communication should be enhanced.

As mentioned earlier, communication on social media not only poses challenges but also provides opportunities to communicate with users more quickly. Public security institutions also use social media as an opportunity to search for missing persons. They share all the necessary information about missing persons on their official accounts to make it easier to find them, because with the help of the public, the circumstances surrounding missing persons are sometimes revealed more quickly than through institutional cooperation alone. Another opportunity provided by social media is the prevention of criminal offenses or administrative violations in cyberspace. This prevention is ensured by a public virtual patrol, whose functions include the prevention of criminal offenses and administrative violations in cyberspace, monitoring of social media, evaluation of information received and collection of additional information, as well as active preventive activities and informing people about various relevant topics related to the prevention of violations of the law in cyberspace. This is an excellent way to regulate and ensure public security on social media and a great opportunity to strengthen public security communication.

It can therefore be said that social media are becoming not only part of public security communication, which enables public security institutions to disseminate information quickly and effectively, engage the public, and strengthen trust in state institutions. However, these opportunities are accompanied by significant challenges, such as disinformation and cyberattacks. In order to manage these risks, it is necessary to develop strategic communication, educate the public to be resistant to false information, and promote critical thinking and trust in official sources.

Survey of communication representatives of public and state institutions

A quantitative research method was chosen for the study – a survey that allows for the collection of summary data from two target groups: members of the public and communication representatives of public security institutions. The research tool consists of two questionnaires, containing 19 and 17 questions, respectively. The questionnaire questions were developed based on the theoretical principles of public security communication and social media use. The questionnaire was designed to assess respondents' social network usage habits and attitudes toward public security agency communication.

Public attitudes towards public security communication on social media

A total of 122 respondents participated in the public survey. The majority were women (69.7%), while men accounted for 30.3%. In terms of age, the majority of survey participants were 16–24 years old (44.3%), followed by those aged 25–34 (23.8%) and those aged 45 and older (22.1%), and the smallest group was 35–44 years old (9.8%).

The results of the public survey show that respondents actively use various social networking platforms, but there are three main ones. Most of the respondents use *Facebook* at least once a week – as many as 95.9% of respondents. *YouTube* ranks second in terms of usage – 78.7%, and *Instagram* ranks third – 71.3%. Almost half of the respondents (45.1%) use *TikTok*, while only 9% of respondents use *Telegram*. Other platforms mentioned account for a

small percentage, only 0.8% each. This data shows that it is most effective for public security institutions to communicate on the platforms with the largest audience, primarily *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *YouTube*. There is also a noticeable increase in the use of *TikTok*, which indicates new opportunities to reach broader groups of the population.
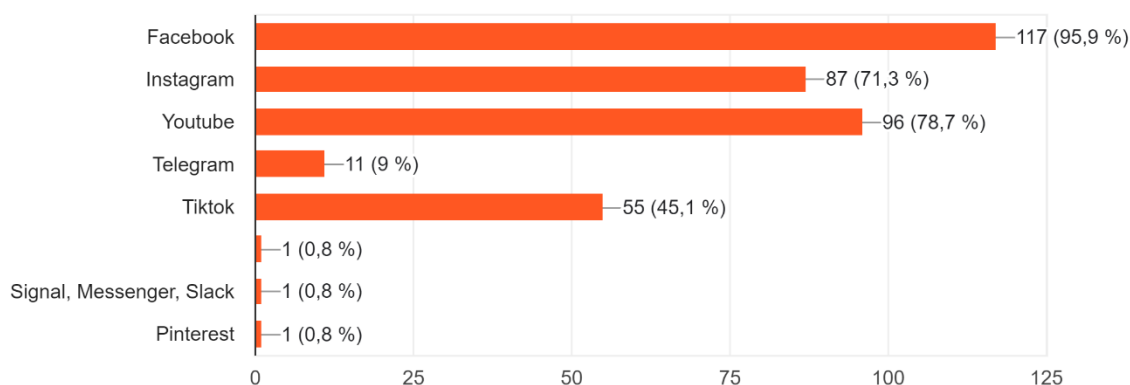
Fig. 1. Platforms used by the public

When asked which public security institutions respondents follow on social media, it appears that the Police Department's account is the most actively followed, with 36.9% of respondents. Other institutions have lower visibility: the State Border Guard Service is followed by 10.7%, the Fire and Rescue Service is followed by 12.3%, the Public Security Service by 14.8%, and the Financial Crime Investigation Service by only 4.9% of respondents. However, the majority of respondents (54.1%) indicated that they do not follow any public security institutions on social media. These results show that more than half of the residents who participated in the survey do not have access to public security communication on social media in general. This may be related to a lack of information dissemination and public distrust of institutions and their activities. It can also be said that police communication is the most accessible and visible.
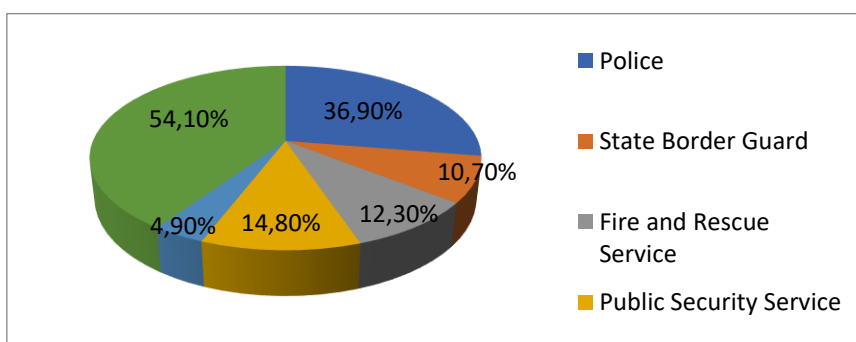
Fig. 2. Public security institutions followed by respondents on social media.

The responses provided by respondents regarding their trust in information provided by public security institutions show that public trust is moderate. Most respondents (33.6%) chose a medium level of trust, 27% indicated that they were fairly confident, and 29.5% were very confident. A small proportion of respondents (7.4%) chose 1 point and (2.5%) chose 2 points.

Summarizing the results, it can be said that more than half of the respondents (56.5%) consider the information provided by institutions to be reliable or very reliable, while only 9.9% showed a lower level of trust. This shows that public security institutions enjoy greater public trust, which is important for effective communication in crisis and everyday situations, but part of the public still lacks complete confidence in the reliability of information. It is therefore important to continue to strengthen the clarity and consistency of information and to respond to the needs of the audience.
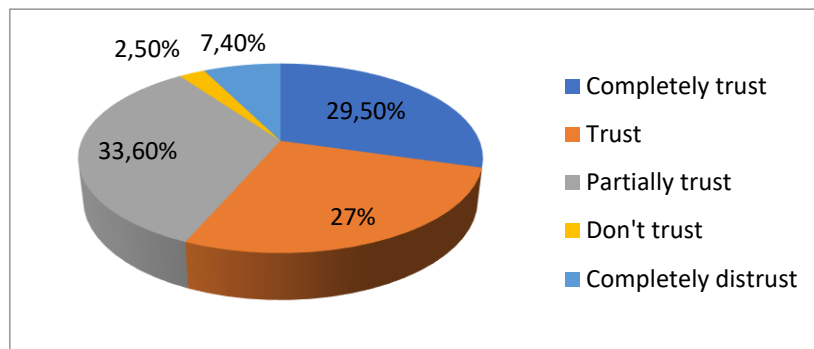
Fig. 3. Assessment of public trust in information provided by public security institutions on social media.

The results of the survey show that the majority of respondents have encountered disinformation, misinformation, or propaganda on social media. This was indicated by 73.8% of respondents. These data reveal that the problem of inaccurate or misleading information is widespread in the context of public security. The prevalence of disinformation on social media is a significant challenge for public security institutions, as misleading information can create unfounded fears, undermine trust in institutions, and hinder communication in situations of real danger. The large number of respondents who have encountered disinformation indicates that the audience is vulnerable to manipulation of information, which requires more active action by institutions to identify false content, clarify facts, and provide clear and timely information.

Respondents expressed their opinion on how public security institutions should refute misleading information on social media. Half of those surveyed (50%) said that the most effective way would be a quick and short refutation in video format, while the same number of respondents (50%) noted that references to official sources should be provided. This shows that the public expects clear, reliable, and easily verifiable refutation of information. Another 46.7% of users believe that it would be effective to mark the refutation at the top of the information so that users would notice it immediately. A much smaller proportion (9%) indicated visuals or maps as an effective tool for combating the spread of inaccurate information. These data show that the public values fast, clearly structured, and reliable information the most. This is an important insight for institutions seeking to respond effectively to disinformation, especially given that a large proportion of the population has encountered misleading information on social media.

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

Visuals/Maps — 9%
Marked refutation at the top of the information — 46,70%
Links to official sources — 50%
Quick and short refutation in video format — 50%
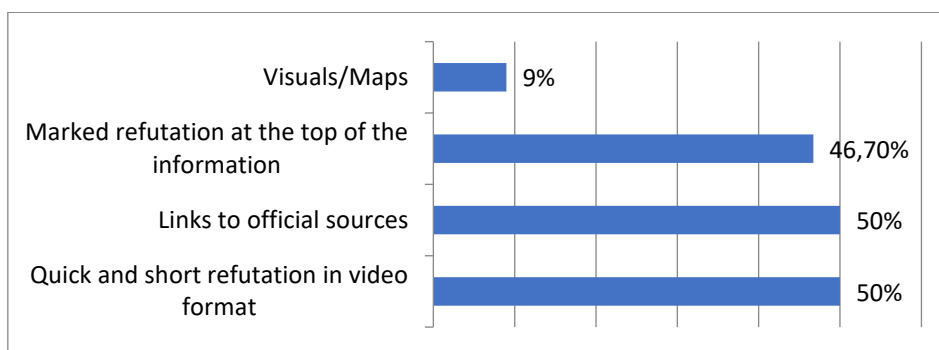
Fig. 4. Public opinion on the most effective ways to refute misleading information on social media.

In a public survey on the format of posts, respondents indicated that the most attention-grabbing and useful content format is short videos or short reels – 68.9% of respondents. Short texts with images came in second place in terms of popularity, with 63.1%. A slightly smaller proportion of respondents preferred the stories format (25.4%) and infographics or maps (18%). Live broadcasts were named as the most useful by 18.9% of participants. It can therefore be said that the content formats preferred by the public reveal clear opportunities for the development of public security communication. Public security institutions can achieve greater visibility and public engagement by creating short videos, visual elements, and concise, easily understandable content. This is particularly relevant when informing about incidents, providing instructions, or refuting misleading information.

Live broadcasts — 18,90%
Infographics / maps — 18%
For stories format — 25,40%
Short texts with images — 63,10%
Short videos (video / reels) — 68,90%
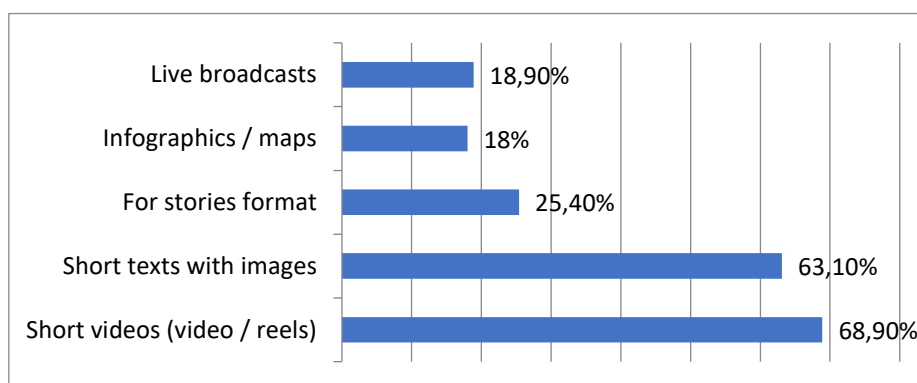
Fig. 5. Public opinion on the most useful and attention-grabbing content formats on social media.

Assessment of public security institutions' communication on social media

Twelve communication representatives participated in the survey of public security institutions. The survey data showed that the majority of communication specialists participating in the study represented the Police Department – as many as 75% of all respondents. Other institutions accounted for smaller shares, with the State Border Guard Service representing 8.3% and the Public Security Service representing 16.7%. Representatives of the Fire and Rescue Department and the Financial Crime Investigation Service did not provide any data. Therefore, these data show that the results most closely reflect police communication practices, but also provide an opportunity to see the opinions of several other public security institutions.

The survey data revealed that all public security institutions participating in the study officially use Facebook (100%), with the majority using YouTube (75%) and Instagram (66.7%). However, none of the institutions use TikTok or Telegram, and only 8.3% use LinkedIn. A comparison of the results of both groups reveals clear differences. Residents use TikTok much more often than institutions. This shows that some of the public may not be able to access information because institutions focus only on more traditional platforms. In addition, the platforms used by the public are more diverse, while those used by institutions are more concentrated on a few main channels. This suggests that there are untapped opportunities to expand communication into areas where residents, especially younger ones, are actively involved.
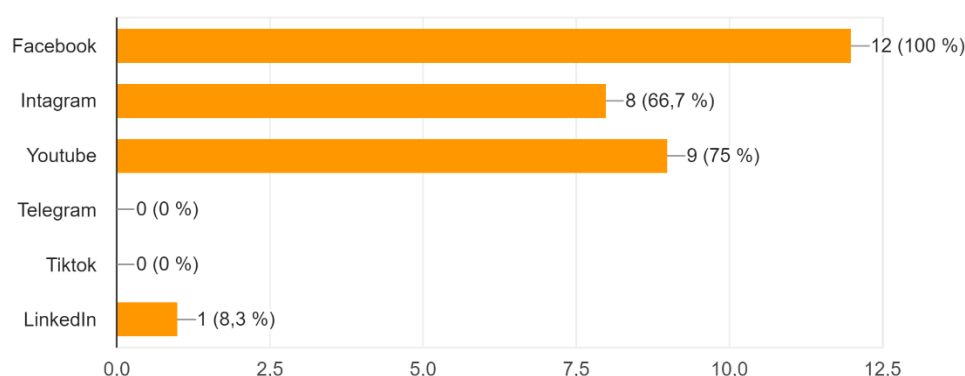
Fig. 6. Platforms used by public security institutions

Communication representatives of public security institutions identified several key challenges they face when communicating on social media. The majority of respondents (66.7%) noted that one of the most significant difficulties is the inability to reach all user groups. This shows that it is difficult for institutions to ensure an adequate level of communication and effectively reach audiences of different ages, interests, or digital skills. The second most frequently mentioned challenge is the lack of human and organizational resources, which was indicated by 58.3% of respondents. This reveals that institutions lack the time, staff, or skills needed for high-quality communication on social media. Other challenges are related to technological and informational factors: 33.3% of institutional communication representatives face problems with algorithm visibility, 25% face uncertainty in legal regulation, and 16.7% face the spread of misinformation and rumors, as well as difficulties in coordinating messages with partners. These results reveal that the communication of public security institutions is limited by both internal (resources, competencies) and external factors (platform algorithms, disinformation, legislation). This creates a field of challenges that has a direct impact on the effectiveness of public security communication.
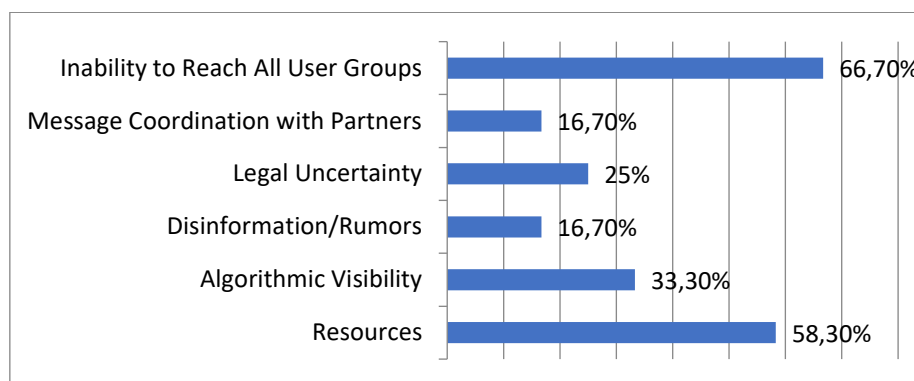
Fig. 7. The biggest challenges in communicating through social media.

Public security institutions' communications representatives indicated that they most often use text and image formats on social media, with all respondents participating in the survey (100%) applying this format. The results also show that short videos (reels) are often used (91.7%) as well as stories (83.3%). Maps or infographics (25%) and live broadcasts (16.7%) are less frequently chosen.

A comparison of the responses of the public and institutions shows that their choices partly coincide, but there are also clear discrepancies that affect the effectiveness of public security communication. The public considers short videos to be the most attractive and useful communication format, and institutions use this format very often. This shows that both public opinion and the methods used by institutions coincide, so it can be said that institutions are able to adapt to contemporary communication trends. Another format selected by the public is short texts with pictures. Institutions also use this format and consider it the most suitable for communication on social media, so this format has proven itself on social media. However, there are certain differences when it comes to formats that are less popular with users. The public pays less attention to infographics, maps, and live broadcasts, but institutions still use these formats. This shows that some of the efforts of institutions may not correspond to the actual information consumption habits of the audience. The biggest difference can be seen in the stories format, although a small proportion of respondents name this format as the most attractive, institutions use it quite often.

This shows that the stories format is seen more as an additional channel for disseminating information rather than the main one. Thus, it can be seen that the formats used by public security institutions for communication on social media largely meet public expectations, but some types of content are underused (e.g., short videos (reels)), while others are used without taking users into account. These discrepancies show how communication with the public on social media could be improved.
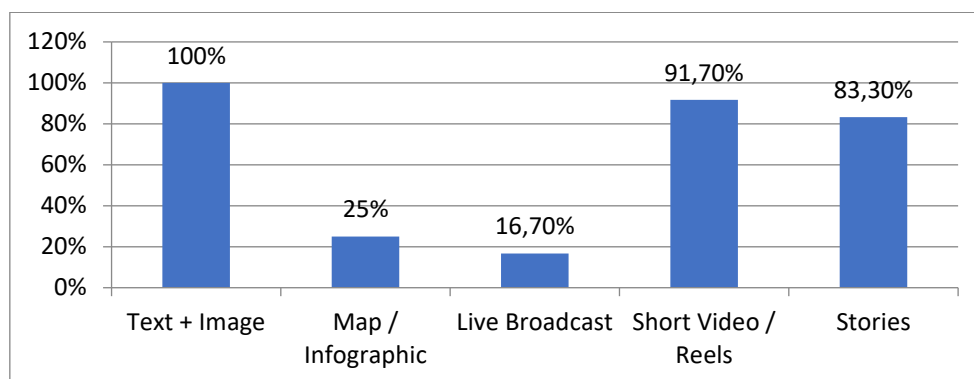
Fig. 8. Content formats used by public security institutions on social media.

The responses provided by public security institution communications representatives show that all respondents (100%) consider the rapid dissemination of information to be the greatest advantage. They also mention strengthening trust and feedback (91.7%) and direct contact with users (83.3%) as significant advantages. Lower communication costs are important to 41.7% of respondents, while only 8.3% of respondents highlighted attractiveness and simplicity for users. The results show that institutions most value the opportunity provided by social media to quickly reach the public and maintain direct contact and feedback, while the simplicity and attractiveness of content is not a priority for them.
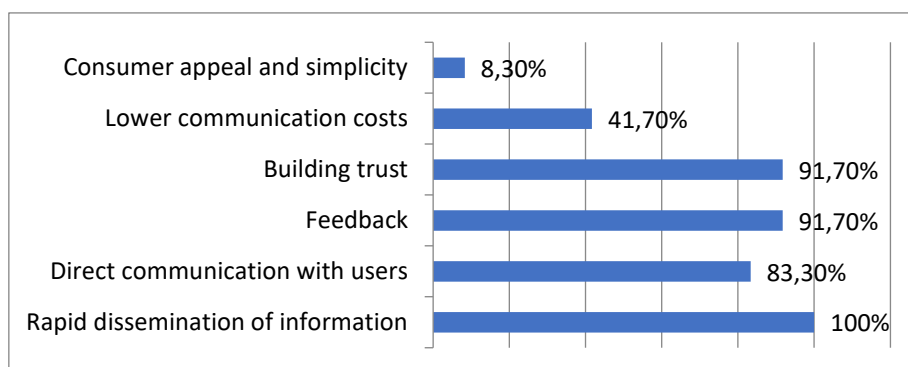
Fig. 9. Advantages of communication by public security institutions on social media.

The collected data shows that most institutions (66.7%) publish information about an incident on social media within 30-60 minutes, and only 8.3% publish information in less than 15 minutes. while the same proportion (8.3%) of respondents do not rush to inform the public and provide information in more than 60 minutes. Meanwhile, 16.7% of respondents indicated that they publish reports within 15-30 minutes. This shows that public security institutions respond to emerging problems fairly quickly, but not in all cases, so in order to ensure adequate security, more attention should be paid to the speed of information dissemination.
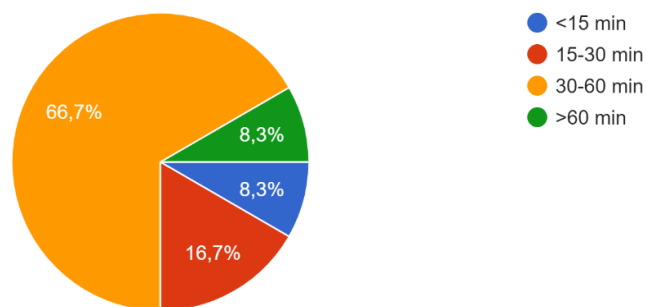
Fig. 10. How long does it take for authorities to issue their first statement after an incident?

The survey responses showed that the activity of public security institutions on social media varies, but the majority (58.3%) of respondents publish content 3-5 times a week. This shows that institutions are trying to maintain constant and targeted communication on social media. The rest of the institutions surveyed publish once a week (16.7%), twice a week (8.3%), 6-10 times a week and more (8.3% each).
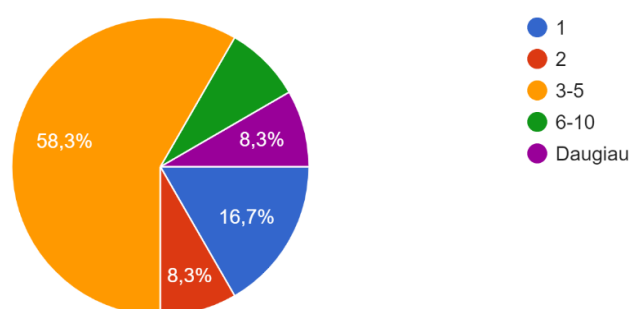
Fig. 11. Frequency of publication

The study showed that social media offer great opportunities for public security communication. They help to quickly reach the public, increase the availability of information, and allow for a rapid response to current events. The public actively uses social media, values the information provided by institutions, and generally trusts it, which creates favorable conditions for effective communication. However, the results also revealed significant challenges. It is difficult for public security institutions to maintain constant updates, create visually appealing content, and respond quickly to misinformation, all due to a lack of human resources, expertise, and technical limitations. The communication representatives of public security institutions themselves spoke in an open question about the ways in which they are trying to increase their audience and its reach. The most common response was to post frequent, high-quality information, thereby advertising their activities and attracting the attention of users. Public expectations often exceed the actual capabilities of institutions, which leads to communication problems such as mistrust and insufficient effectiveness of information dissemination. Comparing the opinions of both groups, it can be seen that institutions often choose formats that fully or partially meet the needs of the audience, but some means of communication are not entirely perfect. The public most appreciates short videos and clear, visually presented information, and a big plus is that public security institutions use these tools

in their practice when communicating with users via social media. All the results show that in order to build strong communication with the public, it is necessary to improve the creation of visual content, disinformation management strategies, strengthen resources, promote public trust, and properly address emerging communication problems.

Conclusions

Looking at communication from a public security perspective, it can be seen that public security itself is ensured by certain institutions in accordance with the provisions laid down by Lithuania. Public security communication includes responding to crisis situations, preventive measures, public education, and teaching the public to recognize false information. Social media facilitate faster dissemination of information; they form a network of users that allows reaching large audiences, providing relevant information, responding to residents' questions, sharing best practices, warnings, and preventive advice, refute false information, build relationships and trust with the public, and communicate with people in real time, thus performing public security functions. However, opportunities also bring challenges – misinformation, limitations imposed by algorithms, public prejudice against public security institutions, mistrust, and a lack of resources, time, and expertise. All of this hinders smooth communication, so it is important to choose the right ways to combat the challenges that arise, to work continuously on communication, and to use a message format that is attractive to the public.

The quantitative data collected on public security communication on social media leads to the conclusion that the public and representatives of public security institutions agree on the importance and potential of social media, but their opinions differ on several aspects. The public has a positive view of public security institutions' communication, with most considering it useful and reliable, but they note that more content should be posted on social media. Meanwhile, representatives of public security institutions point to other key challenges, such as lack of resources, lack of time, managing misinformation, and limited visibility due to algorithms. The comparison showed that the communication formats used by public security institutions and different social media do not fully meet the needs of society, so it can be said that not all the opportunities offered by social media are being properly exploited in this area. In order to improve these aspects, it is necessary to take into account people's needs and available opportunities.

References

1. Bennett W. Lance and Livingston, Steven (2021). *The Disinformation Age: Politics, Technology, and Disruptive Communication in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 3.
https://www.academia.edu/44905403/The_Disinformation_Age
2. Bonsón, Enrique , Royo, Sonia and Ratkai, Melinda (2015). „Citizens' engagement on local governments' Facebook sites. An empirical analysis: The impact of different media and content types in Western Europe".
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0740624X14001567
3. Calo, Ryan, Coward, Chris, Spiro, S. Emma, Starbird, Kate and West, D. Jevin (2021). „How do you solve a problem like misinformation?", *Science Advances* 7, 50.
https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abn0481

4. Covello, T. Vicent (2006). „Risk Comunacation and Message Mapping: A New Tool for Communicating Effectively in Public Health Emergencies and Disasters", *Journal of Emergency Management* 4, 3, 25–40. https://www.academia.edu/110536020/Risk_communication_and_message_mapping_A _new_tool_for_communicating_effectively_in_public_health_emergencies_and_disaste rs

5. CWA 18005:2023 – *Requirements and Recommendations for Early Warning Message Content and Structure on Social Media for Crisis and Disaster Management* (Brussels: CEN-CENELEC, 2023), žiūrėta 2025 m. spalio 17 d., https://www.cencenelec.eu/media/CEN-CENELEC/CWAs/RI/2023/cwa18005_2023.pdf#page=9.40

6. Fielding, Nigel G. (2023). „Police communications and social media", *European Journal of Criminology*, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1477370821998969.

7. Young, E. Camila, Kuligowski D. Erica, Pradhan, Aashna (2020). *A Review of Social Media Use During Disaster Response and Recovery Phases*, NIST Technical Note 2086. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Erica-Kuligowski/publication/340463713_A_Review_of_Social_Media_Use_During_Disaste r_Response_and_Recovery_Phases/links/5e8b708b4585150839c62775/A-Review-of-Social-Media-Use-During-Disaster-Response-and-Recovery-Phases.pdf

8. Laurinavičius, Alfonsas (2001). „Saugios aplinkos kūrimo teorija ir patirtis", *Juriprudencija,* 21 (13), https://ojs.mruni.eu/ojs/jurisprudence/article/view/3730.

9. Lietuvos Respublikos krašto apsaugos ministerija, *Nacionalinės kibernetinio saugumo būklės ataskaitos santrauka 2024* (Vilnius: Krašto apsaugos ministerija, 2025), žiūrėta 2025 m. lapkričio 2 d., https://kam.lt/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Nacionalines-kibernetinio-saugumo-bukles-ataskaitos-santrauka-2024.pdf

10. Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, „Lietuvos Respublikos kibernetinio saugumo įstatymas", 2014 m. gruodžio 11 d., Nr. XII-1428, žiūrėta 2025 m. lapkričio 2 d., https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/f6958c2085dd11e495dc9901227533ee

11. Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerija, „Komunikacijos apie viešojo sektoriaus įstaigų teikiamas paslaugas ir gyventojų aptarnavimą gairės", žiūrėta 2025 m. rugsėjo 7 d., https://vrm.lrv.lt/uploads/vrm/documents/files/LT_versija/Vie%C5%A1asis%20adminis travimas/7_%20Komunikacijos%20gaires.pdf

12. Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerija, „Viešasis saugumas" (atnaujinta 2023 m. rugsėjo 20 d.), žiūrėta 2025 m. rugsėjo 21 d., https://vrm.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/viesasis-saugumas-1/

13. Ling, Carmen Leong Mei, Pan, L. Shan, Ractham, Peter and Kaewkitipong, Laddawan (2015). „ICT-Enabled Community Empowerment in CrisisResponse: Social Media in Thailand Flooding 2011" (2015): 174-212, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Shan-L-Pan/publication/281993441_ICT-Enabled_Community_Empowerment_in_Crisis_Response_Social_Media_in_Thailand_ Flooding_2011/links/5696362308ae28ba70018259/ICT-Enabled-Community-Empowerment-in-Crisis-Response-Social-Media-in-Thailand-Flooding-2011.pdf

14. McQuail, D. (2005). *Mass Communication Theory*. https://books.google.lt/books?hl=lt&lr=&id=4UNqdHsc90oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA21&dq=

D.+McQuail,+Mass+Communication+Theory&ots=WOhgzhp1_q&sig=rOgFJqOUN2E
WREYLHiLpoNRnN9M&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

15. Navickienė, Vida, Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė, Živilė, Tamulevičiūtė-Šekštelienė, Angelė , Žemienė, Aušra (2023). *Įtaigi viešoji komunikacija*, Vilnius.

16. OASIS, *Common Alerting Protocol Version 1.2 (Committee Specification)* (2010), žiūrėta 2025 m. spalio 17 d., https://docs.oasis-open.org/emergency/cap/v1.2/CAP-v1.2-os.pdf

17. Olson, K. Michele, Sutton, Sarah C. Vos Jeannette, Prestley, Robert, Renshaw, L. Scott and Butts T. Carter (2019). „Build Community Before the Storm: The National Weather Service's social media engagement", 359-373, žiūrėta 2025 m. spalio 31 d., https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/am-pdf/10.1111/1468-5973.12267

18. Sharad Goel, Ashton Anderson, Jake Hofman ir Duncan J. Watts „The Structural Virality of Online Diffusion" (2015), žiūrėta 2025 m. spalio 18 d., https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/research/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/twiral.pdf

19. Shu, Kai, Bhattacharjee, Amrita, Alatawi, Faisal, Nazer, H. Tahora, Ding, Kaize, Karami, Mansooreh and Liu, Huan (2020). „Combating Disinformation in Social Media Age" (2020), 2–4, https://wires.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/am-pdf/10.1002/widm.1385

20. Silver, Amber, Andrey, Jean (2019). „Public Attention to Extreme Weather as Reflected by Social Media Activity", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Manegement*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amber-Silver-2/publication/332842859_Public_attention_to_extreme_weather_as_reflected_by_social_media_activity/links/5cd1a28492851c4eab896e9b/Public-attention-to-extreme-weather-as-reflected-by-social-media-activity.pdf

21. Tumalavičius, Vladas (2017). *Viešojo saugumo užtikrinimo teisiniai aspektai Lietuvoje: dabarties tendencijos ir procesai. Mokslo studija*. Vilnius. https://kam.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/viesojo-saugumo-uztikrinimo-teisiniai-aspektai-2018.pdf.

22. Vosoughi, Soroush, Roy, Deb and Aral, Sinan (2018). „The Spread of True and False News Online", *Science*, 1146–1151. https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aap9559.

23. Wang, Yan, Hao, Haiyan and Platt, Lisa Sundahl (2021). „Examining Risk and Crisis Communications of Government Agencies and Stakeholders During Early-Stages of COVID-19 on Twitter", *Computers in human behavior* 114. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344241594_Examining_Risk_and_Crisis_Communications_of_Government_Agencies_and_Stakeholders_during_Early-Stages_of_COVID-19_on_Twitter

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS. GLANCE FROM ANOTHER SIDE

Gediminas BUCIUNAS

Vytautas Magnus University
Jonavos str. 66, LT-44138 Kaunas
E-mail: gediminas.buciunas@vdu.lt
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: gediminas.buciunas@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1826-0527

Abstract. *The article analyzes one of the social phenomena in the labor market, which is part of the economic subsystem: exploitation at work. The author of this scientific study chose the following research design to obtain data on labor exploitation from individuals who have directly encountered and fallen victim to one of the latent and difficult-to-prove form of trafficking in human beings in a criminal justice area – a forced labor exploitation. The author of this article prepared the list of questions and, with the consent of the respondents, conducted a survey with the mediation of the non-governmental organizations and Catholic organizations operating in Ukraine for the distribution questionnaire. The respondents were Ukrainian citizens, and they had been asked about various aspects of their exploitation of forced labor abroad, starting with how they began their search for work, what reasons prompted them to take this step, the circumstances of the signing (or non-signing) an employment contract, working and living conditions and the nature of the work, economic sectors related to the respondents labor activity, and ending the survey on the process of termination of the employment relations (whether formalized legally or not formalized in any way) including the negative consequences for the employee.*

The collected, collated, and analyzed data provided elements to build sketchers of a paradigm on identification the features of possible labor exploitation. It also may be a useful tool for distinguishing the breaches of the requirements set up in the labor law and criminal offenses that entail criminal liability for forced labor exploitation.

Keywords: *Trafficking in human beings; labor exploitation; forced labor exploitation; labor law; criminal liability.*

Introduction

Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity (Pope Francis)

Trafficking in human beings is a fast-growing crime area that affects millions of people around the world. Many countries protect the rights and freedom of human beings by different legal instruments. One of the instruments is a criminal law which protects only the highest values of society, criminalizing attacks on these values. According to Part 1 of article 1 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, "*the purpose of the criminal code is to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens, as well as the interests of society and the state, from criminal acts by means of criminal law.*" The same provision is set up in the Criminal Code of Ukraine, other countries around the World.

The Criminal Code or the Laws defines socially dangerous acts or omissions and counts them as criminal offenses and, at the same time, sets up the heaviest type of legal liability – the criminal. In many countries around the world trafficking in human beings is criminalized. Harsh punishment for such activity is set up by the criminal law/code in many countries. For example, Section III criminal offences against liberty, honor and dignity of a person under Article 147 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania. A similar stance of lawmakers is presented in

article 149 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. For example, Part 3 of the above-mentioned article states that "*any such actions provided for by Part 1 or 2 of this Article, committed against a minor by his/her parents, adoptive parents, guardians or custodians, or committed against a child or an organized group, or combined with violence dangerous to life or health of a victim or his/her relatives, or with the threat of such violence, or if they resulted in grave consequences shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of eight to fifteen years with or without forfeiture of property. Note. 1. Under this Article, exploitation of a human being shall mean all forms of the sexual exploitation, using in the porn industry, forced labor or forced servicing, servitude or usages similar to servitude, servile status, involvement into indentured servitude, body organs' removal, experimentation on a person without his/her consent, adoption with the purpose of gain, forced pregnancy or forced termination of pregnancy, forced marriage, forced involving in begging, involving in criminal activity, using in armed conflicts, etc.*"

According to the National Association of Securities Dealers Automatic Quotation System (hereinafter referred to as "Nasdaq") 2024 Global financial crime report, among the most prevalent crimes that fueled trillions of dollars in illicit flows and money laundering activity were a range of destructive crimes, including an estimated: $782.9 billion in drug trafficking activity, $346.7 billion in human trafficking, $11.5 billion in terrorist financing. As we can see, trafficking in human beings is one of the most lucrative illegal income sources for organized crime, even though trafficking in human beings is forbidden.

Trafficking in human beings occurs in a variety of ways and in many different sections of society Trafficking in human beings can take various forms and may involve sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, exploitation for the purpose of forced criminality, such as pickpocketing, shoplifting and drug trafficking, according to EUROPOL. The above-mentioned statistical data show that income from trafficking in humans is one of the major illegal incomes for organized crime groups (Buciunas, G., 2024, p. 276-279).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (hereinafter referred to as "UNODC") data, the latest global data show that trafficking in forced labor has become equally prevalent as sexual exploitation. UNODC data show that forced labor and sexual exploitation were each detected in just under 40 % of cases in 2020 (Table 1.). This ratio results from a recent decrease in reported cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation and a steady rise in the registered number of cases of trafficking for labor exploitation.

Table 1. Reported cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation and for labor exploitation
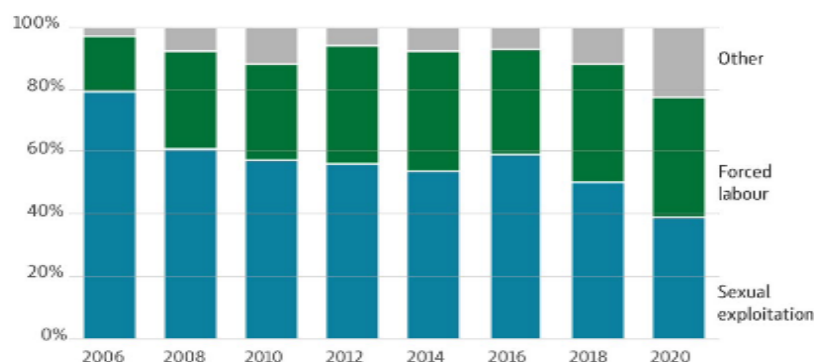
Data source: UNODC, 2022.

The following question may be raised in any given situation. How many criminal cases involving trafficking in human beings were registered? For example, in the Republic of Lithuania. According to the official data placed at the site of the Information Technology and Communications Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania were registered 45181 criminal acts in 2023, in 2024 – 47216 criminal acts were registered. Although only 7 trafficking in human beings' cases were registered in 2023, and only 3 cases in 2024. It raised the following question. Does statistical data on trafficking in human beings show the real situation? It leads to the discussion on the reliability of statistical data. It is a separate topic of academic research, and it is not going to be analyzed in depth in this academic paper.

The author chooses the paradigm of the research on social phenomena – trafficking in human beings from the perspectives of the people who encountered one of the types of trafficking in human beings – forced labor exploitation. That approach may be called the term "glance from another side". At the same time, this paper is novelty. The author has reviewed the literature on trafficking in human beings and didn't find any author who conducted the research in such a way. The main research method to get information about forced labor exploitation were used in the given academic paper – a survey, namely, the citizens of Ukraine who encountered such social phenomena.

Research part

Someone may be raising a question as to whether forced labor and exploitation are the same or not? If the answer follows – it is not, the next question is coming. What is the difference between the labor exploitation and forced labor exploitation. Is each labor exploitation be counted as forced labor exploitation? Article 3 of Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime adopted 15 November 2000 states that (a) *"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs; (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used."* The topic on similarities and differences between the two concepts may be separate topics for the research.

The author is going to use the labor exploitation concept due to the following fact. The information about subtle at the same time, sensitive details on factors pushing to search for a job, pre-employment and employment procedures, start and end of labor relations were gathered from people who directly passed and experienced negative emotions, many difficulties in their work and who went through work problems with remnants of painful pattern on their souls. Working difficulties were specified the term "labor exploitation." Most of the respondents didn't apply to law enforcement agencies either in foreign countries or their native country for help, due to different reasons starting from distrust of police and other state institutions ending to a fear of retaliation from employer's side. The respondents of this survey applied to the non-governmental organizations, Roman Catholic charitable organization

"Caritas" for a piece of advice on how to act in case of labor exploitation. Some of the respondents encountered labor exploitation before full-scale Russian aggression, some – after full-scale aggression from 24 February 2022.

Few people who are not actually practitioners of a mature science realize how much mop-up work of this sort of a paradigm leaves to be done or quite how fascinating such work can prove in the execution. And these points need to be understood (Kuhn, Th., 1970, p. 24).

The author considered the fact that some breaches of labor law provisions don't fall under regulation of criminal law as the last resort for the protection of legal interests. It brings the challenge for the practitioners to choose applicable laws: labor or criminal. How do you distinguish exploitation for forced labor exploitation and infringement of labor law provisions? Which criteria should a police investigator or a prosecutor have at his/her disposition to make the final decision: to open a criminal case or refuse to do it? Gathered, collated, analyzed data help to identify some important features of the first signs of labor exploitation. It was one of the tasks of this academic paper. It also led to the question. How does the author of the paper plan to perform the task?

The author of this paper has prepared a list of questions covering different aspects of labor exploitation including forced, starting with common traits of respondents' identity, such as age, gender, education, push factors to search for a new job abroad, ways for searching for new jobs, forms of communication with potential employers, a contract signing procedure, working conditions and finally the termination of labor relations between involved parties in. The target audience of this survey were 55 Ukrainian citizens who directly encountered labor exploitation. It is their (the respondents) opinion about experience in the labor market inside Ukraine and abroad. The author maintains the respondents' anonymity during the survey. This means that there is no information which allows you, directly or indirectly, to identify a person. The survey is still ongoing slowly due to strict requirements on personal data set up in law on data protection. The questionnaire was created by the author of this research paper in compliance with ethical and data protection standards prescribed in the laws. Some of the respondents experienced labor exploitation inside the country (Ukraine), some outside the territory of Ukraine – abroad. All respondents received all information regarding the objective of the survey, safeguards of their anonymity and only after that if a respondent agree to take part, the link to the Google form to fill up the questionnaire was shared with them. Most respondents (more than 80 % of respondents) are females (Table 2.). It is in line with the findings made as the result of a collaborative effort between the International Labor Organization (hereinafter referred to as "ILO") and the Walk Free Foundation in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (hereinafter referred to as "IOM"). According to above-mentioned findings, women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery, accounting for 28.7 million, or 71 % of the overall total in 2016.

So, it leads to sum up that more women than men are affected by different types of trafficking in human beings, including forced labor exploitation.

Table 2. Gender of respondents

Your gender/Ваша стать
55 responses

- жіноча/ female
- інша/ other
- чоловіча/ male

81.8%
10.9%
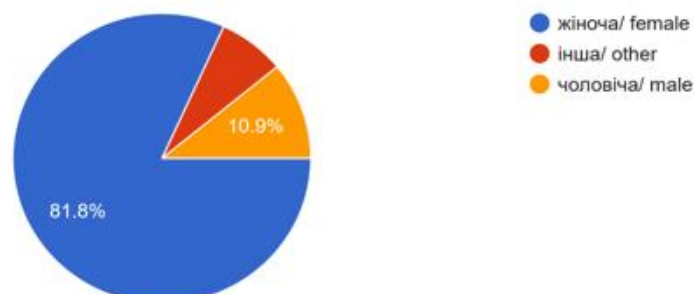
The second question of the survey was related to the age of respondents. As survey results shown in table 3, the biggest share of the population (citizens of Ukraine) who encountered labor exploitation are 31-50 years old.

Table 3. Age of respondents

Скільки вам років/ How old are you?
55 responses

- 14-20 років/ 14-20-year-old
- 21-34 років/ 21-30-year-old
- 31-40 років/ 31-40-year-old
- 41-50 років/ 41-50-year- old
- Більше 51 років/ Over 51

27.3%
21.8%
29.1%
21.8%
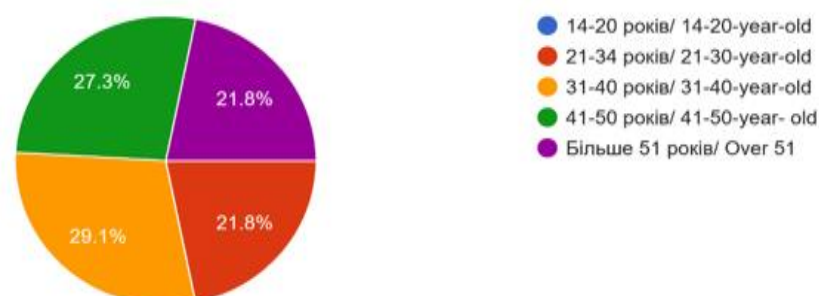
The third question of the survey was about the achieved identity trait of the respondents – education. The most prevailing among respondents' levels of education, according to the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (hereinafter referred to as "ISCED") were levels 3, 4, 5 and 6: secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary education, first stage of tertiary education and bachelor's.

Table 4. Level of education of respondents

Яка у вас освіта?/ What is your education?
55 responses

- Незакінчена середня/ Secondary uncompleted
- Середня/ Secondary
- Середня спеціальна/ Technical and vocational
- Ступінь бакалавра/ Bachelor
- Ступінь магістра / Master or integrated studies
- Кандидат наук або доктор/ PhD
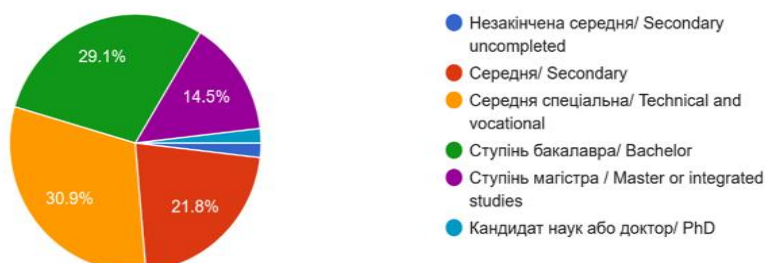
The following question of the survey was related to a respondent's domicile\living area.

Table 5. Domicile of respondents

Де Ви мешкали до моменту, коли вперше зіткнулися з випадком використання вашої праці та трудової експлуатації?/ Where did you live when you first encountered labour exploitation?
55 responses

- у столиці/ in the capital city
- у обласному центрі/ in a regional central city
- у районному центрі/ in a district central town
- в іншому місті або селищі міського типу/ other town or an urban type settlement
- у сільській місцевості/ in the rural area
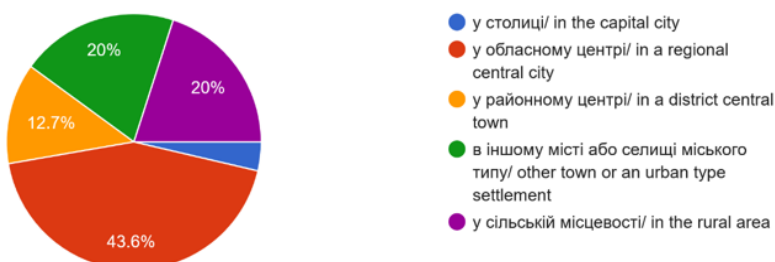
63.6 % of all respondents' domiciles were in a: rural area (20%) or urban type settlement (42.6 %). The current population of Ukraine is 39,203,106 as of 18 September 2025, and 76.77% of the population is urban based on Worldometer's elaboration of the latest United Nations data.The fifth question was the following. What was your marital status when you first encountered labor exploitation? The answers were as follows:

➢ Married without a child or children - 9.1 %
➢ Married and having a child or children – 34.5 %
➢ Unmarried without a child or children – 25.5%
➢ Unmarried and having a child or children - 12.7 %
➢ Divorced without obligation to take care of a child or children – 5.5 %
➢ Divorced and having a child or children – 12.7 %
➢ She/he is the custodian of a disabled child or other family members, relatives – 5.5 %.

So, it led to the conclusion that 60% of respondents who encountered labor exploitation having a child or children. The question about the occupation of respondents before she/he encountered labor exploitation and answers are following and presented in table 6 below.

Table 6. Occupation of respondents

Чим ви займалися чи ким працювали перед тим, як потрапили в ситуацію торгівлі людьми?/
What were you doing or working before you faced the situation related to trafficking in human beings?
55 responses

- Навчалися/ Studied
- Сфера послуг (ресторан, готель)/ S…
- Бюджетна організація (школа, дитса…
- Торгівля (магазин, ринок, інтернет-м…
- Виробницво (завод)/ Manufacturing (…
- Гірничо-видобувна промисловість (н…
- Будівництво/ Construction
- Сільське господарство/ Agriculture

1/2

Another question of the survey is about satisfaction with income. Did you satisfy the level of your income before you encountered labor exploitation? 47.3% of respondents replied that they weren't satisfied with the level of income; 30.9% - income wasn't sufficient for them; 10.9% - income was more likely sufficient for them; 9.1% don't have any income. Only one respondent (1.8 %) replied that for him/her the income was fully sufficient.

The ninth question aims to identify negative conditions or circumstances in an area that motivate people to leave and migrate to another location in searching for jobs inside the country and abroad. Human trafficking is the result of several push factors. The most important thing in this regard is the fact that the people who fall to be victim are often characterized by a difficult socio-economic situation and a lack of prospects for the future. The following question of the survey sounds. What reasons made you look for a new or additional job? Replied 55 respondents. Factors pushing human beings into searching for jobs inside the country and abroad are to be linked to different by essence of the push factors and are grouped as follows into two groups: socio-economic and political.

Socio-economic factors:
➢ High unemployment rate in his/her living area,
➢ Change of domicile,
➢ Low income or insufficient amount of income to survive.
➢ Not enough income for children's wellbeing, including education,
➢ No job in rural areas (high unemployment rate),
➢ Insolvency or necessity to return loan, credit,
➢ Search for seasonal jobs to improve the wellbeing of the family,
➢ Attractive working conditions,
➢ Health issues of family members, relatives,
➢ Loss of husband,
➢ Bad organizational culture at the business entity,
➢ Expectation to have stability in the upcoming future,
➢ Due to war, we lost jobs.

Political factors:
➢ Occupation of the area where respondents used to live and work by Russian military forces.
➢ Ongoing military actions in his/her domicile.

Socio-economic and political factors create an atmosphere of fear, instability and are the driving force pushing individuals to migrate to another part of the country or abroad in searching for a new job.

The tenth question of the survey was about the duration of jobs outside Ukraine. 22 respondents used to work abroad and their answers on the duration of a job were following: 40.9 % seasonal job, 13.6 % performed assigned tasks (mainly at the reconstruction industry).

So, it led to the conclusion that at least 54.5 % of respondents had a short-term job with a clearly defined condition for the end of labour relations. Short-term employment mainly prevails in the reconstruction industry or in the agriculture sector just to meet seasonal demand from the workforce. Only 13.6 % of respondents had permanent employment.

The eleventh question of the survey was about the source of information about the possibility of working abroad. The respondents pointed out three main sources: the Internet, acquaintances and newspapers. Only one respondent mentioned a state institution. It leads us to conclude that the main source of information about jobs abroad for citizens of Ukraine are mass media outlets.

The next question of the survey was the following. In what form did you receive a job offer and information about working conditions abroad? 25 respondents replied, and their answers were as follows: only two respondents received a permanent job offer, 6 respondents received a job offer with a probation period and 14 respondents were informed that a job is going to be offered to them if they agree to work unofficial. It means without signing any contract. Two respondents mentioned that their personal documents (passports) were deprived by an owner/employer.

The following question of the survey was related to the amount of salary dedicated to respondents who had worked abroad and if a contract in written form had been presented for them (as job seekers), and if the salary was specified in a draft of a contract or proposal, and at what level was it mentioned? The answers were as follows regarding the amount of salary:
- ➢ Minimum wage for the given country was mentioned – 16.7 %
- ➢ Average salary for the given country – 8.3 %
- ➢ Salary higher than average in the country – 16.7 %
- ➢ I don't know minimum wage and average salary in the country of a potential employee - 33.3 %
- ➢ I trusted the employer and agreed with the proposed salary by him/her - 29.2 %.

As we can see from the answers, one third of all respondents who had worked abroad did not have any information about the legally mandated minimum wage in the country of his/her employer, average salary in the industry for some job positions in the country of the employer.

The following questions of the survey are related to the signing procedure of a contract, working and living conditions either in Ukraine or abroad. The answers you may see in tables 7-17 (except answer submitted and presented in table 11) below.

Table 7. On preliminary labor contract

Чи надіслали Вам попередній контракт на ознайомлення перед працевлаштуванням?/ Have you been sent a preliminary contract for review before employment?
28 responses

Так/ Yes
Ні/ No
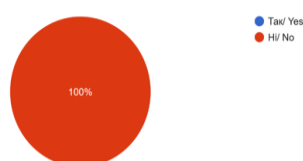
Table 8. Language of labor contract

Чи був контракт складений мовою, яка була вам повністю зрозумілою? / Was the contract concluded in a language that you could understand fluently?
55 responses

Так / Yes
Ні / No
Контракта не було / There was no contract

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

MRU
Mykolas Romeris
University
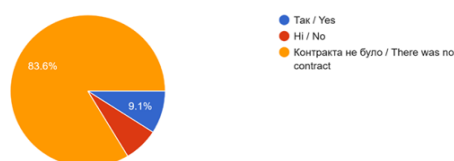
Table 9. Preparation of employment documents and relocation

Хто оплачував оформлення документів та переїзд до місця роботи?/ Who paid for the paperwork and relocation to the workplace?
55 responses
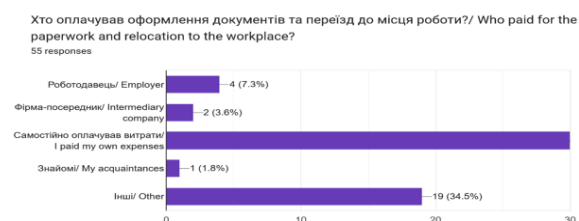
Table 10. Payment for accommodation, food, work clothes

Хто оплачував помешкання, добирання на роботу, харчування, робочий одяг?/ Who paid for your accommodation, commuting, food, and work clothes?
55 responses
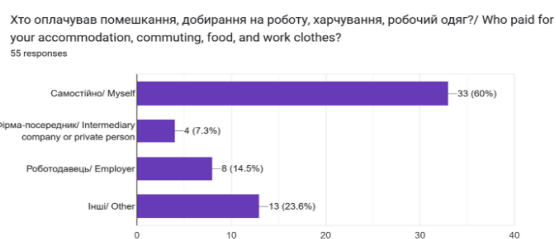
Table 11. Conditions of accommodation (replied respondents who used to work abroad)

Якщо помешкання оплачував роботодавець, скільки людей мешкало разом з вами у одному приміщенні?/ If the accommodation was paid for b...w many people lived with you in the same room?
19 responses
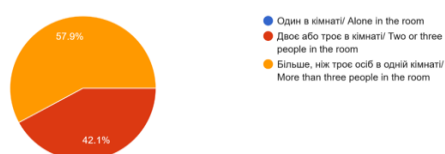
Table 12. The work safety rules

Чи ознайомив Вас роботодавець з правилами/ інструкціями безпеки під час роботи?/ Did the employer familiarize you with the work safety rules/instructions?
55 responses
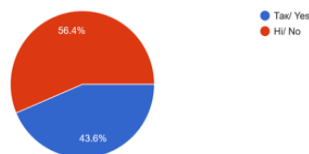
Table 13. Protective equipment

Чи видавав Вам роботодавець захисне обладнання, одяг та взуття?/ Did your employer provide you with protective equipment, clothing and footwear?
55 responses
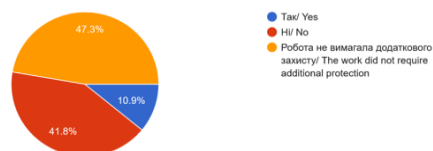
Table 14. Living place

Чи проживали Ви на місці роботи?/ Did you live at your place of work?
55 responses
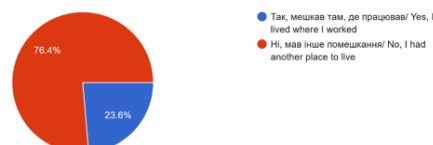
Table 15. Workday duration

Скільки тривав Ваш робочий день?/ How long did your working day last?
55 responses

Table 16. Paid leaves

Чи були у Вас оплачувані відпустки?/ Did you have paid leaves?
55 responses
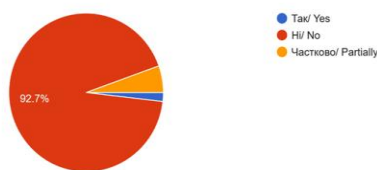
Table 17. Termination of labor relations

Як був розірваний контракт або неофіційні робочі відносини?/ How was the contract or informal working relationship terminated?
55 responses
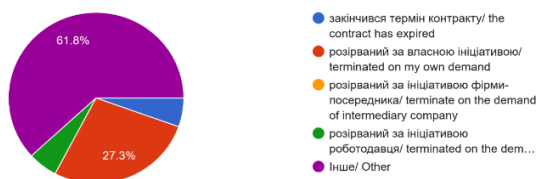
The following question in the survey pertained to actions taken in response to the employer's dishonest behavior. What suspicions and doubts did you have during the employment process about your employer? Most of the respondents answering the question placed below draw attention to the following and prevailing facts in their answers:

➤ Employers know about employees' financial distress,
➤ Employers didn't specify amount of salary and period of payment.

The next question of the survey aims to identify is whether any violent behavior that took place during employment from employers' side. The question sounds. Did the employer commit violent acts during work? The questions were applied to all respondents who used to work abroad and in Ukraine. Respondents (55) provided information about the types of violence used by employers and means in use to suppress resilience of the workers. The answers were as follows on the type of violence:

➤ One third of respondents experienced psychological violence,
➤ One-eighth – physical violence.

The most prevailing instruments to control employees and in use by employers are the following:

➤ Imposed financial fines,
➤ Restriction on interaction with family members and relatives,
➤ Deprivation of personal identification documents (mainly passports).

Another question of survey was dedicated to the employer's behavior and actions after the contract (written and in unwritten form) were terminated without indicating the initiator for the termination of labor relations. The answers are as follows from 55 respondents:

➤ Final payment wasn't paid on time for almost one-third of employees (respondents),
➤ Final payment wasn't paid at all for more than one-third of employees (respondents).

The survey's results were analyzed, collated and valuable data extracted on features of labor exploitation. The objective of the survey was to investigate latent social phenomena such as labor exploitation from the point of view of those who suffer from labor exploitation.

The Preamble of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization states that "*whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice; And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperiled; and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required; as, for example, by the regulation of the hours of work, including the establishment of a maximum working day and week, the regulation of the labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage, the protection of the worker against sickness, disease and injury arising out of his employment, the protection of children, young persons and women, provision for old age and injury, protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own, recognition of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, recognition of the principle of freedom of association, the organization of vocational and technical education and other measures*

Results of the survey allowed us to have pictures of all the labor exploitation process from the human being's perspective who directly experienced it. It allows the author of this academic paper to design the sketches of the paradigm on essential features indicating/alarming on high level of probability of exploitation and exploitation in the labor market. It is in line with the idea set up in ILO Declaration of Philadelphia that states *"labour is not a commodity"* but a platform for the pursuit of *"material well-being and spiritual development"* and the objective is follow *"the employment of workers in the occupations in which they can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution*

MRU
Mykolas Romeris University

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

to the common wellbeing". At the same time, it can be used as an algorithm in investigation into forced labor exploitation and facilitate the decision-making process on the application of the relevant laws. Unsolved conflict at work, wrong decisions on application of laws may lead to injustice, losing trust to the rule of law. In the given case which provisions of law should be applicable in labor law or a criminal law. Due to subtitle nature of the free market, liberalization of labor relations, some breaches of working conditions of employees may fall into infringement of labor laws or even into the area of criminal liability for the damage caused to the most protected values (Buciunas, G., Brych, L., 2024, p. 171-180).

Article 2 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania on principles of legal regulation of labor relations states that *"Labor relations shall be regulated in accordance with the principles of legal certainty, protection of legitimate expectations and comprehensive protection of labor rights, creation of safe and healthy working conditions, stability of labor relations, freedom to choose work, fair remuneration for work, equality of subjects of labor law regardless of their gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, health status, intention to have a child (children), adopt a child (children), take a child (children) into care, or take a child (children) into foster care (hereinafter referred to as a child), marital and family status, membership of political parties, trade unions and associations, circumstances unrelated to the professional qualities of employees, freedom of association, free collective bargaining and the right to take collective action."* Article 1 of the criminal procedure code of the Republic of Lithuania states that *"the purpose of criminal proceedings is to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens, as well as the interests of society and the state, by swiftly thoroughly investigate criminal offenses, and properly apply the law so that the person who committed the criminal offense is punished fairly and no innocent person is convicted."*

So, analysis of the answers allows to the author of this academic paper to present the sketch of a paradigm for identifying the features of possible labor exploitation based on the results of the survey presented above. A paradigm comprises the following elements:

1. Pushers to start searching for a new job: socio-economic and political factors which are closely interconnected. Firstly, political factors such as war, occupation of territory by aggressive military force, unrest, political turmoil etc. It creates favorable conditions for the domino effect which occurs when one event triggers a chain of related events. For example, war leads to massive migration to other parts of the country or outside for search for safe heaven, a job. Complexity of socio-economic and political factors facilitated and encouraged human beings to migrate. In the migration literature, several factors have been identified as to why migrants decide to leave their homelands and move to other countries (Efendic, A. 2016; Qin et al., 2018).

2. Social vulnerability of jobseekers. Race, nationality, citizenship, knowledge of foreign languages, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, health status, social status, skills and education, marital status, fact of having dependents including with disability or not.

3. Sources of information on employment: the Internet, state institutions, private companies/recruitment agencies, family members, relatives, acquaintances, diaspora.

4. Ways of communication with potential employers: directly, through mediators.

5. Collection of information about a potential employer, his/her reputation, country, region of employer's location had place.

6. Knowledge of the labor law provisions of the country of potential employment.

7. Information about the social protection system existing in the country before employment and during employment. For example, benefits in case of sickness, average salary in the country, minimum hourly salary in the country, etc.

8. Pre-employment screening. For example, introduction with draft of a contract, the language of a labor contract, the mandatory elements of a labor contract set up by law.

9. Signing procedure for the official contract or setting up informal labor relations.

10. Working conditions.

11. Safety rules and protection equipment at the workplace.

12. Organizational culture inside the business entity.

13. Living conditions and employer's role in creating (un)favorable living conditions for employees.

14. Employers/owners, and other managers' behavior toward employees. For example, the use of psychological violence, a conflict resolution mechanism set up in the business entity.

15. Control instruments used towards employees by the employer/owner of a business entity. For example, deprivation of personal documents, limitations or/and restrictions to interact with family members, relatives, friends

16. Termination stage of labor relations and presence of negative consequences for employees.

It is a non-exhaustive list of elements of the sketchers of a paradigm designed to identify the fact of labor exploitation or just the breaches of labor law requirements.

Conclusions

Incomes from trafficking in humans is one of the major illegal incomes for organized crime groups.

Factors pushing human beings into searching for jobs inside the country and abroad are to be linked to different by essence of the push factors and may be grouped into two groups: socio-economic and political.

The sketchers of a paradigm on identification of the features of possible labor exploitation based on the results of a survey comprised of the following elements: 1. pushers to start searching for a new job: socio-economic and political factors; 2. Social vulnerability of jobseekers; 3. Sources of information on employment; 4. Ways of communication with potential employers; 5. Collection of information about a potential employer, his/her reputation; 6. Knowledge of the labor law provisions of the country of potential employment; 7. Information about the social protection system existing in the country; 8. Pre-employment screening; 9. Signing procedure for the official contract or setting up informal labor relations; 10. Working conditions; 11. Safety rules and protection equipment at the workplace; 12. Organizational culture inside the business entity; 13. Living conditions and employer's role in creating (un) favorable living conditions for employees; 14. Employers/owners, and other managers' behavior toward employees; 15. Control instruments used towards employees by the employer/owner of a business entity; 16. Termination stage of labor relations and presence of negative consequences for employees.

References

1. Buciunas, G. (2024). *Trafficking in human beings. Statistics. Does it reflect the real situation?* Збірник тез Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції *"Теорія та практика протидії злочинності в умовах правового режиму воєнного стану"*. 8

Листопада 2024 року. Львів: ЛьвДУВС, 276-279.
https://dspace.lvduvs.edu.ua/bitstream/1234567890/8621/1/08_11_2024.pdf

2. Buciunas, G. and Brych, L. (2024). *Problems of investigating human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation: experience of Ukraine and Lithuania.* Збірник тез міжнародної науково-практичної конференції *"Державна політика у сфері протидії торгівлі людьми і незаконній міграції: сучасні виклики для України та світу",* 7 Червня 2024 року / упорядники О. М. Марін, І. А. Вишневська. Львів: ЛьвДУВС, 171–180.

3. Constitution of the International Labour Organization. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000%3A62%3A1566624867971040%3A%3ANO%3A62%3AP62_LIST_ENTRIE_ID%3A2453907%3ANO

4. Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania. https://www.infolex.lt/ta/66150#

5. Criminal Code of Ukraine. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14?lang=en#Text

6. Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Lithuania. https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.EC588C321777/asr

7. Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children. *Types of human trafficking.* https://www.dutchrapporteur.nl/trafficking-in-human-beings/types-of-human-trafficking

8. Efendic, A. (2016). *Emigration intentions in a post-conflict environment: Evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Post-Communist Economies, 28 (3), 335–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14631377.2016.1166800

9. European Parliamentary Research Service. *Global percentages of victims by form of exploitation.* https://epthinktank.eu/2024/11/28/human-trafficking-the-gender-dimensions/global-percentages-of-victims-by-form-of-exploitation/

10. EUROPOL. *Trafficking in human beings.* https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/trafficking-in-human-beings

11. International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation. *Global estimates of modern slavery.* https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf

12. ILO Declaration of Philadelphia. https://webapps.ilo.org/static/english/inwork/cb-policy-guide/declarationofPhiladelphia1944.pdf

13. Informacijos ir ryšių departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos. *Raktų šeima: Duomenų rinkinys apie nusikalstamas veikas Lietuvoje* https://www.ird.lt/lt/indicators/opendata/item.151213?export=csv

14. Informacijos ir ryšių departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos. *Duomenys apie nusikalstamas veikas, padarytas Lietuvos Respublikoje* (Forma_EK-SAV). https://www.ird.lt/lt/reports/view_item_datasource?id=11395&datasource=102819

15. Kuhn, S. Thomas (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Second edition. Enlarged, Vol. 2, No. 2., 1-210. https://www.lri.fr/~mbl/Stanford/CS477/papers/Kuhn-SSR-2ndEd.pdf

16. Lietuvos Respublikos Darbo Kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo įstatymas. https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/f6d686707e7011e6b969d7ae07280e89/asr

17. Nasdaq, Verafin (2024). *Global financial crime report. Insights at the Intersection of Financial Crime Data & Real Survivor Stories.* https://elements.visualcapitalist.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/1711973384569.pdf

18. Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons

19. Qin, G., Johnson, C., Zhang, Y., Zhan, H., Yin, J., Miller G., Turingan, G. R., Guisbert, E., & Lin, Q. (2018). *Temperature-induced physiological stress and reproductive characteristics of the migratory seahorse Hippocampus erectus during a thermal stress simulation*. Biology Open, 7(6), 1–7. Doi: 10.1242/bio.032888

20. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*. https://web.archive.org/web/20130124032233/http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf

21. Worldometer. *Ukraine Population*. https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/ukraine-population/

22. 4 stirring quotes on human trafficking. https://theexodusroad.com/eleven-inspiring-quotes-on-human-trafficking-slavery-and-justice/

MRU
Mykolas Romeris University

APPLICATION OF MILITARY METHODS IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS TO ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Dileta JATAUTAITĖ
Vilnius University Business School
Saulėtekio av. 22, LT-10225, Vilnius, Lithuania
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio st. , LT-44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: diletajatautaite@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4753-618X

Egle RADVILE
Vilnius University Business School
Saulėtekio av. 22, LT-10225, Vilnius, Lithuania
E-mail: egle.radvile@vm.vu.lt
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-7057-3215

Rolandas TERMINAS
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
Saulėtekio av. 11, LT-10223, Vilnius, Lithuania
Baltijos šalių verslo atsparumo vadovų asociacija,
Karaimų g. 67, LT-21104 Trakai, Lithuania
E-mail info@prevencijoskodas.com
ORCID: 0009-0007-0328-073X

Abstract. *The study explores how military-inspired leadership principles and decision-making frameworks can be effectively integrated with business continuity and management practices to enhance organizational resilience. The aim is to investigate how combining military leadership models with BCM, Agile methodologies, and crisis communication strengthens an organization's adaptive capacity and recovery capability. Research objectives are: (1) to integrate BCM approaches — including PDCA, BIA, and recovery objectives (RTO, RPO, MTPD, MBCO) — with military decision-making models such as Mission Command and the OODA loop; (2) to examine Agile principles and STARCC as complementary frameworks; and (3) to synthesize recent literature (2020–2025) and practitioner insights (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025) to develop a holistic resilience model. Findings indicate that iterative planning, decentralized decision-making, rapid feedback loops, and structured communication significantly enhance organizational resilience. The study proposes an integrated framework combining military leadership, BCM tools, Agile methods, and crisis communication to sustain adaptability, performance, and competitive advantage.*

Keywords: *Organizational resilience, Business continuity management (BCM), Military leadership principles, Mission Command & OODA loop, Agile management, STARCC crisis communication, Integrated resilience model*

Introduction

In today's volatile environment—marked by pandemics, cyberattacks, and geopolitical conflicts such as the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian war—organizations must cultivate robust resilience to survive and thrive. Organizational resilience is an organization's capacity to absorb shocks, recover, and emerge stronger and more adaptable (Carmeli & Markman, 2011; Horne & Orr, 1998). Unlike traditional risk management, which focuses on prevention, resilience emphasizes proactive adaptation when adverse events occur (CDC, 2002).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the limitations of siloed continuity plans and showed that resilience depends on human resources, adaptive processes, and rapid decision-

making (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). Modern organizations integrate risk management, business continuity, crisis response, and leadership into cohesive resilience strategies (Horne & Orr, 1998; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Resilience is a multidimensional capability, encompassing structural, cultural, and relational aspects (Ruiz Martín, López Paredes, & Wainer, 2018; Duchek, 2020). For SMEs, proactive resource management and organizational learning enhance adaptability under environmental uncertainty (Nguyen et al., 2021). Economic disruptions, such as tariff changes, further demonstrate the need for resilient strategies, as supply chain interruptions affect productivity, capital allocation, and competitive advantage (Benguria, Saffie, & Waugh, 2022; Chae, 2019; Eugster, Jaumotte, MacDonald, & Piazza, 2022).

In "grey zone" business environments characterized by uncertainty and intermittent conflict, success depends not solely on resources but on adaptability (Boyd, 1987; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). Hierarchical models with centralized decision-making are often insufficient. Organizations increasingly adopt military-inspired principles emphasizing agility, decentralization, and mission-oriented command. For instance, NATO's Mission Command framework empowers personnel to make decisions aligned with strategic intent (Land Warfare Development Centre, 2017). These principles align with Agile management, which emphasizes adaptive, team-based responses and iterative learning cycles (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016).

Research Problem is exploration of the application of military-inspired methods and frameworks in business environments to strengthen organizational resilience. Specifically, object of the research is the integration of military command models—such as Mission Command and Boyd's OODA loop (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act)—with business continuity management (BCM) processes and Agile methodologies. In addition, the study considers the role of structured crisis communication through the STARCC model (Sympathy, Taking responsibility, Action, Reassurance, Commitment, and Contact) as a means of preserving stakeholder trust and legitimacy during crises (Reynolds, Galdo, & Sokler, 2002).

The aim of this research is to investigate how the integration of military leadership principles with established BCM and Agile frameworks can enhance organizational resilience in complex and uncertain environments.

Research Objectives are:

• To examine and integrate established business continuity management (BCM) approaches — including the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), and recovery metrics such as Recovery Time Objective (RTO), Recovery Point Objective (RPO), Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD), and Maximum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO) — with military-inspired decision-making frameworks such as Mission Command and the Observe–Orient–Decide–Act (OODA) loop.

• To assess the applicability of Agile management principles and the Situation, Task, Action, Result, Communication, Coordination (STARCC) crisis communication model as complementary frameworks to business continuity and military-inspired methods.

• To synthesize recent academic research and practitioner approbation (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025) to develop a holistic framework for organizational resilience that integrates military leadership principles, business continuity planning, agile adaptation, and structured communication.

• To validate the proposed integrated resilience framework through illustrative practitioner case examples involving supply chain disruptions and crisis communication scenarios.

Hypotheses

H₁: The integration of military-inspired leadership, Business Continuity Management, Agile practices, and structured crisis communication enhances organizational resilience, preparedness, and crisis performance (Boyd, 1987; ISO, 2019; Rigby et al., 2016; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Jatautaitė et al., 2025).

H₂: Practitioner insights confirm the practical effectiveness and applicability of the integrated organizational resilience framework in real crisis contexts (Nguyen et al., 2021; Jatautaitė et al., 2025).

Relevance of the Study

This study addresses a critical gap in resilience research by linking military leadership philosophies with established business continuity and Agile practices, thereby proposing a holistic model for crisis preparedness. Given the increasing frequency of disruptions caused by geopolitical conflicts, economic volatility, technological change, and regulatory shifts, such integration is highly relevant. Practitioner approbation further ensures that the proposed framework is not only theoretically robust but also applicable and tested in real-world organizational contexts and practice (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative integrative literature review methodology to explore the integration of business continuity management (BCM) and military-inspired leadership principles as a holistic approach to enhancing organizational resilience. This methodology is well suited to the subject because it allows for the synthesis of diverse academic frameworks, practitioner insights, and conceptual models, thereby enabling the creation of a nuanced and comprehensive resilience framework.

The review focuses on recent literature (2020–2025) to ensure that findings reflect contemporary challenges in organizational resilience, including evolving risk landscapes, technological advancements, and the increasing complexity of global supply chains. Key theoretical foundations are drawn from Jatautaitė, Radvilė, and Terminas (2025), whose work integrates BCM, enterprise risk management (ERM), incident response, and crisis communication. This foundation is complemented by peer-reviewed studies and industry practice documents addressing BCM, ERM, organizational resilience, and military-inspired decision-making frameworks such as Mission Command and Colonel John Boyd's OODA loop.

The methodology employs conceptual synthesis rather than primary empirical data collection. This involves:

Thematic literature synthesis — organizing knowledge into key resilience dimensions: BCM, adaptive leadership, and crisis communication.

Critical framework comparison — analyzing models such as the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), Recovery Time Objective (RTO), Recovery Point Objective (RPO), Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD), Minimum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO), Mission Command, Agile methodologies, and the STARCC communication model.

Integration of case-based exemplars — applying theoretical insights to realistic scenarios (e.g., supply chain disruptions, crisis communication in the energy sector) to illustrate practical relevance.

The analytical process is structured to answer the following: How can the synergy of disciplined planning, adaptive decision-making, and structured communication strengthen organizational resilience? This is addressed by organizing the discussion around three interconnected dimensions:

Business continuity management as the foundational resilience layer.

Military-inspired leadership and agile decision-making as adaptive capacity drivers.

Structured crisis communication (STARCC) as a mechanism to sustain stakeholder trust during disruptions.

From Doctrine to Action: Adaptive Leadership in Uncertain Environments

While BCM provides a structured and proactive foundation for resilience, organizations facing dynamic and unpredictable crises must go beyond predefined plans. Effective crisis response requires adaptive leadership capable of making timely decisions under uncertainty, leveraging incomplete information, and maintaining operational momentum despite disruption. This is where military-inspired leadership principles become invaluable.

Military doctrines such as Mission Command emphasize decentralized decision-making, empowering leaders at all levels to act in alignment with strategic intent rather than relying solely on rigid instructions (U.S. Army Doctrine, 2020). Similarly, Colonel John Boyd's OODA loop (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act) offers a dynamic decision-making framework that allows organizations to rapidly cycle through situational assessment and action. In volatile environments, the ability to "loop" faster than adversaries or competing forces becomes a critical advantage (Boyd, 1987).

Integrating these principles with BCM offers several benefits:

• Enhanced situational awareness is when Decision-makers continuously observe and orient to changing conditions, updating continuity strategies in real time.

• Empowered operational autonomy is when Leaders at different organizational levels make decisions consistent with strategic goals, reducing bottlenecks and increasing responsiveness.

• Resilience through adaptability is when The OODA loop ensures that organizations iterate and adapt their actions to evolving threats, strengthening both response and recovery capacity.

Agile management complements this approach by embedding iterative planning, cross-functional collaboration, and flexibility into crisis response. Agile practices — such as sprint planning, daily stand-ups, and retrospective reviews — align well with the PDCA cycle of BCM, creating a continuous improvement loop that enhances readiness and responsiveness.

Building Adaptive Resilience: Business Continuity as the Strategic Core

A robust organizational resilience program is fundamentally anchored in business continuity management (BCM) practices, and it ensures preparedness and adaptability in the face of uncertainty. According to ISO 22301, BCM constitutes a holistic management process that identifies potential threats and their impacts on business operations, and it provides a framework for building resilience and effective response (ISO, 2019). Put differently, BCM ensures that an organization can maintain essential operations during and after disruptive

incidents, and it transforms continuity from a static emergency plan into a continuous, organization-wide process embedded in corporate culture and strategy (Cerullo & Cerullo, 2004; Herbane, 2010). Importantly, BCM integrates planning with culture, and it functions proactively rather than reactively, thereby shifting continuity planning "from a costly insurance policy to a driving mechanism necessary for daily navigation through uncertainty" (Bird, 2018, p. 12).

Central to effective BCM is the principle of continuous improvement, and the ISO 22301 standard positions the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle as the backbone of a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) (ISO, 2019). The PDCA framework transforms BCM from a fixed set of instructions into a living system, and it ensures that continuity plans are iteratively tested, reviewed, and updated to remain relevant amid evolving risks and operational conditions (Herbane, 2010; Smith, 2020; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). Specifically, the Plan phase involves establishing continuity policies and objectives with top management commitment, conducting a Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and risk assessment to identify critical activities and potential threats, and determining recovery strategies such as Recovery Time Objective (RTO), Recovery Point Objective (RPO), and Minimum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO). Planning shapes preparedness, and it builds a framework for adaptive response, as Dwight D. Eisenhower famously observed: "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything" (Boyd, 1987).

The Do phase implements these strategies through detailed Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), crisis management protocols, IT disaster recovery procedures, and resource allocation, and it establishes clearly defined responsibilities for teams. The Check phase assesses plan effectiveness through training, tabletop exercises, simulations, audits, and management reviews, and it measures performance against organizational objectives. The Act phase addresses identified gaps, updates strategies accordingly, and integrates lessons learned, thereby maintaining adaptability and ensuring continuous improvement (ISO, 2019; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). A core component of planning, BIA systematically identifies critical functions and assesses the consequences of disruption, and it informs recovery objectives that set operational thresholds for resilience. Recovery objectives — including MTPD, RTO, RPO, and MBCO — define acceptable downtime and data loss, and they guide the selection of continuity strategies such as redundant systems, backup sites, alternative suppliers, and cross-trained personnel (Wallace & Webber, 2017; Smith, 2020; Armstrong & D'Agostino, 2018).

Moreover, mature organizations integrate BCM with Enterprise Risk Management (ERM), and they foster a unified resilience culture where risk assessments are translated into actionable continuity measures (Frigo & Anderson, 2011; Buzzao & Rizzi, 2023). This integration transforms resilience into an organization-wide competency, and it ensures that every employee understands their role in sustaining continuity. While recovery objectives define operational thresholds, adaptive leadership philosophies complement them by enabling organizations to respond dynamically to crises. Mission Command, rooted in military leadership, emphasizes decentralized execution, clarity of intent, and subordinate initiative, and it empowers teams to act decisively without waiting for rigid instructions (Shamir, 2011; U.S. Army, 2012). Corporate examples such as Amazon and Netflix demonstrate that empowering employees within broad strategic guidelines fosters innovation and agility (Denning, 2018).

Closely aligned with Mission Command is the OODA loop (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act), which enables iterative decision-making under uncertainty, and it embeds continuous feedback into operations (Boyd, 1987; Richards, 2004). Agile management complements these principles by promoting adaptability, cross-functional teamwork, and rapid iteration, and it

MRU
Mykolas Romeris
University

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

aligns with Mission Command and OODA by fostering decentralized execution and continuous learning (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016). The convergence of these frameworks creates a coherent logic for resilience, and it translates military doctrines into corporate decision-making practices that function effectively in crises (Jatautaitė et al., 2025).

Ultimately, a comprehensive resilience program integrates BCM recovery objectives, adaptive leadership philosophies, and iterative decision-making frameworks into a unified whole, and it embeds them in crisis communication and organizational learning processes. Effective communication sustains situational awareness, reinforces shared understanding, and preserves trust, while after-action reviews transform disruption into an opportunity for improvement (Coombs, 2015). Thus, resilience emerges not as a static state but as a continuously evolving capability, grounded in preparation, empowered by adaptive leadership, and sustained by iterative learning.

Crisis Communication and the STARCC Model

Having examined the core components of resilience—robust continuity planning (BCM/ERM + PDCA/BIA), adaptive leadership and decision frameworks (Mission Command, OODA, Agile), and effective crisis communication (STARCC)—it becomes evident that true organizational resilience emerges not from any single element but from the deliberate integration of all three. Each element addresses a distinct aspect of resilience: BCM provides structure, processes, and resources; adaptive leadership principles enable flexibility, empowerment, and rapid decision-making; and STARCC communication builds and sustains stakeholder trust during turbulence. Together, they form a cohesive model in which operational readiness, adaptive capacity, and transparent communication reinforce each other to sustain organizational performance in crisis (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Integrating the Approaches: A Synergistic Resilience Model (Developed based on Boyd, 1987; ISO, 2019; Herbane, 2010).

Preparedness depends on comprehensive BCM planning and training, which establish structured processes for crisis readiness, and it is enhanced by Mission Command leadership, which empowers teams to act decisively under uncertainty. This preparedness also includes developing communication protocols and STARCC message templates so that when a crisis occurs, the organization is both operationally equipped and communicatively prepared to respond effectively.

Response builds on these preparations by combining structured planning with adaptability. While pre-established structures ensure coordination, empowered teams must have the authority to make rapid decisions guided by OODA loops, and communication must be

continuous and guided by STARCC principles. This combination creates a response that is both coherent and agile, enabling the organization to adapt to evolving circumstances while addressing stakeholder concerns.

Recovery focuses on restoring critical services as identified through Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and on rebuilding stakeholder confidence. Recovery is accelerated by prior investments in redundancy and by Agile problem-solving, and it requires transparent communication to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. Recovery is therefore not merely a return to normalcy but an opportunity to strengthen systems and processes so the organization emerges stronger from the crisis.

Learning completes the cycle of resilience. Post-incident reviews, including after-action reports, feed back into PDCA cycles, capturing technical lessons and process improvements. This continuous learning fosters dynamic capabilities that enhance the organization's ability to absorb shocks and adapt to future disruptions (Figure 2).
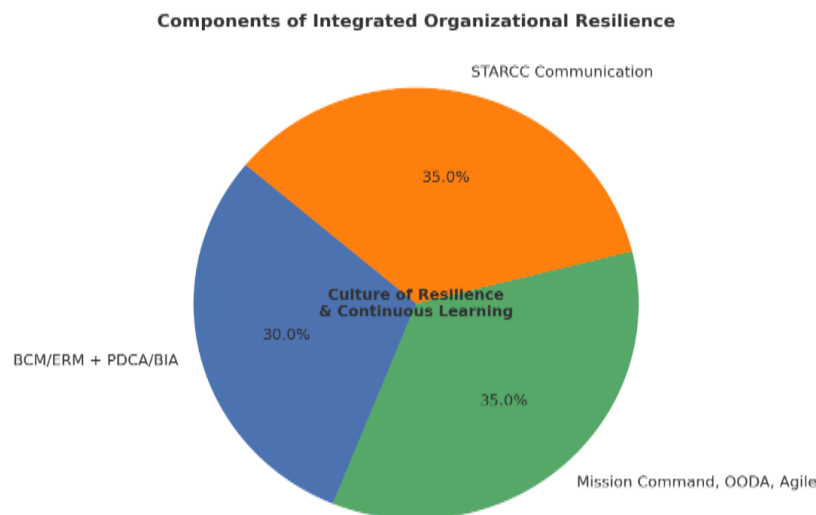
Figure 2. Components of Integrated Organizational Resilience (Developed based on Frigo & Anderson, 2011; Buzzao & Rizzi, 2023).

In today's increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world—often compounded by brittleness, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI)—resilience must extend beyond structural preparedness to emphasize both absorptive and adaptive capacities. Military-inspired methods, such as empowered local decision-making and situational awareness, strengthen organizational agility and enable frontline teams to act effectively in unpredictable conditions. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations established cross-disciplinary crisis teams empowered to exercise OODA loops at the organizational level, thereby accelerating decision-making and response.

All in all, resilience is not a static capability but a dynamic system that thrives on integration. The combination of robust continuity planning (BCM/ERM + PDCA/BIA), adaptive leadership frameworks (Mission Command, OODA, Agile), and structured crisis communication (STARCC) creates a synergistic model in which each element strengthens the others (Figure 3).
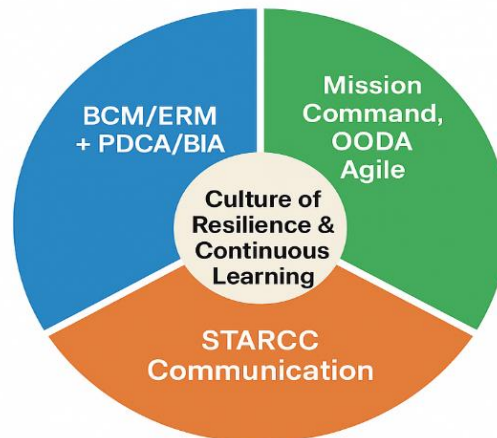
Figure 3. A Synergistic Resilience Model Integrating BCM, Leadership Frameworks, and Communication (Developed based on Boyd, 1987; U.S. Army, 2012).

Preparedness provides the foundation, adaptive leadership enables flexibility and rapid decision-making, and STARCC ensures clarity, empathy, and trust in stakeholder relationships. Together, they form a holistic resilience framework that allows organizations to withstand disruption, adapt under pressure, and emerge stronger.

Therefore, Figure 4 presents an Integrated Organizational Resilience Framework that brings together four critical domains of resilience into a central culture of resilience and continuous learning. The framework emphasizes how Business Continuity Management/Enterprise Risk Management (BCM/ERM) combined with the Plan–Do–Check–Act/Business Impact Analysis (PDCA/BIA) provides a structured process for risk identification, continuity planning, and systematic improvement. On the leadership side, Mission Command, the OODA (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act) loop, and Agile methodologies contribute adaptability, decentralized decision-making, and rapid response to uncertainty. In parallel, STARCC communication principles (Simple, Timely, Accurate, Relevant, Credible, and Consistent) highlight the role of effective information sharing during crises. Finally, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery mechanisms ensure that organizations not only anticipate disruptions but also effectively manage them and recover sustainably.

At the center of the model lies a Culture of Resilience and Continuous Learning, symbolizing that resilience is not simply a process or set of tools, but an embedded organizational mindset. The arrows indicate that all four components—management systems, adaptive leadership, communication strategies, and preparedness practices—interact dynamically and reinforce each other in shaping long-term organizational resilience (Figure 4).

MRU
Mykolas Romeris University

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

Figure 4. Integrated Organizational Resilience Framework (Developed from ISO, 2019; Herbane, 2010; U.S. Army, 2012; Boyd, 1987; Rigby et al., 2016; Coombs, 2015; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; FEMA, 2011; Alexander, 2013).

Ultimately, resilience depends not only on the technical capacity to respond but also on the ability to communicate transparently and lead decisively—ensuring that, even in the face of uncertainty, organizations can sustain trust and emerge stronger.

Conclusion

Organizational resilience in contemporary business environments requires an integrated, capability-based approach rather than reliance on static continuity plans. This study demonstrates that combining structured Business Continuity Management (BCM) with adaptive leadership, Agile practices, and strategic crisis communication creates a more robust and dynamic foundation for navigating disruption. BCM provides the essential structural backbone through systematic planning, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), recovery objectives, and PDCA-driven continuous improvement (ISO, 2019; Buzzao & Rizzi, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on leadership models that enable rapid sense-making and decentralized action under conditions of uncertainty.

Military-inspired leadership principles—particularly Mission Command and the OODA loop—enhance organizational agility by empowering teams to act within clear strategic intent while responding flexibly to evolving circumstances (Boyd, 1987; U.S. Army, 2012; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). When combined with Agile management practices, these models strengthen responsiveness, iterative learning, and cross-functional coordination, enabling organizations to translate continuity strategies into effective operational responses during crises (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016; Highsmith, 2013).

A central contribution of this research lies in highlighting the interdependence of the "hard" and "soft" dimensions of resilience. Formal systems, technologies, and procedures must be reinforced by adaptive leadership, empowered teams, and a culture of learning in order to function effectively under stress (Duchek, 2020). The proposed integrated framework bridges strategic intent and operational execution, positioning resilience as a continuous cycle of anticipation, response, recovery, and learning rather than a one-time preparedness exercise.

Crisis communication emerges as a critical enabler of resilience and organizational legitimacy. Structured communication frameworks, such as the STARCC model, support

transparency, empathy, and credibility, thereby maintaining stakeholder trust during disruptive events (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Coombs, 2007). Operational recovery without effective communication risks reputational damage, whereas timely and consistent messaging strengthens organizational credibility and long-term resilience outcomes.

Overall, the findings align with contemporary resilience scholarship that conceptualizes resilience as an adaptive organizational capability grounded in learning, leadership, and strategic integration (Duchek, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021). By integrating BCM standards, military leadership philosophies, Agile practices, and crisis communication, organizations can move beyond defensive risk management toward proactive and strategic resilience.

For practitioners, the implications are clear: resilience should be institutionalized as an enterprise-wide capability supported by empowered leadership, iterative learning mechanisms, and integrated communication strategies. Organizations that adopt this holistic approach are better positioned not only to withstand disruption but to leverage crises as opportunities for renewal, innovation, and sustainable competitive advantage. In an era characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, resilience becomes not merely a protective mechanism but a strategic enabler of long-term organizational success.

References

1. Armstrong, R., & D'Agostino, J. (2018). Business continuity planning and disaster recovery. *Journal of Business Continuity & Emergency Planning, 11*(3), 245–260.
2. Benguria, F., Saffie, F., & Waugh, M. (2022). Escaping the trade war: Trade integration and the effects of supply chain reorganization. *Journal of International Business Studies, 53*(6), 1015–1036. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-022-00521-y
3. Boyd, J. R. (1987). *A discourse on winning and losing*. Air University Press.
4. Carmeli, A., & Markman, G. D. (2011). Organizational resilience: A valuable construct for management research. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 13*(3), 243–258. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2011.00321.x
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *Public health preparedness and response capabilities*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
6. Chae, B.-K. (2019). Developing key business capabilities for supply chain resilience. *International Journal of Production Economics, 211*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2019.01.007
7. Duchek, S. (2020). Organizational resilience: A capability-based conceptualization. *Business Research, 13*(1), 215–246. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7
8. Eugster, R., Jaumotte, F., MacDonald, R., & Piazza, R. (2022). *Trade shocks and global value chains* (IMF Working Paper No. WP/22/91). International Monetary Fund. https://doi.org/10.5089/9781513572067.001
9. Horne, J. F., & Orr, J. E. (1998). Assessing behaviors that create resilient organizations. *Employment Relations Today, 24*(4), 29–39. https://doi.org/10.1002/ert.3910240406
10. International Organization for Standardization. (2019). *ISO 22301:2019—Security and resilience—Business continuity management systems—Requirements*. ISO.
11. Jatautaitė, D., Radvilė, E., & Terminas, R. (2025). Adaptive resilience in contemporary organizations: Integrating leadership and continuity. *Journal of Organizational Resilience, 3*(1), 12–34.

12. Land Warfare Development Centre. (2017). *Mission command: NATO doctrine and principles*. NATO.

13. Reynolds, B., & Seeger, M. W. (2005). Crisis and emergency risk communication as an integrative model. *Journal of Health Communication, 10*(1), 43–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730590904571

14. Rigby, D. K., Sutherland, J., & Takeuchi, H. (2016). Embracing agile. *Harvard Business Review, 94*(5), 40–50.

15. Ruiz Martín, C., López Paredes, A., & Wainer, G. (2018). What is organizational resilience and why is it important? *International Journal of Production Management and Engineering, 6*(1), 11–28. https://doi.org/10.4995/ijpme.2018.8363

16. Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2015). *Effective crisis communication: Moving from crisis to opportunity* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

AI-GENERATED MEDIA AND PUBLIC TRUST: EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM LITHUANIA

Sigita JURAVIČIŪTĖ

Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: sigita.contact@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0008-4444-7206

Abstract. *The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies is fundamentally reshaping the digital communication landscape. AI now enables the creation of highly realistic synthetic images, videos and voices. While these innovations open new opportunities for creativity, they also blur the boundaries between reality and fabrication, posing challenges to public trust and perceptions of truth.*

This study explores how young people in Lithuania, both local and foreign, perceive, interpret and emotionally respond to AI-generated media, and how such experiences influence their trust in digital information. Using an exploratory qualitative design, the research combined an experimental exposure to authentic and AI-generated media samples (n = 15, aged 14–29) with semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis identified four central themes: reliance on intuition and first impressions; mixed emotional reactions such as curiosity, admiration and anxiety; erosion of baseline trust; and gradual adaptation through reflective verification and collaboration.

Findings show that authenticity judgments are increasingly shaped by emotional resonance, familiarity and contextual cues rather than factual reasoning. Exposure to synthetic media often provokes cognitive fatigue and emotional ambivalence, yet it can also foster critical awareness and the emergence of "networked trust" in which verification becomes a shared social practice. Participants demonstrated both vulnerability to manipulation and growing resilience through peer discussion, emotional regulation and adaptive learning.

The study concludes that trust in the AI era is not a static belief but a dynamic process rebuilt through emotional intelligence, reflection and collective verification. These insights highlight the importance of technological transparency, media education that incorporates emotional literacy and community-based initiatives to strengthen resilience against misinformation in small digital societies such as Lithuania.

Future research should address these questions using quantitative methods to capture broader societal patterns and include older age groups, whose trust dynamics and digital literacy levels may differ from those of youth.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, AI-generated media, trust, emotional response, media literacy, qualitative research, youth, Lithuania.*

Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the most influential forces shaping modern communication and media production. Generative AI systems that create realistic images, videos and voices can convincingly replicate human features and behavior. While these tools offer new opportunities for creativity, education and marketing, they also challenge the foundations of trust, authenticity and truth in information exchange (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2023; Rini, 2025). The spread of deepfakes and other synthetic media has blurred the boundary between reality and fabrication, leading to what scholars describe as an epistemic crisis in digital communication (Chesney & Citron, 2024).

Public trust is central to any functioning information society. When people cannot distinguish between real and manipulated content, skepticism can extend beyond specific sources to digital information in general (Floridi, 2024). This erosion of trust weakens social cohesion, reduces confidence in journalism and amplifies misinformation. Yet, confronting synthetic media can also promote media literacy and critical awareness by motivating fact-checking and verification. Thus, AI-generated media simultaneously undermine and stimulate public trust. Despite growing global attention to AI-generated disinformation, little is known

about how people socially and emotionally perceive such content, especially in smaller digital societies like Lithuania, where media ecosystems are concentrated and institutional trust is fragile. Existing research largely focuses on technological detection rather than human interpretation.

This study addresses that gap by exploring how individuals recognize, evaluate and emotionally respond to AI-generated images and voices. It examines how direct exposure influences their sense of authenticity and trust in digital information, focusing on the reasoning strategies they use, the effects on overall trust, and links to critical thinking and media literacy. By situating the analysis in the Lithuanian context, the study contributes to international debates on the social implications of generative AI and offers insights for educators, policymakers and communication professionals seeking to strengthen resilience against misinformation.

Theoretical background

AI-generated media and the transformation of digital communication

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally transformed digital communication by reshaping how information is created, distributed and perceived. Generative AI technologies such as generative adversarial networks (GANs) and diffusion models can now produce highly realistic images, voices, videos that closely imitate reality. These tools have democratized media creation, enabling anyone to generate professional content at low cost, but they have also accelerated the spread of fabricated materials, raising concerns about authenticity, authorship and accountability (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2023; Mirsky & Lee, 2023). Initially praised for fostering creativity in art, marketing and education, generative AI soon revealed a "dual-use dilemma": the same systems that enable innovation can be weaponized for manipulation and deception (Floridi, 2024). Deepfakes exemplify how convincingly AI can imitate reality, producing what scholars describe as an epistemic crisis, when traditional markers of authenticity erode, trust in communication collapses (Chesney & Citron, 2024; Rini, 2025).

Empirical studies show that exposure to synthetic media undermines people's ability to judge credibility and increases skepticism toward news and political communication (Corsi et al., 2023; Möller & Helberger, 2024). Repeated encounters with AI-generated videos foster long-term uncertainty about journalism and public figures, spreading distrust across digital ecosystems (Floridi, 2024; Rini, 2025). This creates a paradox: while digital technologies expand information access, they also fuel fatigue, cynicism and declining confidence in media sources. AI-generated content not only spreads misinformation but reshapes how people define truth and evidence online. From a communication theory perspective, AI blurs the cues such as tone, source, or style that audiences traditionally use to assess credibility. As these cues become artificial, interpretation grows uncertain, and people rely more on emotional or heuristic judgments rather than verifiable evidence (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). This shift reinforces the psychological mechanisms that make misinformation persuasive and complicates ethical questions of digital representation (Floridi, 2024; Rini, 2025). Yet some researchers argue that exposure to synthetic media can enhance resilience by encouraging media literacy, fact-checking and critical engagement (Islam et al., 2024). Thus, AI-generated media represents both a threat and an opportunity: it undermines traditional trust while motivating societies to rethink authenticity and develop new ethical and educational frameworks for truth in the digital age.

In conclusion, generative AI marks a turning point in communication. By blurring the boundary between real and synthetic, it challenges established notions of credibility and truth, reshaping not only how information spreads but how people decide what to believe.

Trust, authenticity and perception in the age of synthetic media

Trust is the foundation of any functioning information system. Public confidence in media depends on people's ability to assess credibility and detect manipulation (Floridi, 2024). As AI-generated media becomes more sophisticated, distinguishing real from artificial content grows increasingly difficult. Visual and contextual cues that once signaled authenticity can now be perfectly replicated. Studies show that even brief exposure to synthetic content reduces trust in both real and fake information, revealing a deeper shift in society's relationship with truth (Rini, 2025; Möller & Helberger, 2024).

Empirical research confirms that AI-generated visuals heighten confusion and weaken belief in journalism (Iqbal & Qureshi, 2024). Most people cannot reliably identify whether media is genuine or computer-made, often judging by intuition or emotion (Arroyo et al., 2024). Such uncertainty leads to "informational disorientation" especially dangerous during crises, when fake videos or audio recordings can fuel fear, anger or sympathy and serve as tools of psychological manipulation. Cognitive studies show that people often rely on emotional cues: familiarity, fluency or affect, rather than analytical reasoning (Arguedas et al., 2023; Javed et al., 2024). This makes audiences vulnerable to AI-generated materials designed to exploit these shortcuts. Trust thus becomes less about factual proof and more about perceived authenticity.

From a social-psychological view, trust online is unstable and emotionally driven (Lewandowsky et al., 2022). Yet, awareness of manipulation can foster resilience. Confronting synthetic media encourages critical evaluation, fact-checking, and the creation of verification tools and educational programs (Islam et al., 2024; Arroyo et al., 2024). Ultimately, the rise of AI-generated media has transformed how people perceive truth. It destabilizes traditional signs of authenticity but also promotes greater critical awareness. Understanding this evolving nature of trust is essential for building media literacy, ethical communication and resilience in an increasingly synthetic information environment.

In conclusion, the rise of AI-generated media has fundamentally transformed how people perceive and evaluate truth in the digital age. As synthetic content blurs the line between real and artificial, traditional cues of authenticity have lost reliability, making trust increasingly fragile and emotionally driven. Yet, this challenge also brings opportunity: awareness of manipulation can strengthen critical thinking, promote media literacy and inspire new ethical and technological strategies to protect truth and integrity in modern information systems.

Media literacy and resilience to disinformation

Media literacy, understood as the ability to access, evaluate and create media messages critically, has become one of the most important tools for strengthening resilience against misinformation and manipulation. It enables individuals not only to question the accuracy of what they see and hear but also to understand how information is produced and shared. In the era of generative artificial intelligence, traditional approaches that focus mainly on verifying sources or detecting false claims are no longer sufficient. People must also understand how AI systems generate synthetic images, videos and voices and how such content can influence perception, trust and emotion (Sergeeva, 2025).

Recent studies show that practical, experience-based education is the most effective way to help people recognize AI-generated content. Participants who created or analyzed deepfakes were significantly better at identifying manipulation and less likely to believe false information (Dhahir et al., 2024; Geissler, 2025). However, focusing too much on deception can make people overly skeptical, leading them to doubt even reliable journalism (Spinde et al., 2024). Media education therefore must balance critical awareness with confidence in trustworthy sources. The importance of media literacy becomes especially clear during crises such as wars, elections or natural disasters, when misinformation spreads quickly. Community-based workshops, where participants collectively analyze synthetic media, have been shown to increase confidence, cooperation and trust within local communities (Dhahir et al., 2024). Moreover, combining critical thinking with practical technological tools such as reverse-image search, metadata analysis or voice verification enhances people's ability to assess authenticity effectively (Sergeeva, 2025).

In conclusion, media literacy in the age of AI is not a fixed skill set but an evolving process of learning, reflection and adaptation. It requires technical understanding, emotional resilience and collective responsibility to maintain trust and ethical communication in a complex, rapidly changing information environment.

Methodology

Research design

This study employed a qualitative exploratory design that combined an experimental exposure phase with semi-structured interviews. The aim was to understand how individuals perceive AI-generated media and how direct exposure to synthetic content affects their sense of authenticity and trust in information. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants reasoning, emotions and interpretation processes, factors that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods. The experiment involved presenting participants with a curated set of media materials, including both authentic and AI-generated images, short video clips and audio recordings. The order of presentation was randomized to avoid bias. Participants were asked to identify which materials they believed to be authentic and which appeared artificial and to explain the reasoning behind their judgments.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit participants representing diverse age groups, education levels and media-consumption habits. The final sample consisted of 15 individuals aged between 14 and 29, all residing in Lithuania at the time of the study. The group included eight females and seven males, reflecting a balanced gender composition. Participants came from varied educational backgrounds: five were secondary-school students, six were university students and four were employed young adults with higher education. All participants were digitally active, regularly engaging with online news, social media and multimedia content. This was established through both recruitment criteria and pre-interview discussions, during which participants described their typical media routines. Most reported using at least two social media platforms daily (most commonly "Instagram", "TikTok", "YouTube") and following news either through online portals or aggregated feeds on social networks. Several participants also mentioned creating or sharing digital content themselves, such as short videos, photos or memes. These behaviors collectively indicated that all participants were experienced and active users of digital media environments.

Seven participants were non-Lithuanian youths currently residing in Lithuania. They were regular visitors of a youth center that served as one of the main recruitment sites for the

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris
University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

study. The remaining eight participants were Lithuanian nationals recruited through community and educational networks. Although the study was not designed as a comparative cross-cultural analysis, the inclusion of both Lithuanian and foreign participants allowed for observing potential cultural and emotional differences in how authenticity and trust are perceived. Participation in the study was voluntary and all individuals provided informed consent before data collection. For underage participants, written parental consent was obtained to ensure ethical participation and compliance with research guidelines. Participants were anonymized using codes (P01–P15) to protect their identities. The study consisted of two stages designed to explore participants' perception and interpretation of AI-generated media. In the first stage, an experimental exposure was conducted. Participants viewed ten media samples: five authentic and five generated using publicly available AI tools such as "DALL·E" and "ElevenLabs". The materials included images of public figures, political scenes and short voice clips imitating familiar newsreaders from around the world. After each item, participants were asked to indicate whether they believed the content was authentic and to briefly explain their reasoning. This stage aimed to capture participants' immediate cognitive and emotional reactions when distinguishing between real and synthetic media. The second stage involved semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30–40 minutes. These interviews explored in greater depth how participants made authenticity judgments, what cues they relied on, how they felt during the exposure and how such experiences might influence their broader trust in online information.

The interviews were conducted in English, while all experimental materials were provided in participants' native languages to ensure full comprehension and authentic emotional engagement. Lithuanian participants viewed and listened to media samples in Lithuanian, while foreign participants received the same or equivalent materials translated into their respective native languages. With the help of modern artificial intelligence tools, it was possible to prepare high-quality, linguistically accurate materials in each participant's native language, ensuring that meaning, tone and emotional nuance were preserved. This approach ensured that each respondent experienced the stimuli naturally, in the linguistic and cultural context most familiar to them. Presenting materials in participants' native languages minimized cognitive strain related to translation or second-language processing and allowed emotions, judgments and associations to emerge more spontaneously. Using English as the interview language, meanwhile, created a neutral communicative space for discussion across a multicultural sample. This methodological choice enhanced both linguistic accessibility and ecological validity, enabling the study to capture genuine differences in perception and emotional response across cultural backgrounds.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase framework. This method was chosen because it allows for identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative data while remaining flexible and grounded in participants' own language. It was particularly suitable for this study, which sought to understand both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of how people experience and evaluate AI-generated media.

The analysis proceeded through the six stages outlined by Braun and Clarke. First, all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and read multiple times to ensure familiarization with the data. Second, initial codes were generated manually to capture relevant features of participants' reasoning, emotions and descriptions of authenticity judgments.

Coding was conducted using NVivo 14 software, which supported a systematic comparison of recurring ideas across participants. In the third and fourth phases, potential themes were identified, reviewed and refined through iterative reading. The analysis sought to uncover overarching patterns in participants' reasoning strategies, emotional reactions and expressions of uncertainty or confidence. Particular attention was paid to how participants described their thought processes when deciding whether media appeared real and how their perceptions of trust evolved after recognizing synthetic elements. During the fifth and sixth stages, themes were defined and named and illustrative quotations were selected to represent key insights. The analysis also examined the interplay between emotional reactions (such as surprise, skepticism or curiosity) and cognitive judgments, highlighting how these two dimensions jointly shaped participants' sense of trust.

Overall, the thematic analysis revealed nuanced patterns showing that participants' evaluations of authenticity were deeply influenced by intuitive feelings and contextual cues rather than purely factual reasoning. This process-oriented approach provided a coherent framework for connecting micro-level observations from interviews with broader theoretical insights about media trust in the age of artificial intelligence.

Reliability and validity

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed throughout the research process. Triangulation was applied by comparing participants' verbal responses from the interview phase with their actual decisions made during the experimental exposure. This allowed for cross-checking between what participants said and what they did, strengthening the internal validity of the interpretations. In this study, triangulation served to verify whether participants stated reasoning matched their observable behavior when identifying authentic and AI-generated content. Consistencies between verbal explanations and practical judgments provided stronger evidence of how individuals truly assessed authenticity and trust.

Although the sample size was relatively small, the purpose of the study was not statistical generalization but analytical depth to capture how individuals construct meaning and negotiate trust when exposed to synthetic media. The aim was to develop rich, contextualized insights rather than numerical representation. To ensure consistency in analysis, all transcripts were coded manually by the researcher using NVivo 14, following the same coding framework derived from Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase model. Codes and themes were refined through repeated reading and reflection, which minimized interpretive bias and improved dependability. To further enhance transparency, detailed notes were kept during the analytical process to document how decisions about theme definition and categorization were made. Reflexivity was also maintained throughout the study. The researcher continuously reflected on personal assumptions and potential influence on interpretation, particularly given the sensitivity of topics related to trust, misinformation and emotional response. This reflexive stance helped to balance subjective understanding with analytical rigor.

Finally, the study achieved a high level of realism by using participants' native languages and familiar digital formats, allowing for genuine emotional and cognitive engagement. This design choice ensured that participants reacted as they naturally would in real online environments, which strengthened the overall credibility of the findings and supported an accurate interpretation of how people perceive authenticity and construct trust in the context of AI-generated media.

Findings and analysis

The study explored how people recognize, feel and react to AI-generated media. The analysis revealed four main themes: (1) decisions based on first impressions, (2) mixed emotional reactions, (3) loss of basic trust and (4) growing awareness/adaptation. Together these themes show that judging what is real online is not only about logic or evidence. It also depends on emotion, context and experience.

First impressions and uncertainty

All fifteen participants reported that their first impressions were based on intuition rather than detailed analysis. [P01] said, "Sometimes I just go with the vibe of the video, not the facts". [P02] added, "It's impossible to know right away, I trust my gut, not my eyes". [P03] explained, "I thought it was real because the voice sounded familiar, only later I noticed the accent was strange". Similarly, [P04] described relying on instinct: "It just felt too perfect, like something was off". [P05] focused on small visual cues: "The skin looked too smooth, that was my clue". [P06] noted fatigue in repeated guessing: "After a few clips, I stopped caring whether it was fake or not". [P07] reflected uncertainty: "It looked real for a moment, but maybe cameras are just better now".

Other respondents confirmed that their judgments were unstable. [P08] said, "I changed my mind twice on the same clip". [P09] added, "At first I said real, then fake, then real again, I can't tell anymore". [P10] summarized this confusion: "You can't be sure even when something looks perfect, it's more about how it feels". Interesting that [P11] reflected on the experience as a learning process: "Now I know my instincts aren't enough". [P12] agreed, "My first reaction is almost always wrong". [P13] linked uncertainty to emotional cues: "If I like the person or topic, I trust it more". [P14] said, "If it looks like a TV broadcast, I assume it's true". Finally, [P15] highlighted timing sensitivity: "The movement rhythm was slightly off, that's what gave it away".

Together, these findings reveal that authenticity judgments in the age of AI are deeply psychological rather than rational. People no longer assess credibility through factual reasoning alone but through emotion, familiarity and embodied perception. This shift signals a profound transformation in how truth itself is experienced: what "feels" real increasingly outweighs what can be proven real. Such intuitive reliance not only exposes the fragility of digital trust but also demonstrates that emotional and sensory cues have become new gatekeepers of belief. In other words, trust in digital media is migrating from evidence-based cognition to emotion-based intuition, reshaping the very foundations of how individuals perceive authenticity in an AI-saturated information world.

Emotional reactions and fatigue

Participants expressed mixed emotional reactions to AI-generated media, combining fascination, anxiety and exhaustion. Many described feeling simultaneously impressed and unsettled. [P01] found the experience "exciting but stressful, I want to know what's true," while [P02] admitted, "It makes me tired; you never know what's real". Their comments capture the tension between curiosity and mental fatigue that accompanies encounters with synthetic content. Similarly, [P03] was intrigued, calling it "scary but kind of brilliant at the same time" and [P04] echoed this duality, describing it as "fascinating but frightening, I couldn't stop

watching". These reflections reveal how AI-generated media evoke both wonder and loss of control, creating a psychological push and pull between attraction and fear.

At the same time, participants expressed frustration toward the deceptive potential of such media. [P05] noted, "It's impressive, but I hate that it can fool people" while [P06] shared a sense of exhaustion, "After a few clips, I just didn't want to decide anymore". This reaction illustrates the phenomenon of cognitive overload: repeated exposure not only confuses perception but drains emotional energy. As [P07] observed, "Now I look for mistakes even where there are none" suggesting that constant vigilance can transform into hyper-skepticism. [P08] described this emotional strain vividly: "Every new clip felt like a test I could fail" and [P09] reinforced it with a feeling of betrayal, "It's like being tricked on purpose". For several participants, fatigue coexisted with attempts to find meaning or adapt. [P10] confessed, "It's exhausting, you can't relax while watching" whereas [P11] tried to remain constructive, "Maybe it's a sign we need to be smarter, not scared". Others oscillated between irritation and curiosity. [P12] emphasized, "It's impressive, but annoying that it can trick people so easily" and [P13] viewed the technology ambivalently "I want to learn how it's made, it's both art and manipulation". [P14] described a growing discomfort "It looks too perfect and that's disturbing" a sentiment that culminated in [P15]'s striking metaphor: "It's fascinating and terrifying, like reality with a glitch".

From an analytical perspective, these reactions suggest that emotional confusion is a key mechanism in the erosion of digital trust. When users feel simultaneously amazed and deceived, their confidence in perception itself becomes fragile. This emotional instability, rather than simple ignorance or lack of skill, may explain why synthetic content can undermine public trust so effectively. Moreover, the fact that participants experienced both curiosity and irritation indicate that emotional engagement can serve as both a risk and a resource: while anxiety leads to fatigue and avoidance, curiosity can motivate learning and adaptation. Therefore, managing emotional responses through education, awareness and collective reflection, may be as crucial to media literacy as technical verification tools.

In sum, the emotional dimension of AI-generated media is central to how people learn to trust or doubt digital information, revealing that the future of trust depends not only on recognizing deception, but on understanding how it feels to be deceived.

Erosion of trust

Exposure to realistic fake content fundamentally changed how participants thought about truth online. Many described a sense of disorientation and doubt that extended beyond the experimental materials to their everyday media consumption. As [P10] reflected, "Now I'll question everything I see online. Even real videos might not be real anymore". This marks what researchers call the erosion of baseline trust the fading assumption that most information is true unless proven otherwise. [P02] echoed this sentiment: "If even experts can be fooled, what chance do we have?". For many, uncertainty became not just a response to deception but a new default mode of perception. Participants described how they attempted to judge authenticity once their basic trust had been shaken. Several admitted that they still relied on superficial signals as indicators of credibility. [P14] confessed, "If the video looks like a TV broadcast, I trust it more, even if something looks off" while [P12] added, "If the logo or caption looks professional, I relax a bit! maybe too much". Such comments show that aesthetic familiarity remains a powerful, if misleading, source of reassurance.

Others tried to base their judgments on visual details or subtle inconsistencies. [P05] said, "The skin was too smooth, that's what gave it away" and [P06] focused on tone: "The lighting

and shadow felt wrong, like someone copied a real person". However, as [P07] observed, "Even when something looks fake, I'm not sure anymore, maybe it's just my phone quality". This uncertainty illustrates how hyperreal visuals collapse the usual distinction between authenticity and imitation, leaving people unsure where truth begins or ends. In several interviews, participants noted that the story's emotional coherence could override factual evidence. [P08] admitted, "The story made sense, so I trusted it" and [P03] added, "If it fits what I already believe, I stop checking". This reliance on narrative consistency demonstrates how emotion and expectation can dominate perception. When synthetic media trigger empathy or moral alignment, analytical reasoning often retreats. Trust, therefore, becomes less a question of verification than of resonance - people believe what feels internally consistent. The cumulative effect of these experiences is not only skepticism toward specific content but a broader collapse of informational confidence. [P02] described feeling "mentally tired of doubting everything" while [P10] said, "It's like I can't switch off the doubt anymore". This permanent vigilance transforms engagement with information into an emotionally draining activity. Even when participants recognized that doubt was rational, they described it as exhausting and isolating.

From a theoretical perspective, these reactions demonstrate that the erosion of trust is not just cognitive but affective. People no longer lose faith because they are deceived once, but because they feel perpetually uncertain. This emotional fatigue corrodes the sense of shared reality that underpins social communication. As trust in institutions weakens, individuals retreat into personal skepticism, which offers control but diminishes collective confidence. Ultimately, the findings reveal that the crisis of digital authenticity is not only about falsehood, it is about emotional exhaustion and loss of epistemic stability. When truth feels fluid, trust can no longer be assumed; it must be constantly reconstructed through awareness, dialogue, and transparent verification. This suggests that rebuilding trust requires more than technical detection tools - it demands cultural adaptation that restores confidence in both human judgment and social institutions.

Adapting and becoming more cautious

Not all reactions were negative. Several participants described the experience as eye-opening, prompting them to adopt more deliberate and reflective habits when engaging with media. [P11] explained, "If I'm not sure, I'll screenshot it and check the source or do a reverse image search" while [P13] shared a similar strategy: "When I hear a perfect voice, I look for another clip from the same person". These practices reflect a shift from passive consumption to active verification. Participants began to treat information as something that must be tested rather than taken for granted. Some respondents emphasized the importance of peer discussion in restoring confidence. [P07] said, "When I see something suspicious, I send it to our group chat; we discuss until someone finds the real version" and [P09] confirmed that collective engagement reduces anxiety: "Talking about it with others made me less anxious. It's not just my problem anymore". For these participants, verification became a social process, where collaboration helped transform uncertainty into reassurance. [P01] added, "It's easier to trust again when we check things together, I don't feel so lost".

Other participants demonstrated growing media awareness and curiosity toward technological tools. [P06] remarked, "I'd learn better if the app told me why it's fake, not just that it's fake" suggesting a desire for educational feedback rather than mere protection. [P12] called for greater transparency in digital platforms: "There should be clear 'AI-generated' or 'verified' labels, not hidden disclaimers". These responses reveal a constructive form of skepticism a willingness to engage critically while demanding systemic support. For some,

adaptation also meant learning from mistakes. [P04] reflected, "I was wrong before, but now I check lighting and reflections" whereas [P05] expressed determination to improve recognition skills: "I try to spot the details that don't match, like the way people blink". [P02] emphasized emotional regulation, noting, "It's easy to panic, but now I stop and think before reacting". These voices illustrate an evolution from emotional response to cognitive control, where reflection becomes a protective mechanism against manipulation.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that exposure to AI-generated content can stimulate not only skepticism but also learning and resilience. Participants moved from passive disbelief to proactive evaluation, transforming confusion into critical awareness. This adaptive behavior reflects a new form of digital literacy - one rooted in collaboration, emotion management and the ability to verify across multiple sources. From an analytical perspective, these accounts suggest that trust does not vanish under the pressure of synthetic media; it reorganizes itself. Instead of being assumed, trust becomes conditional, negotiated and socially distributed. Verification is no longer an individual burden but a shared civic practice, what might be called networked trust. Participants' growing caution signals a maturing digital culture, where awareness of manipulation no longer paralyzes but empowers. In this sense, the challenge of AI-generated content may paradoxically strengthen public resilience: by teaching people how to doubt productively, it helps rebuild trust on a more conscious and collective foundation.

New insights from the data

Beyond the four main themes, the study revealed several additional insights into how people form and negotiate trust in the context of AI-generated media. These observations go beyond surface judgments and show how perception, emotion and self-reflection interact when authenticity becomes uncertain.

First, participants developed an unexpected sensitivity to timing and rhythm rather than to visual detail. Many noticed inconsistencies in breathing, blinking or movement pace before identifying visual flaws. [P15] explained, "The image was perfect, but the movement rhythm was slightly stuck! that's how I knew it was fake". [P07] shared a similar perception: "The person blinked too rarely - it felt robotic". Likewise, [P11] mentioned, "The voice pauses didn't match normal speech". This pattern suggests that audiences are unconsciously developing rhythmic literacy - the ability to detect authenticity through temporal flow rather than visual quality. As AI-generated imagery becomes photorealistic, temporal irregularities may remain one of the last human-readable signals of artificiality.

Second, emotionally charged content significantly influenced participants' critical judgment. Several admitted that stories about war, humanitarian crises or moral injustice made them less analytical. [P03] said, "When it's about attacks or victims, my feelings take over, I check later, not first". [P08] added, "If it's something sad or shocking, I want to believe it's true immediately". [P12] reflected on the same mechanism: "Emotional topics make me forget to doubt". This finding helps explain why manipulated media spreads fastest in emotionally polarized contexts - not because it looks real, but because it feels urgent and morally resonant. Emotion thus functions as both a bridge and a barrier to trust: it draws people closer to content but pushes them further from verification.

Third, participants' responses to being wrong diverged sharply, revealing two distinct psychological paths, learning versus withdrawal. For some, mistakes became a source of insight. [P04] said, "I was wrong about the reflections, so now I check that first" while [P09] reflected, "It's embarrassing to be fooled, but it makes you sharper next time". Others, however, reacted with discouragement. [P02] stated, "If even experts can be fooled, what's the point of trying?" and [P06] echoed this frustration: "No matter how careful you are, AI will always stay one step ahead". These contrasting attitudes indicate that resilience in the digital age depends not only on knowledge but also on emotional self-regulation, the ability to cope with being deceived without giving up the effort to verify. Across all fifteen interviews, participants also demonstrated growing meta-awareness about their

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

own perception. [P10] observed, "I don't just doubt the media now; I doubt my reactions too" while [P13] concluded, "Maybe trust is not about being sure but about staying alert". Such reflections suggest a broader shift toward reflexive media literacy - a mindset where doubt itself becomes part of responsible information processing.

In summary, these insights deepen our understanding of how people adapt to a synthetic information environment. They show that trust formation is becoming multimodal (based on rhythm and pattern), emotionally mediated (shaped by affect and empathy) and psychologically diverse (varying between resilience and withdrawal). The ability to detect AI-generated content increasingly relies on subtle perception and emotional intelligence, not only on technical expertise. This means that the future of media literacy should move beyond fact-checking to include emotional and perceptual awareness, teaching people not just how to verify but how to feel critically. Ultimately, these findings reveal that while AI challenges traditional trust, it also compels individuals to rediscover human intuition, collaboration and reflection as essential tools for navigating truth in the digital age.

Rebuilding trust and future needs

Many participants emphasized the need for clearer and more transparent systems to help them identify AI-generated or manipulated content. [P12] suggested, "I'd like to see a visible label like 'AI-generated' or 'verified', not hidden somewhere in small text". [P06] shared a similar idea but focused on explanation rather than warning: "If the tool could tell me why it's fake, like the lighting doesn't match, I'd actually learn from it". These comments reveal that people seek not only protection but understanding. They do not want to be shielded passively from falsehood but to engage actively with how authenticity is determined. Several participants pointed out that their confidence increased when content could be verified through multiple perspectives. [P13] explained, "If I find the same scene from another camera, my trust rises immediately" while [P07] added, "If I hear the same voice in different sound settings, I'm more sure it's real". [P11] mentioned a similar pattern: "When different sources show the same moment, I stop doubting". This practice of cross-checking demonstrates that networked verification, comparing several angles, sources or formats, has become a new foundation for digital trust. It replaces blind belief with relational confirmation, showing that truth now exists not in isolation but through connection.

Participants also described how social collaboration strengthens confidence. [P09] said, "Talking about suspicious clips with others makes me less anxious, we figure it out together". [P01] echoed this: "It's easier to believe something when your friends confirm it too". [P04] described how dialogue encourages awareness: "When we discuss what's fake, I notice details I'd normally miss". For [P02], this shared reflection has moral value: "It's not just about being right; it's about protecting each other from being misled". These comments show that rebuilding trust is not only technical but social and ethical, rooted in dialogue, empathy and shared responsibility for truth. Notably, foreign participants in the study appeared more emotionally expressive and personally invested in their reactions to synthetic content than local Lithuanian participants. They often described stronger emotional confusion or moral discomfort when confronted with realistic fakes. This suggests that cultural background and distance from familiar media environments may heighten emotional sensitivity to uncertainty, especially when individuals lack strong local reference points for verification. Emotional attachment, therefore, functioned as both a vulnerability and a motivator for reflection, making these respondents more likely to discuss, compare and seek reassurance through social validation. Some participants also envisioned educational and institutional solutions.

[P05] argued that "schools should teach how AI images are made, not just how to spot fakes". [P10] emphasized the role of transparency from media organizations: "News outlets

should show how they verify videos - that would help people trust them again". [P14] and [P15] both linked trust to system-level clarity, with [P14] noting, "If governments required visible authenticity tags, people would relax" and [P15] adding, "We need digital spaces where authenticity isn't a guessing game". Collectively, these visions illustrate that participants see trust as a shared infrastructure, built jointly by technology, education and community. Overall, the findings indicate that people move through several emotional and cognitive stages when facing AI-generated content, from immediate reactions of curiosity or fear, through confusion and loss of confidence, to eventual adaptation and reflective trust. [P03] summarized this transformation aptly: "At first I doubted everything; now I just check smarter". Trust, in this sense, becomes less about technology itself and more about feeling, context and cooperation.

In addition, the study revealed a clear age-related difference in the ability to recognize AI-generated content. Younger participants generally performed better at identifying synthetic media than older ones. They were more attuned to subtle technical inconsistencies, such as rhythm, lighting or sound mismatches and were quicker to use verification tools like reverse searches or source comparisons. Older participants, by contrast, tended to rely on overall impressions and emotional cues of authenticity, which made it harder for them to distinguish real from artificial material. This suggests that digital literacy and technological confidence are closely linked to age: younger informants, being more accustomed to rapidly evolving media environments, adapt faster to new verification practices, whereas older participants may require clearer educational guidance to maintain confidence in the digital sphere. From an analytical standpoint, these insights suggest that the future of trust will depend on cultivating networked resilience, a combination of emotional awareness, practical verification habits and open communication among users, institutions, platforms. Rather than restoring the naive certainty of the past, people are learning to live with ambiguity in a more informed and collective way. In this evolving landscape, trust is no longer a given; it is a practice, one that merges critical thinking with emotional intelligence and social solidarity. By learning not only what to doubt but how to verify, individuals can remain confident and connected in an increasingly artificial digital world.

Conclusions

This study explored how individuals recognize, interpret and emotionally respond to AI-generated media and how such encounters influence their trust in digital information. By combining experimental exposure with qualitative interviews, the research provided in-depth insight into how people make authenticity judgments in an environment where traditional visual or contextual cues are no longer reliable.

The findings reveal a psychological and emotional transformation in how truth is perceived. Participants increasingly rely on intuition, emotional resonance and social confirmation rather than on factual or technical evidence. Exposure to synthetic media triggered complex emotions: curiosity, admiration, anxiety and fatigue, that deeply shaped their judgments. Emotional confusion emerged as a central mechanism in the erosion of digital trust: when reality feels uncertain, confidence in perception itself becomes unstable. At the same time, the study demonstrated the capacity for adaptive resilience. Participants learned to verify, cross-check and discuss information collectively, creating what this research calls *networked trust*. This process shows that trust does not disappear under the pressure of AI manipulation - it reorganizes into new social, emotional and reflexive forms. Particularly among foreign participants, emotional engagement was more intense; their distance from familiar cultural

references made them more vulnerable to confusion but also more motivated to seek reassurance and dialogue.

Overall, the results highlight that trust in the AI era is not a static belief but a dynamic practice a continuous negotiation between emotion, cognition, collaboration. Rebuilding public confidence in information therefore requires a multidimensional approach:

- Technological transparency, such as visible authenticity labels and open-source verification tools;
- Educational innovation, teaching not only fact-checking but emotional and perceptual literacy;
- Social cooperation, where communities and institutions collectively reinforce credibility through dialogue and shared standards.

Methodologically, the research design and analysis were well aligned. The experimental exposure combined with semi-structured interviews successfully captured both cognitive and affective dimensions of trust. Thematic analysis effectively revealed patterns across participants' reasoning and emotions. The inclusion of both Lithuanian and foreign respondents provided valuable comparative insight into cultural and emotional nuances of perception. The only minor consideration is that future studies could elaborate more explicitly on cross-cultural differences, since the stronger emotional attachment observed among foreign participants emerged inductively during analysis rather than being pre-defined as a research variable. Addressing this aspect in the research design (for example, through comparative sampling or follow-up interviews) would strengthen the explanatory depth of the findings.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the challenge of AI-generated media lies not only in deception but in how people feel about deception. Trust in the digital age is being rebuilt through awareness, emotional intelligence and collaboration, turning uncertainty into an opportunity for collective resilience and critical growth.

References

1. Arguedas, A. A., Zhang, Y., & Kim, J. (2023). *Relying on cues to judge online news from unfamiliar sources on digital platforms. Journalism.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849231234567
2. Arroyo, A., Müller, S., & Chen, L. (2024). *A representative study on human detection of artificially generated media across countries. AI & Society, 40*(2), 233–247. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-024-02072-1
3. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
4. Chesney, R., & Citron, D. K. (2024). *Deepfakes and the new disinformation war: The coming age of synthetic media.* Yale Law Journal, 133(4), 1025–1082. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3213954
5. Corsi, G., Marino, B., & Wong, W. (2023). The spread of synthetic media on X. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review, 4*(3), 1–14.
6. Dhahir, D. F., Kenda, N., Dirgahayu, D., Widihastuti, R., Rustam, M., & Pala, R. (2024). *The relationship of digital literacy, exposure to AI-generated deepfake videos, and the ability to identify deepfakes in Generation X. Pekommas: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat, 9*(2), 357–368.
7. Floridi, L. (2024). *AI-generated media and the crisis of epistemic trust.* Ethics and Information Technology, 26(2), 145–159. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-024-09612-7

8. Geissler, D. (2025). *Digital literacy interventions can boost people's ability to discern deepfakes: Comparison of five interventions. 2507.23492*

9. Iqbal, Z., & Qureshi, H. (2024). *The potential effects of deepfakes on news media and entertainment*. *AI & Ethics, 5*(1), 54–68. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-024-00472-5

10. Islam, M. B. E., Haseeb, M., Batool, H., Ahtasham, N., & Muhammad, Z. (2024). *AI Threats to Politics, Elections, and Democracy: A Blockchain-Based Deepfake Authenticity Verification Framework*. Blockchains, 2(4), 458-481. https://doi.org/10.3390/blockchains2040020

11. Javed, S., Rashidin, M. S., & Wang, J. (2024). *Effects of simple and detailed cues on perceived credibility of social media influencers: The moderating role of involvement*. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*(1), 1635. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04107-w

12. Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., & Cook, J. (2022). *Beyond misinformation: Understanding and coping with the "post-truth" era*. *Annual Review of Psychology, 73*, 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010419-050744

13. Li, F., Chen, Y., & Zhang, L. (2024). *Impact of AI-generated content labels on perceived accuracy, message credibility, and sharing intentions*. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 26*, e123456. https://doi.org/10.2196/123456

14. Lu, Y., Zhao, P., & Sun, W. (2024). *The influence of cognitive and emotional factors on social media users' information sharing: Quick or reflective thinking? Computers in Human Behavior, 155*, 107277. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.107277

15. Metzger, M. J., & Flanagin, A. J. (2013). Credibility and trust of information in online environments: The use of cognitive heuristics. *Journal of Pragmatics, 59*, 210–220. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.07.012

16. Mirsky, Y., & Lee, W. (2023). *The creation and detection of deepfakes: A survey. ACM Computing Surveys, 55*(3), 1–41. https://doi.org/10.1145/3505244

17. Möller, J., & Helberger, N. (2024). *Deepfakes, trust, and the crisis of authenticity in digital communication. New Media & Society, 26*(1), 77–95. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231122745

18. Rini, R. (2025). *Epistemic risks of synthetic media*. Philosophy & Technology, 38(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-025-00691-0

19. Sergeeva, O. V. (2025). *Impact of digital media literacy on attitudes toward generative AI acceptance in higher education. Frontiers in Education, 10*, 1563148. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1563148

20. Spinde, T., Wu, F., Gaissmaier, W., Demartini, G., & Giese, H. (2024). *Enhancing media literacy: The effectiveness of annotations and bias visualisations on bias detection. Journal of Media Literacy Research.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/27543873241234567

21. Vaccari, C., & Chadwick, A. (2023). *Deepfakes and disinformation: Understanding the impact of synthetic political video on deception, uncertainty and trust in news.* Digital Journalism, 11(2), 195–215. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2141819

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN TERMS OF DEFENSE AGRICULTURE: SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE CRITICAL IN AREAS RURAL

Marcin KOŚCIELNIAK
Pomeranian Higher School
Kościuszki 112/114 str. 83-200 Starogard Gdański, Poland
E-mail: marcin_k@poczta.onet.pl
ORCID: 0000-0001-7399-5721

Abstract. *Critical infrastructure located in rural areas plays a fundamental role in ensuring agricultural continuity, food security, and the socio-economic stability of the state. Contemporary rural infrastructure faces increasing pressure from complex and interrelated threats, including cyberattacks, climate-induced disasters, hybrid threats, supply-chain disruptions, and limited technological and financial resources. These challenges are particularly acute in Poland, where a significant share of strategic infrastructure supporting agriculture is dispersed across rural regions. The article aims to identify the key challenges associated with protecting agricultural critical infrastructure in rural areas and to propose strategic solutions that enhance its resilience and long-term security. The study is based on a critical analysis of domestic and international literature, legal regulations, security strategies, and policy documents related to critical infrastructure protection. The analysis reveals significant gaps in existing regulatory frameworks and management practices, especially in addressing the specific conditions of rural areas. The findings emphasize the necessity of integrated risk management, cybersecurity development, public – private partnerships, and active involvement of local communities. The article proposes systemic, organizational, and technological measures to strengthen resilience, reduce cascading failures, and improve crisis response capabilities. The results contribute to ongoing research on critical infrastructure protection by highlighting the rural dimension, which remains underrepresented in existing studies, and by offering practical recommendations for policymakers and security practitioners.*

Keywords: critical infrastructure; rural areas; agricultural security; cybersecurity; risk management; resilience

Introduction

Growing complexity problem security infrastructure critical located in the areas rural, with elements contemporary threats: cyberattacks, changes climatic tensions geopolitical, gives rise to essential question, extremely important both for practices management public and private, as also for theory security. What is effective? protects infrastructure critical in areas rural Before threats defensive elements infrastructure critical (systems energy supply, water supply, transport, communication, security health) constitute because foundation functioning agriculture, i.e. key elements influencing the level security food state. The problem of protection infrastructure agricultural Before contemporary threats is especially significant in Poland, due to the high participation areas rural areas where located are strategic for security countries elements infrastructure critical.

Concern for the state infrastructure critical located in areas rural Is justified her big meaning for correct functioning states, economies and general safety. Due to the large extent areas rural, weak access to modern technology, and also limited resources (financial and human resources) and dispersion elements infrastructure, difficult Is quick responding in case of disruptions in her functioning. Contemporary threats, such How catastrophic phenomena weather, cyberattacks and threats hybrid Whether chain disorders supplies, encourage active partner cooperation various entities, including administration public, enterprises and community local, in order to assurances effective protection infrastructure. In the current, dominated by quick changes environmental and technological environment, necessary stands

myself implementation interdisciplinary solutions that combine aspects technical, social and managerial.

The goal article Is identification basic challenges in protection infrastructure critical located in areas rural and proposal strategy limiting risk and long-term immunity this one infrastructure to disruptions, with indication roles and responsibilities administration public and community local. Way implementation goals article will enable indication conclusions and recommendations both for practitioners and the environment scientific and will allow identify areas for further research in the field of issues protection infrastructure critical.

In the article was carried out critical analysis literature, domestic and foreign reports in the field security, identified Polish regulations legal and strategies in the field of protection infrastructure critical. Conducted she was reflection strategic and systemic on the topic opportunities and needs protection infrastructure critical, what led to the formulation hypotheses about the existence important gaps in Polish regulations and methods management security infrastructure agriculture compared to analyses at the level European and international. Critically rated functioning mechanisms protection infrastructure critical and proposed solutions alternative in terms of national background concept included at the level international. State of research indicates a growing interest issues protection infrastructure critical due to the increasing threats for her functioning. However, many research refers to protection specific sector or aspects protection infrastructure Before specific threats and very rarely in relation to areas rural. This justifies taking up such issues in this article and consequently putting questions research. What solutions organizational, technical and systemic are effective in securing infrastructure critical agriculture in the areas rural areas in Poland ?

Structure article consists of one of the most important definitions and scopes concepts infrastructure critical in the rural areas. In the further parts article described contemporary threats for infrastructure agricultural. Presented too system assurances security infrastructure critical agriculture That special taking into account procedures grades risks, ways prevention and minimization effects disruptions and development ability to defend infrastructure critical. In detail described also duties administration public in the field of assurances security infrastructure agriculture. In the last parts article presented conclusions from the conducted analyses and recommendations.

Infrastructure critical in areas rural areas – definitions and scope

Infrastructure critical in rural affects the safety of their inhabitants and stability economies. There are this systems and resources necessary for functioning energy electricity, water supply, transport, telecommunications and advanced technology. Failure these elements infrastructure critical Maybe lead to serious problems economic and social, lack continuity work sector agricultural and reducing security food (Vijayan, 2024, p. 1).

In a special way in the countryside important are systems irrigation, local sources energy and ICT and connections Communication failure a single one of them Maybe pull for yourself domino disruptions in others sectors, limiting too access to services health, education and care public (Vijayan, 2024, p. 1).

Therefore, definition infrastructure critical for areas rural, outside what about her should, ought to to contain characteristics related to reliability system, resistance to interference actions due to contemporary threats, cyberattacks, sabotage Whether Too disinformation. New threats destabilize system by break actions infrastructure critical on various levels (Mayorkas, 2024, p. 2; Setola et al., 2016, p. 19).

But infrastructure critical in villages characterizes myself many weaknesses that due to

the lack of centralization, small investments and weak automation, what makes it difficult monitoring potential threats. Systems irrigation, energy and transport in the countryside include wide areas with low density population, what creates difficulties in ensuring appropriate protection (Vijayan, 2024, p. 1; Setola et al., 2016, p. 12).

Also insufficient financing and services technical they limit development technological. Investments and modernization infrastructure rural they are progressing slower than in cities. It makes it easier this spread myself effects failure to other sectors (Vijayan, 2024, p. 1). Limited access to advanced technologies such as How sensors, communication satellite and telemetry, constitutes next problem, slowing down their integration.

Therefore, security infrastructure critical requires strategy responding to limited resources technologies and requirements areas rural, including assurances inclusion local administration, but too education in the field of management and implementation procedures security in sectors agricultural (Vijayan, 2024, p. 1). In addition education on the subject threats for local communities and their inclusion in the system security Maybe efficiently to correct protection and cooperation between various administrations will allow you to quickly way counteract potential damage.

Communities local they should to take active participation in shaping procedures protection and in response to accidents, in monitoring system safety to include their voice in improvement services security (Vijayan, 2024, p. 2).

Management and operation services public and system monitoring they can be data - based delivered by local stakeholders. Beyond identification challenges and needs system protection Maybe this lead to early warning about threats, what contributes to their prevention (Vijayan, 2024, p. 2). Besides this inclusion local community aims to lift awareness about threats and responsibilities for local safety. Practical testing effective procedures security local is in some countries part of mandatory training officers on duty. Additionally should to underline benefits solutions using partnerships public-private and local community. Projects implemented in this mode May the biggest chances good luck because they provide services on- site security, and what for this it's going better recognizing and adapting to needs local (Vijayan, 2024, p. 2).

In accordance with the requirements European and standards international, including Directive 2008/114/EC on identification and designation European infrastructure critical and evaluation needs in terms of improvement her protection, each country EU member states have designated units level national and lower. Selection level and criteria designations these units left to the decision countries member states.

Security infrastructure critical in the EU is because process multi-stage, and individual stages, e.g. designation entities or assessment threats, they can realize different institutions public and private. In countries EU member states identifying sectors infrastructure critical and related entities completed According to uniform methodology. It creates this but just theoretical a chance for transnational exchange information. In practice countries member states they are implementing independently developed solutions in the field procedures safety. There is this especially visible in areas rural, where local character infrastructure critical makes it difficult implementation concept rungs power organized at a higher level than municipal (Setola et al., 2016, p. 11).

Directive 2008/114/EC suggests implementation system including procedures management risk, planning continuity actions and estimation threats. Implementation system there is so much more difficult that recipes Directives impose on states EU member states order estimation threats at the level national and domestic. Agricultural sector was left defined as relevant for the EU, and at the same time countries Member States. Important Is interoperability

systems and effective exchange information between systems national and private (Setola et al., 2016, p. 11).

As they show last research, protection Before new ones threats maybe to be achieved Thanks security newly specific elements infrastructure critical, i.e. infrastructure digital. Increasingly bigger number services critical in areas rural, such how contemporary activity agricultural, chains supplies and services public, based in a bigger way degree on it. Protection infrastructure digital requires but take into account threats related that application modern and universal available technologies and their use for purposes prohibited (Mayorkas, 2024, p. 2). In particular speech here about cyberattacks and threats related to fast development and dissemination myself computers quantum, using, but too without him, algorithms artificial intelligence and capabilities generating " deep fakes" (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19). Protection subsystems digital refers to cyberspace. Suitable security requires complex strategy cybersecurity. In the area cybersecurity countries member states Union European they have to take up actions to implementation strategic plans cybersecurity and cooperation with others countries Member States and the Commission European Union, in accordance with the guidelines contained in the NIS directive. It is this this more important that security digital sector critical depends first of all to everyone from frame managers subsystems digital. Hence Too important issue Is perfecting professional development internet and advanced technologies such as How communication satellite and IoT, allowing for more effective monitoring and protection infrastructure critical, requires simultaneous implementation strategy at the level state and at the level enterprises, but also solutions regarding coordination both national and global (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19). Therefore, infrastructure critical in areas rural requires specific solutions ensuring their protection. Characteristic for this area weaknesses infrastructure critical caused by, among other things, dispersion her elements, limited resources and specificity surroundings socio-economic they cause necessity development solutions that will increase their resistance to interference actions caused contemporary threats.

Contemporary threats For infrastructure critical agriculture

Contemporary cyber threats for infrastructure critical agriculture due to growing quantity cyberattacks using complicated procedures they illustrate possible effect attacks on infrastructure critical rural agriculture. Hacker attack on the network distribution electricity in Ukraine, which was deprived of electricity in 2015 energy electricity 225 thousand users, shows how vulnerable to attack Is rural infrastructure critical and in what areas the most vulnerable to disruptions actions basic services, affecting safety local communities, including production food (Limba et al., 2017, p. 4).

A large threat in the area infrastructure water and energy, which is part of agriculture, is control her actions by cyberattack and lack means technical preventing takeover by attackers control over basic mechanisms her actions, what maybe result in longer lack of deliveries energy electricity and water, important in agriculture (Mayorkas, 2024, pp. 4-5).

Low, in some cases lack of awareness and knowledge procedures service system security for staff operators infrastructure critical they result frequent effectiveness cyberattacks, despite that are they made aware users and operators. Additional a hindrance to rural agriculture is limited capacity organizational and financial infrastructure critical and consequently lack professional training in operation and implementation devices technical securing systems before failures, what makes possible violations in the system security are not detected in time, causing their cascading, extensive character (Limba et al., 2017, p. 9). Low redundancy and small resources financial in agriculture in the case of cyberattack and disruption infrastructure

critical in this rural area they cause large vulnerability to damage and lack resources material to quickly restoration efficiency her rural activities systems water and energy and communication and logistics may smaller alternative means action (a lot lower redundancy infrastructure critical) and lack reserves financial for possible repairs or reconstruction, what maybe result in longer lack of deliveries services critical. It causes this worsening myself level life and ebb people from the countryside in search of more stable and safer conditions life (Vijayan, 2024, p. 1).

Hybrid threats are more and more common, using cyberattack, sabotage physical, and also disinformation in the case of attack on infrastructure critical. Such attacks they cause disruptions actions the whole system telecommunications, also satellite, making it impossible or limiting communication in the countryside. Such attack on infrastructure satellite, limiting communication in the countryside, while Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022, was attack on satellites communication companies Viasat (Mayorkas, 2024, p. 3).

Sabotaging activities infrastructure critical in the countryside remotely, most often by attack in cyberspace, causes destabilization technically simple systems operating in the area transport, supply and logistics, disrupting functioning enterprises and action chain logistics agriculture, causing chaos in the markets production agricultural on a larger scale area. Sabotage infrastructure is difficult to identify due to large vastness and dispersion physical objects system in the countryside, as well as with low consciousness staff operators, what requires construction own systems monitoring (Mayorkas, 2024, p. 3).

Activities disinformation they use situation chaos and lack information while various kind conflicts in countries that were left attacked. Infrastructure attacks IT they cause lack access to reliable information about possible disruption services local, what limits and often makes it impossible identification kind threats, e.g. local failures or attack on infrastructure. Disinformation causes chaos in reception information, even when actions systems technical are correct, destabilizing the situation on a given area. Chaos causes population stops trust messages government and local administrator, by What are deprived chances for a quick reaction, e.g. to actions terrorist (Brodacki et al., 2023, p. 10). Phenomena in the field of climate and environment they cause more frequent threats infrastructure critical in the countryside, in the form of various kind disasters that they disturb functioning rural logistics transport and supply of various kind means of production agricultural in the countryside. Phenomena such as floods, droughts and tornadoes, on the one hand pages they cause destruction and damage alone infrastructure critical in agriculture, but too a break in the chains supplies in the countryside. Their characteristics are low predictability time speeches and huge losses material – often they cause long-lasting downtime in the area deliveries basic materials production (Setola et al., 2016, pp. 5, 12). Example disruptions chain logistics in the aftermath actions nature this eruption volcano Eyjafjallajoekull in 2010. Effect chain domino was phenomenon dominant, hindering logistics transport and supplies, causing elongate time expectations, what severely felt areas rural with delayed deliveries materials operational for agriculture, e.g. fuels (Setola et al., 2016, p. 12).

Weak and often Very weak, resistance to excessive loads in the areas rural with scattered building and low redundancy rural infrastructure critical are the biggest the problem that they evoke phenomenon domino. There is this most often occurring problem, because disruption situation actions one sector, e.g. distribution energy electrical, affects the disruption work next – delivery water (limitation irrigation fields, preventing work rural plants processing agricultural, lack power supply farms household, transport refrigeration, trucks fire brigade, ambulance emergency services rescue), and then food supply (lack of deliveries food and restriction her transport, trade food limited by not working store cash registers and devices

storage food demanding power supply). Such a situation domino repeats myself also in the sphere agriculture, while disruptions in the global system transport, what an example was COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown availability materials consumables for machines agricultural in the countryside, lack of markets station fuels due to quarantine staff (Setola et al., 2016, p. 12; Mayorkas, 2024, p. 3). Global problem more and more bigger fuel demand liquid within ten years fugitive follow the trend limitations import oil From eastern neighbour. In Poland also tendency Is growth – by 33% over decades (Brodacki et al., 2023, p. 7), therefore necessary Is development existing national bases warehouse For fuels. Poland achieved in 2020–2022 level storage fuel for 75 days. Domestic warehouses fuels liquid they enlarge base supplies (PERN), and in addition add up should growth abilities storage at the terminal in Dębogórze. Budgets for the annual checks national databases oil petroleum and products oil are not enough controlled. States developing myself more and more they limit import oil that strategically important, but more and more inflammatory, areas. The consequence Is lack possibilities purchase stocks to cover possible, unpredictable disruptions global chain logistics oil, and on the market national are created deficiencies (Brodacki et al., 2023, pp. 7-8).

Functionality and operation elements components infrastructure critical in the area agriculture in large measure depend From chain flow data and materials logistics, where more and more bigger meaning plays monitoring and control risks and diversification infrastructure transport has basic impact on delivery products agricultural to others, also endangered areas, causing global problem supplies population in basic means life, including food (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19). Directive Union The European NIS of 2016 imposes on countries member states duty implementation coherent, national strategy cybersecurity (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19).

Mostly research regarding protection rural infrastructure Is described and explained security systems telecommunications and security critical objects material infrastructure physical activity in the countryside, but lack in them mentions of taking into account elements systemic in procedures planning and management due to their poor developed technology and lack staff to service them. Average system security cyberspace has large number weak points because of different specifics areas management and limited systems monitoring their safety (Mayorkas, 2024, pp. 4-5). Development system cybersecurity Is necessary and has big impact on protection resources digital in the countryside, e.g. accounts customers in the systems banking. According to TNO research was more than 9500 incidents, of which effects in the sphere economic were multi-sectoral (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19). The consequences of their effects the most they touch population, including rural.

Hedging Strategies infrastructure agricultural

Effectiveness security infrastructure agricultural in areas village requires organized management risk catastrophic and developing abilities protective. Challenge this assumes in today's world both implementation tasks preventive measures, as well as the use of new technology increasing resistance systems on the impact forces nature and action cybernetic. Includes strategy minimization effects and assurance continuity critical processes economic areas village, entering into a wider context protection infrastructure critical described in the work.

Management risk catastrophic

Management risk catastrophic in agriculture in the areas rural creates essential barriers resulting from the limitations scale and amount Help financial. In the years 2009–2014, ad hoc

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris
University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

aid could be provided to count only 487 farms, which accounts for <1% of all individual farmers. Average sum Help financial she hesitated around 13 thousand zlotys, but in areas the most affected a disaster, which was Masovia and Podlasie, payments exceeded 100 thousand zlotys. Minimum range support excludes from the group recipients help large hi people because of too small scale damage. Relatively low sum support will not allow reconstruct agricultural infrastructure after severe disaster, especially in areas haunted her cyclically (Soliwoda et al., 2017, pp. 9–10). Large differentiation amounts Help financial breakdown territorial confirms legitimacy politics regional diversified That due to the scale risks, based on type risks and scale losses (example Mazovia and Podlasie) for limitations precipitate caused an event catastrophic. Help financial directed is in large small and medium - sized companies, what Is right action for their survival after disaster, but on the other hand pages maybe lead to a situation lack of support that pages countries for farms with the largest surface land use agricultural (Soliwoda et al., 2017, p. 10).

Enabling reduced threshold minimal precipitate required to receive support financial from 30% to 20% of the value production aims to improvement availability Help financial For farms in difficult situation. Too restrictive criteria they can to be a factor that makes it difficult satisfaction demand for the system insurance related to liquidation barriers access. Increase level management competences risk at the level micro Is as important How reduction costs insurance. Probability use insurance index is 24% higher in farms with higher level competences owner / manager in management risk catastrophic (Kulawik, 2025, pp. 23, 27). Shortage capital financial (decreasing allocation management capital risk catastrophic) maybe create opportunities for development new, more effective ways to protect Before consequences risks catastrophic. Insurance index they offer transparent, fast and hassle-free element subjective interpretation compensation way support farmers after defeat (Kulawik, 2025, p. 23).

In relation to the national system security food necessity systemic actions states in terms of management risk catastrophic in the sector agriculture spends myself necessary in response to the ongoing global change climate. Identification these areas and types risks catastrophic (mapping threats) may bring practical value on many levels, including planning preventive means intervention minimizing their negative effects (practical example - flood in Wrocław in 1997 and practices preventive) (Wieteska -Rosiak, 2016, pp. 8–9).

Enabling management preventive (detection threats and control, risk response) may allow for limitation time devoted to rebuilding farms after catastrophe. Growth competences farmers in terms of management risk Is important from the perspective effectiveness intervention public (Wieteska -Rosiak, 2016, p. 8).

Enabling recovery / rebuilding farms agricultural after touching them by disaster lively maybe serve in building capital social local community. Important is too systemic flow information about losses, but too fast reaction to change risks, and also prevention growth interdependencies risks in the economy. Fast and effective disaster response enables growth immunity societies, limiting dependence between systems economic at the level local and regional and better capacity absorption and adaptation enterprises (Wieteska -Rosiak, 2016, p. 8). Help financial small farms Is good action countries, apart from scale help and its efficiency. Ensuring Help financial in situations crisis improves stability income (base immunity social response to crises), but limits expenses in another area - on prevention. To put it simply - prevention does not provide possibilities control and verification incurred losses in the disaster. You have to remember that stability in the country this just half problem security in the system distribution food, anxiety general in turn this risk of "conspiracy to limitations supplies" (Soliwoda et al., 2017, p. 11). Moving to the level systemic maybe deliver integrated control and planning approaches flows information and communication in order to prevention negative

consequences risks catastrophic. Interoperability this is one of the most important arguments in favour use systems informational as systems, not a package tools. One-sidedness approaches leaning on the model verification Just one type system informational makes it difficult creation model integrated system in which everyone his element Maybe cooperate by providing current information about system and environment. New technologies IT they enable controlling state infrastructure for help tools based on applications mobile, such as integrated systems early warning / monitoring, control state threats local / regional infrastructure. Systems systemic they can analyse data from several sources and provide scenarios changes to the system and they carry out processes analysis sensitivity and analysis risks. It allows this developing indicators in monitoring state system along with his the environment, and this in turn gives possibilities forecasting development the situation in the environment and adjustments strategic in relation to environment and expected directions his development (Kulawik, 2025, p. 23).

Development abilities protective

Development abilities protective infrastructure critical in areas rural involves the implementation modern technology digital, such How systems telemetry, smart grids Whether automation response to anomalies. They serve one to the current one monitoring infrastructure and limitations risks breaks delivery energy Whether water in areas with limited redundancy. They favour diversification sources energy Thanks application micro-installations photovoltaic or biogas plant. A barrier Is whereas Cost implementation and education appropriate competences staff managing director such systems (Vijayan, 2024, p. 2; Mayorkas, 2024, p. 2). Management incidents stands myself more effective Thanks investments in competences staff management. Research indicate that are this difficult to copy resources that determine competitiveness organization. Training staff responsible for management infrastructure in the areas rural should to combine component technical, process (management risk, response crisis) and skill inclusion local community in the project modernization. Recommended Is implementation certificates competence and leading audits readiness operational. Equally important Is special offer innovation and culture organizational favourable learning myself By whole life (Krupski et al., 2014, p. 12). Construction relationship institutional and implementation PPP models are action that allows to limit risk and increase effect synergy, as a result distractions outlays. PPP allows also implement strategies cooperative competition that activate in local communities mechanisms capital social and build trust in managers institutions. Instruments financing such How crowdfunding, finance mixed, CSR programs allow bind capital local enterprises, residents, and also institutions international (Vijayan, 2024, p. 2; Krupski et al., 2014, p. 13).

Implementation coherent procedures security measures (physical and digital) based on international standards (NIS directive, guidelines American DHS) is process incessant. It involves continuous identification elements infrastructure and inclusion in the network management risk and testing security (tests penetration audits cybersecurity, implementation systems detection intruders etc.). There is especially important to risks attacks hybrid, i.e. combination aggression with elements sabotage in the physical and digital environment. Effectiveness Yes outlined strategy protection requires on the one hand pages commitment high- ranking staff competences digital (engineers cybersecurity, security managers), on the other hand and regular analyses risks and procedures (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19; Mayorkas, 2024, pp. 4-5). Analysis interference, for example eruption volcano Eyjafjallajoekull in Iceland, and its effects on the global system distribution goods and capital this relevant element construction immunity systemic. It indicates the need implementation approaches systemic,

which assumes prediction and simulation (predictions cascading). Management crisis has to be consistent with the process analysis incidents, because disruptions they indicate directly to the elements that should improve. Improvement procedures repair and investments in analysis predictive allow shorten time to return to normal from before incident (Setola et al., 2016, pp. 5, 12).

The above challenges are for most systems of a nature rural apart from range possibilities That due to their limited resistance, hence exists need take up by managers institutions infrastructural activities proactive, allowing strengthen system responding to crises and disruptions.

The role of administration public in protection infrastructure

Administration public constitutes important actor process protection infrastructure critical in areas rural, which on the one hand pages involves designing and implementing politician, but also coordination and enforcement law. In Poland role this rests on determining procedures and connecting actions various organs administration. Actions preventive in terms of protection infrastructure critical conducted by administration public they should to be comprehensive, yes to secured areas security - related both physical and digital infrastructure critical. Effectiveness Police as actor security common in large measure depends from resources that they will be made available for their actions related to protection infrastructure critical. Actions entities sector public cooperating with entities from the sector private require that together secured evacuation, property and people (Kowalski et al., 2022, pp. 7, 11). Remember But it is necessary that differences regional and other needs that has characteristic area the countryside, make security infrastructure critical still stands a sign inquiries.

Continuous deficiency means technical, and also low employment, especially in entities Police having impact on infrastructure critical in the rural areas, make 74 % of respondents representing services public points out shortcomings hardware, what influences negatively on the degree implementation tasks (Kowalski et al., 2022, p. 14). Deficit hardware makes time reaction while damage infrastructure gives in elongation, and the same repair damage lasts much longer. Effective response to the effects, for example failure power supply in the areas rural Whether destruction waterworks stands myself by this more and more difficult. Deficit frame whereas reduces resistance infrastructure critical for possible disruptions in processes and limits exercised over her supervision. Development technical and systematic increase frame are necessary. It must be in it but take place improvement on all planes. Improvement tasks implemented by staff, as well as changes in the area organizational, for example appropriate chapter tasks, support social and activation residents for the needs implementation tasks protection infrastructure critical, improve indicator effectiveness in the area infrastructure critical in the countryside.

Currently security infrastructure critical brings to security both areas both digital and physical. Responsibilities countries Member States in the scope implementation requirements in the area protection infrastructure critical are based on guidelines NIS Directives. National regulations in large measure they reflect also guidelines Department Security Internal States States (Setola et al., 2016, p. 19; Mayorkas, 2024, pp. 4-5), point to the protection networks ICT and mechanisms control and supervision in the sector infrastructure. Without systematic measurement risks protection cannot to be appropriate. Prevention system cyberattacks and attacks of a hybrid requires cyclical and systematic analysis risks. System disruptions water and telecommunications, which they had place in areas rural, proved that threats this should to counteract because infrastructure digital stands myself attractive an object of attack for purposes

destabilization. Protection in this dimension should therefore to be also focused on improvement competences staff and regular updating and improving infrastructure and procedures security in the area cybersecurity. Based on experiences others countries, especially events of a nature cascading disruptions and cyberattacks (Setola et al., 2016, p. 12; Mayorkas, 2024, p. 3), administration public implements innovative tools preventing disruptions processes in the sector infrastructure critical. Launched are also tools alarming and systems monitoring automated in the context management crisis. Real scenario crisis allows identify weaknesses systemic in protection resources infrastructure critical. Through testing immunity resources you can therefore improve protection and planning system for the future. States implementing innovative and modern strategies management crisis in the area infrastructure critical they can be myself model for solutions national, such as marking out strategy and policy protection, indicators and procedures response. States implementing advanced strategies protection resources they should therefore to be used in the aspect benchmarking.

Cooperation with local communities within process protection infrastructure critical in the areas rural improves effectiveness system. Activation and activity communities in the process monitoring Whether reporting damage infrastructure and presence communities in training regarding crises (Kowalski et al., 2022, p. 11; Setola et al., 2016, p. 19) strengthens general system protection resources critical. Inclusion community rural to the process planning in the field protection resources at the level local improves fit system at the level regional and local. Launch interactive management That communities rural at the level local government enables more efficient realization function protective, but too more efficient use available resources infrastructure and hardware.

Summary

Implementation purpose work – in-depth analysis strategy protection infrastructure critical in areas rural areas – allowed for answers to the goals set in operational questions regarding characteristics threats and strategies protective. The need identification meanings infrastructure critical For safety, sustainability and development areas rural was motivation For taken work, and obtained as a result research results were left presented in the work of a nature interdisciplinary.

Implementation goals cognitive led to the establishment beings infrastructure critical in areas rural, taking into account her dispersion, availability resources and potential multiples threats to which Maybe to be exposed. Confirmed it turns out that imperfection redundancy systems, difficulties monitoring and limited availability modern technology security in areas rural increase risk disorders of a nature cascading and long-term. Currently, the biggest danger identified is in cyberspace, that due to the possibilities violations security systems ICT and phenomena hybrid, disinformation and consequences changes climate and disturbances chains supplies. Research lead to the conclusion that management catastrophic risk and competences and technologies digital Mutually myself complement each other in creating integrated strategy security infrastructure critical in areas rural. Implementation purpose cognitive possible was Thanks combination critical analysis literature with identification areas knowledge in which in Polish conditions necessary Is taking into account special aspects. Classification support and security infrastructure indicates the essence adjustments financial, political, regional and tools management risk to different needs farms, especially distinctions small and large farms, taking into account their strategic meanings for security food. Within the framework of synthetic shots strategy management risk catastrophic and developing immunity infrastructure critical in areas rural, identified strategies and instruments determining resistance infrastructure, taking into

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

account insurance index and tools IT competences resources human rights, partnership public-private and activation and education communities local.

Article enters in the developing myself current research over resistance infrastructure critical in areas rural areas. Compared to the dominant global literature direction research immunity cities, this Work brings identification and evaluation the most important weak points infrastructure critical in areas rural. Development this indicates that security key assets and services infrastructure in the areas rural Is process systemic. It should this constitute set integrated solutions technological, operational and management, which they provide efficient implementation tasks administration public, business and resources human in areas rural. At work were left developed practical recommendations in the field protection infrastructure critical, especially important That due to the specificity Polish the village where features distinctive are first of all to everyone dispersion infrastructure, limited resources and imperfections management crisis. Limitations related to the study result in particular from the unavailability current and aggregated at the level municipal data, what results in limitation analyses quantitative to data secondary. Furthermore, due to restrictions financial were not completed tests empirical on a larger scale and necessary Is supplement research That special taking into account areas different under in relation to development regional and differentiation farms.

Recommendations for the future they should concentrate myself first of all everyone in the area research in the field of research systemic at a higher level complexity and studies cases in a wider scale interdisciplinary. In the area research concerning studies cases recommended are further analysis comparative between regions and countries, expansion areas research on policy and education related to security infrastructure at the level municipalities and tests quantitative effects practical politician security infrastructure and identification restrictions. Recommended Is further development analyses in relation to competences personnel, management resources crisis, analysis technology and evaluation applications technology, research regarding efficiency partnerships public- private situations crisis areas rural.

Analyses and syntheses research lead to the following recommendations:

1. Launch multi-stage system education for protection and management infrastructure critical, encompassing horizontal schools primary, middle, high school and professional.

2. Development cooperation between entities public and private in order to increase security and protection infrastructure critical, through introduction solutions of a nature systemic, including certification safety (ISO).

3. Strengthening protection infrastructure critical by building immunity network, redundancy, diversity and systems cybersecurity.

4. Determination role, resources and responsibilities for building resistance in systems infrastructure critical, also apart from enterprise (chain supplies).

5. Categorization assets enterprises infrastructure from the point of view goodbye risks interruption of activity.

6. Strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure critical in enterprises and IT networks, including assurance resources specialists in this field.

Personal reflection from work over this article from one page makes you realize need interdisciplinary perception beings problems, on the other hand pages assures of the rightness parties interdisciplinary approaches to conducting research, where analyses of the nature financial complement deal with the issues economic, technical, technological, but too sciences political and management.

MRU
Mykolas Romeris University

References

1. Brodacki, D., Jankowski, D.P., Ogarek, P., Rafał, D., Ruszel, M., & Turowski, P. (2023). Directions for the development of Poland's critical infrastructure in the face of challenges for the security of the region and energy transformation. Pillars of security in the field of oil and fuel supplies in the Central European and Baltic Sea region in the years: 2013-2023 (IPE Analysis, 4/2023). Institute Politics Ignacy Energy Łukasiewicz.

2. Kowalski, D., Skalski, D.W., Czarnecki, D., & Graczyk, M. (2022). The Role of the Volunteer Guard Fire brigade during crisis. Pomeranian Security Forum, No. I-II(12-13)/2022, 43-53.

3. Krupski, R., Mroczko, F., Kowalczuk, E., Wychowanek, J., Moskal- Słaniewska, B., Zarówna, M., Dunicz, M., Szejna, M., Jabłonko, O., Zielinski, M., Bilicka, E., Świder, J., Wojtoszek, K., & Sempryk, J. (2014). Scientific. Wałbrzych Higher Schools Management and Entrepreneurship, Vol. 29, 5-195. Publishing House Wałbrzyska Higher Schools Management and Entrepreneurship in Wałbrzych.

4. Kulawik, J. (2025). Management risk catastrophic events in agriculture. Insurance in Agriculture – Materials and Studies, 1(83), 7-42.

5. Limba, T., Plėta, T., Agafonov, K., & Damkus, M. (2017). Cyber security management model for critical infrastructure. The International Journal Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues, 4(4), 559-573.

6. Mayorkas, A. N. (2024). Strategic Guidance and National Priorities for US Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (2024-2025). US Department of Homeland Security.

7. Setola, R., Rosato, V., Kyriakides, E., & Rome, E. (Eds.). (2016). Managing the complexity of critical infrastructures (Volume 90). Springer International Publishing AG.

8. Soliwoda, M., Pawłowska-Tyszko, J., & Gorzelak, A. (2017). Management risk catastrophic in agriculture – selected problems. Finance, Markets Financial, Insurance, 1(85), 681–693.

9. Vijayan, V.M.A. (2024). Rural Infrastructure Development: Challenges, Opportunities and Future Directions. Shikshan Sanshodhan: Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 7(06), 28-32.

10. Wieteska -Rosiak, B. (2016). ECOLOGICAL SAFETY OF THE CITY. Publishing House University Lodz.

SOME THOUGHTS AND CRITICISMS REGARDING THE REARMEUROPE PLAN-READINESS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE

Dimitris LIAKOPOULOS

Center of European and International Justice
777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA
E-mail: profdl@europe.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6803-5774

Abstract: *The present paper seeks to explore some recent current considerations regarding European rearmament policy. The March 2025 ReArmEurope Plan/Readiness document is a "cutting-edge" innovation, a response to the ongoing war in Ukraine, aimed at laying the foundations for the process of European integration and development begun years ago. The slow pace of progress in the defense sector, the work undertaken by the Atlantic Alliance and the Trump presidency have brought European defense developments to the forefront at the European and international level, within a framework expected to run until 2030. The work of financial resources, state, national and private funding, creating a technological and industrial base, has placed defense policy at a critical juncture for European and national defense, raising considerable criticism for this sector. The method we used is based on documents drafted by the Union institutions themselves and on the limited scholarship on the subject. We don't have and we can't use as a method a relevant jurisprudence in merit of the argument. We attempt to provide a brief, precise and critical analysis of the current and future stages of European defense policy during the rather challenging times Europe is experiencing in this area.*

Keywords: *European Union law; ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness; European defense policy; SAFE; PESCO; European integration; ASAP; EDIRPA; CARD; EPF; NextGenerationEU.*

Introduction

We have reached yet another important milestone with the plan presented on 4 March 2025 by the President of the European Commission (EC), Ursula Von Der Leyen, entitled: ReArm Europe. First and foremost, it is a list of proposals based on and used by the financial sector and then available to the EU member states in oreder to rapidly increase their European defense spending.[1] The initial criticisms are both positive and negative. The project was initially presented by the European Council on 6 March 2025, when European leaders exchanged views that led to a substantial green light for their plan.[2] A few days later, on 11 March 2025, the

---

1 All the online documents of my paper was updated and accessed online until 30 November 2025. See, Press Statement by President Von der Leyen on the Defence Package, 4 March 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/sv/statement_25_673. A. Duff, *"NATO and the European Union: Bridging the gap",* in European Policy Centre, Brussels, 13 May 2024. For a statistical sources of member states of EU in relation to defence amounts see: Government expenditure on defence: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Government_expenditure_on_defence#Highlights.

2 See the Conclusions of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council, 6 March 2025: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/aqbp5qxm/20250306-european-council-conclusions-en.pdf. In merit of some Member states decisions and various positions see: Reuters, *"Belgium aims to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP this year",* in Reuters, 4 March 2025: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belgium-aims-hike-defence-spending-2-gdp-this-year-de-tijd-reports-2025-03-04/. *M. Bryant,* "Denmark to spend billions on defence, citing fears over Russian rearmament", *in The Guardian, 19 February 2025:* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/19/denmark-to-spend-billions-on-defence-citing-fears-over-russian-rearmament. ERR, *"Minister: Estonia's defense spending will be over 4% of GDP in 2026",* in ERR, 19.02.2025: https://news.err.ee/1609610003/minister-estonia-s-defense-spending-will-be-over-4-of-gdp-in-2026.

President presented ReArm Europe to the European Parliament, seeking a positive response from MEPs and from those who had different opinions on the future of European defense.[3] On 19 March 2025, the EC presented the first proposals for a plan entitled ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2023. These lay the foundation for abandoning the relative use of the term rearmament as a defense proposal based on the communication and proposal of the regulation. The President of the EC and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kallas highlighted the White Paper for European Defence-Readiness 2023. This is a programming document that provided a political-strategic reference framework according to the ReArm Europe plan, including a roadmap that reconstructed for European defense the strengthening of member states' preparedness in the face of future scenarios, as we have experienced in practice with the aggression of the Russian Federation v. Ukraine.[4] The initiatives were discussed by the European Council on 20 and 21 March by the heads of state and government, who did not approve the EC initiatives that were implemented with greater urgency.[5]

The ReArm Europe plan, as well as subsequent documents, are linked to a series of events and trends that currently characterize the international geopolitical context. The response to US President Donald Trump's decision was to permanently suspend military aid to Ukraine[6]. At the same time, the EC project assumes responsibility for Europe in the face of much discussion and commentary from the US president, as well as the UN's relative disengagement from defense policy in the old continent and requests for European allies to increase their contribution to NATO's GDP.[7] The trend was toward a relative return to concepts and scenarios that considered

---

M. Karnitsching, N. Alipour, *"With an eye on Trump and Putin, Germany's likely new coalition prepares to rebuild the military and jumstart the economy"*, in Euractiv, 06.06.2025: https://www.euractiv.com/news/germanys-centrist-parties-plan-to-unlock-billions-for-defence-and-infrastructure/. J. *Fox, (22 February 2025). "Defence budget should reach highest level of €3bn, says Tànaiste", in RTÉ, 22.02.2025:* https://www.rte.ie/news/2025/0222/1498201-defence-forces/. J. *Budginaite-Froehly,* "Lithuania connects to Europe's rearmament industry", *in CEPA, 20.02.2025:* https://cepa.org/article/lithuania-connects-to-europes-rearmament-industry/. *G. Sorgi, C. Martuscelli, G. Faggionato,* "EU wide borrowing dfor defence a "no brainer", says Spain's finance minister", *in Politico, 17-02-2025:* https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-wide-borrowing-for-defense-a-no-brainer-says-spains-finance-minister/. J. Liboreiro, *"Poland pitces rearmament bank to boost Europe's defence spending",* in Euronews, *6 February 2025:* https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/02/06/poland-pitches-rearmament-bank-to-boost-europes-defence-spending. *Romania Journal, "EU plans balck sea security hub, invests in Romania, Bulgaria", in Romania Journal. 29 August 2025:* https://www.romaniajournal.ro/politics/eu-plans-black-sea-security-hub-invests-in-romania-bulgaria/

3 MEPs debate: Future of EU Defence and Support for Ukraine, 11 March 2025: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20250310IPR27219/meps-debate-future-of-eu-defence-and-support-for-ukraine

4 Commission Unveils the White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_793. White Paper for European Defence and the ReArme Europe Plan/Readiness 2030: Remarks by High Representtive/Vice-President Kaja Kallas at the Press Conference, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/white-paper-european-defence-and-rearm-europe-planreadiness-2030-remarks-high-representativevice_en. E. Pollman, *"The crime of aggression and the case of Ukraine",* in American Yearbook of International Law-AYIL, 1, 694-729.

5 European Council Conclusions, 20 March 2025: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/20/european-council-conclusions-20-march-2025/

6 G., Irto, I. Kharitonov, T. Nishikawam C. Trebesch, "Ukraine Aid: How Europe Can Replace US Support", in *Kiel Policy Brief* 186, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 2025: https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/ukraine-aid-how-europe-can-replace-us-support-33907/

7 D. Liakopoulos, *"Interpretations, thoughts and critics of international responsibility of the European Union in the implementation of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)", i*n International and European Union

the recourse to rearmament and the deterrent function obsolete. The EC framed the related process from the time of the Union to push European states to assume responsibility for European defense by addressing the fragmentation of national armies[8]. In a direct way, the trend consolidated over the years of reliance on NATO and especially on the continuous American support for defense, in addition to the economic and financial crisis during 2007 and 2013, has led to a depletion of the relevant defense budgets for all member states.[9]

Within this scenario, the Union has sought to encourage a progressive increase in the military capabilities of the member states, especially in their interoperability,[10] by developing and operating a synergy that acts as a leading harbinger of the birth of a common European defense in accordance with the spirit of Art. 42, paragraph 2 TEU.[11] Thus, a common defense was defined through the fusion of national armies and a true European army, equipped with structures based on and removed from the authority of the member states, directly under the relative command and the political and military command structures of the Union.

A "perfect marriage" between political and military commands had always been a difficult reality. The choices regarding defense and the establishment of an institution for maintaining armies were, in effect, a matter of a certain responsibility for the member states. The Union thus played the role of facilitator through direct action for the integration, strengthening and financial consolidation of the related efforts, leaving the states to decide, implement and develop their defense capabilities. Thus, the Union's commitment, especially at the financial level and the efforts of the states, decide and develop the role and commitment of the Union, especially of the EC, to foster the creation of a European defense industry capable of meeting the member states' needs in the field of defense capabilities.[12]

A bit of past history

The history of the birth and stages of defense policy are not of much interest for the present investigation. Instead, we would like to focus briefly on "the mutual defensive assistance clause". Since crises continue, it is important, in every case of armed aggression against another member state's territory, to consider other member states that provide support and assistance by all means. As a reference point, we also have Article 42, paragraph 7 TEU, which provides for a form of ordinary cooperation. When exercises are jointly implemented to make Article 42, paragraph 7 TEU operational, Article 5 of the Atlantic Pact is simultaneously activated in the event of an armed attack on a member state of the Union and NATO.

In this regard, Article 42, paragraph 7 of the TEU will be operational for the Atlantic clause. The issue of activation regarding coordination on the battlefield allows the European clause to express itself in a form of systematic cooperation between member states. This

---

Legal Matters-working paper series, 2018, 4ss. See also the List of sovereign states in Europe by GDP (PPP): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_in_Europe_by_GDP_(PPP)

8 Press release, April 30, 2025 Brussels, 12 Member States request activation of the national escape clause in a coordinated move to boost defence spending: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1121

9 S. Blockmans, *"The EU's Modular Approach to Defence Integration: An Inclusive, Ambitious and Legally Binding PESCO?",* in Common Market Law Review, n. 55 (6), 2018, pp. 1785-1826.

10 R. Vanholme, *"Military Interoperability. Assessing the European Defence Initiatives of 2009 and 2016",* in FINABEL, Bruxelles, Working Paper, 1/2021, https://finabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.-EU-Law-and-Military-Interoperability-1-compressed.pdf.

11 M., Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, J., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024

12 Communication from the Commission. Defence Action Plan, 30 November 2016, COM(2016) 950 final: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52016DC0950

conclusion confirms positions also taken in Article 42, paragraph 7 of the TEU regarding the operationalization of Article 5 of the Atlantic Pact. Not all member states favor this European provision. Indeed, Poland and the Baltic states, most in favor, connect with the Atlantic clause.[13]

We must also highlight a non-systematic cooperation that seeks to financially benefit from financing programs, appropriations from the Union budget that are allocated to support military capabilities development projects. In this spirit, we mention the European Defence Fund, which, during the period 2021-2027, has sought to promote competitiveness, innovation, an industrial base, defense technology, etc. namely, the European Connection Mechanism[14] and the financing for the development of mobility, including a military one. In this regard, we recall, ASAP3[15] and EDIRPA,[16] two programs that began operating in 2023 to also support, respectively, the production of munitions for joint defense procurement.

The temporary instruments are replaced by the European Defence Industry Programme upon their approval. This highlights the legal bases that also allow for an influence on the Union's competences within the Lisbon Treaty, which may also affect defence developments. The related regulations are not adopted through the CSDP but within the framework of the Union's competences in the fields of industry, research, technological development, space policy and trans-European networks. And if this were not the case, the relevant appropriations related to the Union budget could be burdened. This further demonstrates, for the Union budget and for defence development, that the general rule governs military spending, as also provided for in Article 41 of the TEU, to be borne by the Member States of the Union.

The path of the rearm europe plan/readiness 2023

The European defense policy sector found itself on the European and global stage after the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, beginning to accelerate political decisions with the aim of helping Ukraine defend itself by providing weapons and all types of support, as well as military equipment. We begin with the conclusions of the European Council of 19 and 20 December 2013, where the heads of state and government included the concept of strategic autonomy within the European context. This concept responds to the declarations directed at the United States for a progressive reduction of its military presence in Europe, which reflected the Obama administration's dissatisfaction and the allies' resources for defending their continent.[17] The path of strategic autonomy placed the November 2016 Council to act autonomously with its partners when possible and in crisis situation.[18]This links to the need to develop an industrial and technological base for the defense sector, thus supporting this policy in a competitive and integrated manner.

13 S. Clapp, *"Implementation of the Strategic Compass. Opportunities, challenges and timelines",* European Parliament Research Service, December 2022, p. 18ss.

14 Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No. 1316/2013 and (EU) No. 283/2014, PE/52/2021/INIT, *OJ L 249, 14.7.2021, pp. 38–81:* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1153/oj/eng

15 Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023 on support for the production of ammunition (ASAP), PE/46/2023/REV/1, *OJ L 185, 24.7.2023, pp. 7-25:* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1525/oj/eng

16 Regulation (EU) 2023/2418 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on the establishment of an instrument for strengthening the European Defence Industry through joint procurement (EDIRPA), in OJ EU L 2023/2418: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2418/oj/eng

17 K. Larres, *"The United States and the 'Demilitarization' of Europe: Myth or Reality?",* in Politique étrangère, n. 1, 2014, pp. 117-130

18 Council Conclusions on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence, 14 November 2014, doc. No. 14149/19, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14149-2016-INIT/it/pdf

A strategy for Europe was also reworked in 2016 by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who highlighted the need for member states to coordinate their capabilities at all levels.[19] The Union's support was based on several complementary instruments designed to foster coordination. In 2017, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) was created within the European Defence Agency (EDA)[20]. Its ultimate goal was to support member states' defence ministers through reports, recommendations and collaborative opportunities based on development priorities and on their own military capabilities, among other things. It is clear that the lack of operational tasks resulted in limitations within the procedural framework of CARD. Participation in the agency is not mandatory but voluntary. Only in 2023, after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, did Denmark lift the opt-out for related security and defense issues that it had had since 1993,[21] when it joined its own agency and also when it met with all the member states of the Union. And all of this on a voluntary basis for the agency's defense projects.[22]

With a CFSP decision,[23] which was highlighted through the operationalization of the Permanent Structure Cooperation (PESCO) introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, groups of member states were allowed to leverage their resources and gradually deepen defense cooperation through well-planned and studied projects. More than 60 projects were already underway, most of which aimed to finalize and develop national military capabilities toward continued defense integration. In 2018, the creation of a financial system based on the European Defense Fund (EDF) began[24]. Its ultimate goal was to invest in research into products, innovative technologies in the defense sector and to the acquisition of key strategic capabilities within the scope of PESCO projects, including national funding for states to cooperate and invest more. The fund was operational from 2021 with a budget of €7.3 billion for a period of seven years. Instead, the responsibility for management was entrusted to the EC itself for the adoption of a work programme, which established the management, which was entrusted to the EC itself every year when a programme was adopted inviting proposals for the necessary funds relating to the budget of the Union.[25]

Above all, after the unilateral military invasion of Ukraine and the related Versailles Declaration of 24 February 2022, on 11 March[26] the heads of state and government of the Union condemned Russia's action and agreed on their need for a significant increase in defense

---

19 EEAS, Shared Vision, Common Action: A stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's and Foreign and Security Policy, June 2016: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf
20 See, Defence Data for all the members of the EU: https://eda.europa.eu/publications-and-data/defence-data
21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Danes vote yes to abolish EU defence opt-out-here are the next steps, 2 June 2022: https://via.ritzau.dk/pressemeddelelse/13652552/danes-vote-yes-to-abolish-eu-defence-opt-out-here-are-the-next-steps?publisherId=13560888
22 European Council, European Defence Agency, Denmark joins the European Defence Agency, 23 March 2023: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/05/23/eu-defence-cooperation-council-welcomes-denmark-into-pesco-and-launches-the-5th-wave-of-new-pesco-projects/
23 Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 establishing permanent structured cooperation (CFSP) and establishing the list of participating Member States, *OJ L 331, 14.12.2017, pp. 57-77:* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017D2315&qid=1741429023145
24 See for example Article 10(2) of the EDF Regulation that affirmed: "(...) subject to a restriction by a non-associated third country or a non-associated third-country entity directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediary legal entities (...)".
25 Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 (Text with EEA relevance), PE/11/2021/INIT, *OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, pp. 149–177:* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0697&qid=1741513997953
26 Informal meeting of Heads of State and Government, Versailles Declaration, 10 and 11 March 2022: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2022/03/10-11/

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

spending, thus influencing and developing an action plan to define the Union's strategic vision. This project was called the Strategic Compass.[27] This strategy, envisaged by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Borrell, which was also formally adopted by the Council on 21 March 2022, acknowledged the related return to international relations and to the politics of power and armed aggression, thus introducing a timeframe to strengthen European security and defense policy by 2030. The main objective was to accelerate the process of strengthening its defense policy capacity, increase and improve investments and innovative technologies, while reducing and fragmenting the coordination of defense policies for member states. As a consequence, the member states have highlighted the need to increase their defence budgets by 200 billion euros over the next few years.[28]

The objective for the member states was the document, based on existing instruments such as PESCO, which identified new projects such as the European Defence Fund and the forecast that increased long-term financial resources for the Union. The involvement of the European Investment Bank (EBI), especially a few days after it launched the European Security Strategy Initiative (SESI), allocated approximately €6 billion for research and development funding, and for dual-use products targeting military and civilian targets.[29]

In this spirit, the EC introduced complementary temporary and emergency instruments aimed at enabling effective aid for Europe. The first was a direct instrument to financially support partial reimbursements, such as cooperation between Member States and the acquisition of material and defense-related equipment through joint procurement by consortia involving at least three Member States (EDIRPA).[30] The EDIRPA was established in 2023 with a fund of €300 million, intended to last until 31 December 2025. A second instrument was established in 2024. It provided funding to strengthen European industry and defense with the aim of providing timely land-based munitions, artillery, and missiles delivered to Ukraine (ASAP).[31] This instrument included €500 million and remained operational until 25 June 2025.

What did the rearm europe plan/readiness 2030 include?

The ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030 project included preliminary preparation, if we dare say so, for a timeline indicated by the strategic compass of 2022. It quickly represented a process of rebuilding member states' defense capabilities, which assumed political and symbolic weight. The documents developed were based on five measures that called for a further increase in European security and defense spending, with the aim of mobilizing resources in accordance with the EC's guidelines, reaching figures exceeding €800 billion. From this, a figure of €650 billion was calculated to be transferred to national budgets, as well

---

27 European Union, External. Action: A strategic compass for security and defense. For a European Union that protects its citizens, values, and interests and contributes to international peace and security, 21 March 2022, No. 7371/22: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en

28 JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward, JOIN/2022/24 fina: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52022JC0024

29 European Investment Bank, EIB Approves Strategic Europe Security Initiative, Confirm Ukraine Disbursement and Backs 543 million Business and Clear Energy Investment, 10 March 2022: https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2022-122-eib-approves-strategic-european-security-initiative-confirms-ukraine-disbursement-and-backs-eur543-million-business-and-clean-energy-investment

30 Regulation (EU) 2023/2418 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA), op. cit.,

31 Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023, op. cit.,

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris
University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

as €150 billion in loans as a guarantee from the Union budget. This resulted in a four-year period and an increase of approximately 1.5% of the member states' total GDP dedicated to defense spending, reaching a percentage of more than 3% of GDP.[32]

The relevant measures and criticisms were based on the fact that the EC invited member states to activate a national safeguard clause, thus introducing a reform area for the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP).[33] This provides greater flexibility and an increase in public spending, which is part of an additional budgetary space aimed at also investing in the defense sector. Thus, the clause stipulated that a member state's request, subject to a recommendation from the EC, gave the Council the power to permit deviations from an approved spending path for the state that was activating the correction path through an excessive deficit procedure and in the presence of exceptional circumstances beyond the Council's control. The repercussions were significant for their finances. The spending path, a multi-year plan for net primary expenditure and the interests of a series of other expenditures, commits states to pursue and ensure sustainable public finance management. Essentially, the activation of the clause and national defense investments would impact a parameter relating to the deficit and GDP as foreseen by the Stability and Growth Pact.

In this spirit, the EC's invitation has raised concerns. During the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council of 6 March, the heads of state and government emphasized and expanded the safeguard clause at the national level, ensuring the sustainability of public spending, especially for states with high levels of debt.[34] At this level, there is much criticism based on the clause in question, which also conceives deviations from a time-limited spending path as an adequate outcome to incentivize long-term investments, especially those in defense, as evidenced by the existence of national legal systems that imposed legal constraints preventing the increase in deficits to finance rearmament.[35] The safeguard clause does not appear to be so easily justified given that it is recognized in exceptional circumstances. States are not obligated to resort to such clauses that target a certain level of debt as the economic consequences of continued indebtedness[36]. From a political perspective, the imbalance in favor of spending and defense leaves no doubt as to the European institutions' intransigence in opposing exemptions stemming from the pact regarding the related spending for the Green Deal.

In the same spirit, we recall the communication of 19 March, according to which the EC defined the relevant framework for the inclusion of defense spending in the Stability and Growth Pact, along with partial details, in response to the concerns and doubts that have arisen

32 European Defence Agency, in document of Defence Data 2023-2024: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/db9a6195-3532-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1/language-en. D. **Liakopoulos, *"The future of European defense through blockchain as a way to integrate, fill gaps and address the crises of wars in a European context"*, in Public Security and Public Order, n. 36, 2024, pp. 124-134.**

33 Regulation (EU) 2024/1263 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2024 on the effective coordination of economic policies and on multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97, PE/51/2024/REV/1, *OJ L, 2024/1263, 30.4.2024:* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1263/oj/eng

34 V. L. Guttenberg, N. Redeker, *"How to Defend Europe without Risking Another Euro Crisis",* Hertie School, Jack Delors Center, Policy Brief, 21 February 2025

35 P. Dermine, *"Funding Europe's Defence.* A First Take On the Commission's ReArm Europe Plan", *VerfBlog,* 2025/3/05, https://verfassungsblog.de/rearm-europe-law/

36 S. Grund, A. Steinbach, *"European Union debt financing: leeway and barriers from a legal perspective"*, *Working Paper* 15/2023, in Bruegel: at https://www.bruegel.org/working-paper/european-union-debt-financing-leeway-and-barriers-legal-perspective

in this regard.[37] The communication specified the authorization for a member state to divert limited net expenditures specifically to defense spending, i.e., current investments, up to a maximum of 1.5% of GDP for one year.[38] This percentage considered and opened the way for compromises without jeopardizing the sustainability of spending and allowing all states to benefit from this type of flexibility. The communication provided for the relevant diversion, which was monitored by the EC and the Council, ensuring the activation of a coordinated national safeguard clause for all states. Thus, a four-year period of clause availability for national defense spending was established. This period considered the implementation of defense investment projects as adequate. Projects planned and implemented in times of urgency. The EC introduced new investment requirements for the Stability and Growth Pact without compromising its own structure and with a clear aim to implement the clause that precisely assesses the functioning, needs and problems expressed and those that can be resolved with respect to any issues that arise.

The constraints were primarily national requiring therefore relevant reforms, as was the case with Germany, which was trying to eliminate a debt that allowed for unlimited spending on its defense. There was talk of a €500 billion fund and a renewal for infrastructure and economic recovery.[39] Within this framework, a second measure envisaged by the ReArm Europe program was noted, consisting of a financial instrument for the Union entitled Security and Action for Europe (SAFE), which granted member states loans guaranteed for the Union up to a total of up to €150 billion. The regulation proposal was presented on 19 March, at a time when the SAFE, as a temporary and urgent instrument, was intended to support the European defense industry as well as the integration of investments made by member states at the national level, with the aim of increasing and coordinating them.[40] Loans under these conditions and requests from member states to send to the EC had to be made within six months of the regulation's entry into force and from any funds received and to be used exclusively for their own activities. That is, expenditures and measures such as defense products that fall within and are part of certain critical, distinct sectors. Each purchase is made through joint procurement involving only two member states and/or only one EFTA member state and one candidate state, such as Ukraine. Thus, economies of scale were exploited to procure supplies jointly. Each purchase guarantees the Union's interoperability.

From 4 March 2025, due to the urgency of the situation, the EC highlighted the legal basis of an instrument based on Article 122 TFEU.[41] The emergency and exceptional procedures were directly aimed at addressing crisis situations that respected and concerned individual Member States. The relevant procedure provided for the Council, upon a proposal from the EC, in a spirit of solidarity, for Member States to decide on some measure to address the economic

---

37 Communication from the Commission. Accommodating Increase Defence Expenditure within the Stability and Growth Pact, 19 March 2023, C(2025) 2000 final: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a57304ce-1a98-4a2c-aed5-36485884f1a0_en?filename=Communication-on-the-national-escape-clause.pdf

38 D., Liakopoulos, "*Funding and Proposals of the European Commission for Resources in the Field of European Defense Policy"*. Studies in Law and Justice, n. 4 (4), 2025, pp. 57-68.

39 Reuters, *"German Upper House of Parliament Oks Debt Reform, Half-Trillion Found",* Reuters, 21 March 2025: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-upper-house-parliament-oks-debt-reform-half-trillion-fund-2025-03-21/

40 Proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the reinforcement of European defence industry Instrument, 19 March 2025, COM(2025) 122 final: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0122

41 M., Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, J., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024

situation, which could face serious difficulties in the supply of products, especially in the energy sector. For the SAFE, the procedure provided for in Article 122, paragraph 2 TFEU was appropriate, which the Council, upon a proposal from the EC, granted to the Union's financial assistance to a Member State experiencing difficulties, in crisis, or threatened with serious difficulties of any kind due to natural disasters and exceptional circumstances beyond its control. Article 122, paragraph 2 TFEU has used a legal basis on several occasions. The European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM) was established in 2010 to help Member States address the difficulties arising from the financial crisis and the economic recession, especially during the pandemic.[42] The possibility of using the related Union Solidarity Fund was extended in 2002 to provide assistance in major disasters and public health emergencies.[43]

This is a glimmer of support and aid based on solidarity to mitigate the socio-economic consequences related to the risks of unemployment (SURE).[44] In the case of SURE, the separate parts of the instrument were used as stated in its proposal.[45] The EC resorted to a different debate than in the past, under Article 122 TFEU.[46] Perhaps because its sole aim was to circumvent the EP and to exclude a decision-making process that provided for a procedure regulated under paragraph 2, which the President of the Council informed through the relevant adopted acts.

As we understand, the content of the SAFE regulation enjoyed full strategic relevance at the EP, given that the adoption process was for urgent measures. Regarding the SAFE regulation, the EP's approval for loan requests had been received by the EC, but the institution's assembly did not request the annulment of the regulation ex tunc, but rather its own approval, given that it was based on the approval of a well-known legislative act that was intended to replace it. The effects of the regulation in the meantime are produced by a regulation according to the motto "SAFE is safe".[47] Accordingly, it is considered to have reached full completion for the imminent start of implementation upon the CJEU's ruling on financial initiatives from SAFE, which have been completed. The legislative act thus replaces the contested regulation, which concerns future financing for defensive products. The appeal thus expressed the European Parliament's (EP) dissatisfaction with the EC's recurring use of Article 122 TFEU, which was not attributable to critical emergencies. The EP had already invoked the CJEU's case law regarding the use of Article 122 TFEU, which presupposed urgent and exceptional situations that entailed serious economic difficulties for Member States that could not be

---

42 Council Regulation (EU) No 407/2010 of 11 May 2010 establishing a European financial stabilisation mechanism, *OJ L 118, 12.5.2010, pp. 1-4*: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010R0407

43 Regulation (EU) 2020/461 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 March 2020 amending Council Regulation (EC) 2012/2002 in order to provide financial assistance to Member States and countries negotiating their accession to the Union affected by a major public health emergency,PE/6/2020/REV/1, *OJ L 99, 31.3.2020, pp. 9-12 :* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0461&qid=1741884378222

44 Council Regulation (EU) 2020/672 of 19 May 2020 establishing a European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) following the COVID-19 outbreak, ST/7917/2020/INIT, *OJ L 159, 20.5.2020, pp. 1–7:* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0672&qid=1741880441055

45 Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) following the COVID-19 pandemic, 2 April 2020, COM(2020) 139 final, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0139&qid=1742493543322

46 M. Chamon, *"The Rise of Article 122 TFUE. On crisis measures and the paradigm change",* *VerfBlog,* 2023/2/01, https://verfassungsblog.de/the-rise-of-article-122-tfeu/

47 Minutes, Meeting of 23 April 2025, Brussels, JURIPV(2025)04231, par. 17.

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Mykolas Romeris University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

addressed with ordinary instruments. According to the European Parliament: "(…) legally defensible, the measures taken under this article must be 'appropriate' (…) targeted, temporary, and economic in nature (…)".[48]

It is immediately clear that the financial measures envisaged by the SAFE regulation share the relevant positions of the democratic legitimacy of the regulation being challenged and questioning how the adoption of the limited timeframes requested by the European Council, also deemed indispensable by the EP itself, can proceed. The ordinary legislative procedure typically required two years to activate procedures envisaged by the internal regulation of the EP to reduce the timeframes and the emergency procedure based on Rule 170 and the simplified Rule 52 of the Statute of the Court. These procedures require the participation of the EP as a co-legislator, which guaranteed rapid approval of the regulation, which was incomparable to the two and a half months required by the procedure pursuant to Article 122 TFEU. This is a case that also requires careful consideration of other elements. The possible intervention of other institutions, such as the EC and the Council, is being assessed, according to the conclusions of the advocate general, who has not yet been appointed. The CJEU thus has the opportunity to return to the legitimate use of Article 122 TFEU for emergency situations, also raising questions about identifying a legal basis as another response to SAFE and the difficulties of the hypotheses that arise.

As with SAFE, the possible and expected flexibility that requires justification for exceptional circumstances raises doubts. The continued upward trend in spending increases, as expected in response to every emergency and structural need and the implications of a budget that generates national economies, take into account the diverse financial situations of the 15 member states that have authorized the defense investment framework. Thus, several EU members spend above the 2% GDP threshold, while others find themselves with a baseline spending below this threshold, which corresponds to the standard of the NATO framework set for 2014.

In this spirit, the NATO summit of Hague in June 2025 also called on the 23 member states of the Union to join its alliance and commit to an investment exceeding 5% of GDP for defense spending by 2035. The flexibility clauses activated by the council already have a deadline that considers an increase in military spending, which seeks to reprogram the constraint that is too onerous at the Atlantic level due to the financial and political consequences for the national economies involved.

It is so far clear that the SAFE Regulation of 19 March 2025 established a legal basis, incorporating Article 122 TFEU into an explanatory memorandum that highlights the proposal and effectively explains the underlying rationale. The legal basis begins with a deteriorating security context for the Union, which since the beginning of 2025 has led to the Russian threat, including the uncertainties of a geopolitical situation in which the Union was autonomously guaranteeing its defense. The prerequisites for the sudden and exceptional use of Article 122 TFEU, with a massive impact, lead to the supply of products important to the security and defense of the Union and its Member States. This has created serious strain on national public finances.

In a different way, SAFE used the paragraphs of Article 122 TFEU, explaining that the EC had highlighted an instrument that fell within its own procedures. In the case of SAFE, the same need was not clearly explained. This weakened the EC's reasoning, also raising doubts about the correctness of its own choice. These doubts were resolved, and the Court of Justice

---

48 European Parliament, The Activity Report. Developments and trends in the ordinary legislative procedure. 9th legislature (2019-2024), 2024, p. 5.

of the European Union (CJEU) called for a further interpretation of Article 122 TFEU. The SAFE regulation was adopted with amendments through the approval process, which was challenged before the Court by the EP and a Member State.

It is in this spirit that the Parliament v. Council case 20 August 2025 is considered.[49] In that case, the EP requested the annulment of the SAFE regulation, an appeal based on an erroneous choice based on Article 122 TFEU, i.e., applicable and appealable under conditions of urgency, which constitute the prerequisite. The content of the regulation takes into account the Union's industrial policy in the defense sector, based on Article 173 TFEU. This provision constitutes a financial and support legal basis for defense, which also provides for the adoption of support for Member States according to the co-decision procedure and the participation of the EP in the deliberations. The question arises whether the effects of the SAFE regulation are maintained until an act based on a legal basis is replaced, which is adequate due to the reasoning we saw in the previous paragraph: "SAFE is safe". The insufficient reasoning of the regulation and, above all, of its own prerequisites, which are required by Article 122 TFEU, provides a further basis for complaint with the EP's position of being inadequate to be able to justify its emergencies in a precise manner, as well as the reasons contained in the EC's proposal and the reasoning set out in its recitals which are part of the content and not only of the contested regulation.

We do not forget that the SAFE instrument provides for a recourse to supranational debt, which also appears difficult to adopt on a different legal basis within the framework of the TFEU, with the exception of the flexibility clause within Article 352 TFEU.[50] We must question the abstract possibility of a replication path for the SAFE instrument and for the ad hoc mechanism within the CFSP pursuant to Article 42, par. 4 TEU based on the European Peace Facility (EPF).[51]

The financing instrument's objective is to respect the SAFE as a financial basis that constitutes contributions from the Union budget and the expenditure they imply in the defense sector. The legal bases of defense have not yet allowed for circumvention of their own prohibition on establishing financing mechanisms for the defense sector, which enhances the aspects of industrial policy and the integration of the internal market. Article 42, par. 4 TEU has a use and offers scope for further and greater use, including the Union budget as a guarantee for supranational loans and related capital market contracts, as well as the practical possibility of implementing the similar financing mechanism of the SAFE within the scope of defense policy. This provides a way forward, a problematic solution that raises the issue of a lack of democratic control, as envisaged in Article 122 TFEU, since the EP excludes decision-making procedures within the scope of European defense policy.

We must also question another planned measure, namely the one from ReArm Europe that the EC has offered to member states. This involves a series of options that decide on policy and cohesion programs to increase defense spending for infrastructure, research, and continued development. Although this measure has not sparked opposition from various governments, it raises concerns about the idea that it justifies their citizens' choices to increase military spending, which are intended to foster economic growth and sustainable development. The measures and the defense package of 19 March 2025, along with the press releases from the High Representative and the EC, have ultimately reaffirmed the White Paper for European

---

49 CJEU, 20 August 2025, European Parliament v. Council, C-560/25, not other informations
50 M., Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, J., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024
51 M. Frei, *"The European Peace Facility: Yet another important stage for the external relations of the European Union", i*n Juris Gradibus, 4, 2025, 2ss.

Defence as a way to use cohesion funds and defense investments available to states that submit and provide flexibility and incentives for states that decide voluntarily. These types of measures, especially from the EC, concern the involvement of the European Investment Bank (EBI) as well as the mobilization of private capital by facilitating access to financing. The EBI was committed to proposing to a board of directors the eligibility of the bank's shares for financing security and defense projects as dual-use products.

Private capital for the EC has relied on an initiative regarding the savings and investment union dating back to 19 March.[52] This proposed initiative facilitated access to the European capital and business market, including small and medium-sized enterprises and private savings for productive investments in sectors considered strategic for the Union. This strategy includes defense, digital technologies, research, studies, and innovative investments.

The path to private financial resources as additional funding

We discussed in previous paragraphs the funding requested in the European defense sector, also identifying other private financing, both European and previous, that does not involve borrowing by member states but rather their own spending priorities defined by Brussels, as well as the acquisition of private capital. A structural approach is assumed that aligns with defense policy. The related expansion of EBI's activities involves a process of material areas that systematically involves a body of financial effort that supports the development of European defense. Thus, as of 21 March 2025, the EBI Board of Directors has highlighted funding granted to support projects related to common European defense. Since June 2025, this funding has tripled, reaching a total of over €3 billion.

The strategy for the Union, which concerns savings and investments as an initiative presented by the EC, provides for Union competence in financial services, highlighting private capital in the banking system to bridge the credit gap for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as for companies committed to the defense sector.

The EC has favored private investment for the new strategic objectives for the Union, even requesting sums exceeding 800 million euros until 2030 and also reflecting a relative increase in needs for its own defense.[53] In this spirit, the institution exercises legislative initiative in sectors that are no longer directly related to and connected with the promotion and competitiveness targets set for 2025, including the creation of a defense industrial technological base. The news of the adoption of the legislative proposal referred to the impact assessment relating to the revision of Regulation 2019/2088, which is linked to sustainability in the financial services sector, also applied to the defense industrial sector.[54] The related process envisaged and identified resources for defense and the value of the Union budget within the framework of the revision of the Union's regional and cohesion policy, with regard to the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, which is linked with new priorities to the related support for the military industry. This position regarding the structural funds is not automatic. The revision process it provides for Member States is also obvious,

---

52 Communication from the Commission. Savings and Investment Union: A strategy to promote citizens' wealth and economic competitiveness in the EU, of 19 March 2025, COM(2025) 124 final, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0124&qid=1742551996389

53 EC, Savings and Investment Union Strategy: Improving financial opportunities for EU citizens and businesses, Brussels, 19 March 2025: https://finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/savings-and-investments-union-strategy-enhance-financial-opportunities-eu-citizens-and-businesses_en

54 Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector, OJ L 317/2019: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/2088/oj/eng

granting them flexibility to decide and use the structural funds within the framework of their 2021-2027 programming period, thus allocating them to strengthening their defense and with regard to military mobility.

All Member States have had the flexibility to base their decision on an internal debate regarding the priority for financing European resources, considering the possibility of allocating structural funds dedicated to defense to military objectives. This is uneven, as a result of certain cases, thus increasing their own content, as for example for the Baltic States. Already in the related communication on the NextGenerationEU programming period, which expires in 2026, the EC highlighted the relevant options for modifying the PRR for Member States that use unspent funds for recovery and resilience to support their defense industry. The EP, as co-legislator, has sought to revise NextGenerationEU in accordance with the resolution of 18 June 2025, expressed in terms of analogy[55] and as a revision of a relevant financial instrument. In this spirit, the successful allocation of unspent funds to finance defense spending is part of a good approximation for the resources falling within this category.

Some criticisms for the future

From the previous paragraphs, we understand that the EC and the related initiatives presented as part of its ongoing work have raised questions for the coming months and years. These questions, however, are being addressed in practice, not just in theory. Thus, it should be remembered that European defense requires increased investment, especially to enhance cooperation and integration between the various national defense policies, with the aim of moving toward greater interoperability.

The draft White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030[56] has defined a political, strategic and operational framework for the concrete proposals of ReArm Europe. These proposals focus on the short term, strengthening military support for Ukraine, the medium to long term and the construction of a Union deterrent capacity sufficient to ultimately prevent any war of attack on foreign territory, especially a war of aggression. Within this spirit, states simultaneously remain responsible for their own defense, thus benefiting from the added value of the Union and also leveraging the single market. As an "institutional" and reference point, Article 42, paragraph 2 TEU represents a further step in this direction. We cannot forget the issue of future relations between the Union and NATO. The planned and developed documents we have seen, from the 2016 strategy to the white paper of 19 March 2025, have reinvigorated every European effort in the area of complementary NATO defense, while also remaining a foundation for the collective defense of the European continent. Within this sphere, even the Trump administration did not want to close the avenues of the Atlantic alliance but, on the contrary, ensured a fair distribution of its spending within the NATO family.

According to the author's opinion, the current Defense 2030 project has attempted to provide an outcome in terms of limiting its own funding for European defense. It thus clearly emerges that financial instruments constitute a reasonable solution to address the current emergency, thus resorting to a practice that identifies the additional resources that fall within the Union's competences under the Treaty of Lisbon. This is thus a necessary solution according to established law that seeks to overcome the limitations of a general rule governing military spending for the Union under Article 41 TEU. This general rule is not aligned with other needs

---

55 European Parliament resolution of 18 June 2025 on the report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (2024/2085): https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0128_EN.html
56 Joint White Paper for Europea Defence Readiness 2030 of 19 March 2025, JOINT(2025) 120 final, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025JC0120

of European defense. Thus, ongoing international developments seek to highlight the timeframe for the Union to directly provide defense funding that even partially exceeds the use of the Union budget. The project up to 2030 also lays the foundations for thinking about the use of reconsidering Article 41 TEU for the revision of the treaties by trying to change the direction and to foresee the operational expenditure for the defence policy in accordance with the budget of the Union except for specific cases that the Council had to unanimously identify.

The European Council's work over the coming months seeks to highlight the relevant stages for implementing the ReArm Europe Plan 2030 within the timeframes of evaluation and political input. These stages are important and constantly evolving, especially after the prominence of the American reversal, which respects the support of Ukraine, after the Alaska summit of 15 August 2025 to end the war in Ukraine.[57] This event made us understand that the informal meeting of the foreign and defense ministers of the member states held in Copenhagen on 28–29 August 2025 took place outside the institutional framework of the Union, which defined the European Council's proposals of October 2025. The defense ministers agreed on the member states' commitment to taking a stand and caring for all leading states and their own achievement of the objectives set by the European Council of 6 March 2025 for military areas, namely air defense, missile defense, missile systems, munitions, etc. within the expected deadlines.[58] The Council continues its work, as we saw on 23 and 24 October 2025, to try to achieve the defence objectives up to 2030.[59] The European Council discusses the legislative work and procedures for the adoption of the EDIP programme, as well as the review of the cohesion policy alongside the EP and the EC's proposals for the adoption legislation, modifications to support defence developments with regard to the military modality. Again, in the next stages of 18 and 19 December 2025, the first assessment will be drawn up relating to this implementation path for the adoption of primarily political objectives oriented towards European action in the field of defence for the coming years.

Finally, we can say that the relevant cultural model of European defense appears to be alien to the relevant peace project, which enables and paves the way for a European integration completely different from that of the past and with a minority of the current EP's efforts, which corresponds only to a desire for peace and the overwhelming majority of European citizens. The White Paper project, along with the documents of all the institutions that support it, pushes and contrasts the culture of peace with the aspirations of European integration since the birth of the Union. A culture that is in tune with a multipolar, multicultural world that has not been threatened by armed conflict, dialogue, diplomacy, mutual respect, a spirit of openness and reasoning for a search for shared solutions to current and future problems, which must first and foremost place the protection of humanity within the spirit of peace and international security.

---

57 Statement by President Macron, Prime Minister Meloni, Chancellor Merz, Prime Minister Starmer, President Stubb, Prime Minister Tusk, President Costa, President Von der Leyen, Brussels, 16 August 2025: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/bg/statement_25_1966: "(…) support to Ukraine will continue. We are determined to do more to keep Ukraine strong in order to achieve an end to the fighting and a just and lasting peace. As long as the killing in Ukraine continues, we stand ready to uphold the pressure on Russia (…) strengthen sanctions and wider economic measures to put pressure on Russia's war economy until there is a just and lasting peace (…)".

58 EEAS, Informal meeting of defence ministers: press remarks by High Representative Kaja Kallas after the meeting, Copenhagen, 29 August 2025: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/informal-meeting-defence-ministers-press-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-after-meeting_en

59 European Council (26 June 2025), Conclusions, EUCO 12/25, Brussels, par. 22: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/06/26/european-council-conclusions-26-june-2025/

References

1. Blockmans, S., *"The EU's Modular Approach to Defence Integration: An Inclusive, Ambitious and Legally Binding PESCO?",* in Common Market Law Review, n. 55 (6), 2018, pp. 1785-1826.

2. *Bryant, M., "*Denmark to spend billions on defence, citing fears over Russian rearmament"*, in The Guardian, 19 February 2025:* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/19/denmark-to-spend-billions-on-defence-citing-fears-over-russian-rearmament

3. *Budginaite-Froehly, J., "Lithuania connects to Europe's rearmament industry", in CEPA, 20.02.2025:* https://cepa.org/article/lithuania-connects-to-europes-rearmament-industry/

4. Chamon, M., *"The Rise of Article 122 TFUE.* On crisis measures and the paradigm change", *in VerfBlog,* 2023/2/01, https://verfassungsblog.de/the-rise-of-article-122-tfeu/

5. Clapp, S., *"Implementation of the Strategic Compass. Opportunities, challenges and timelines",* European Parliament Research Service, December 2022, p. 18ss.

6. Dermine, P., *"Funding Europe's Defence.* A First Take On the Commission's ReArm Europe Plan", *in VerfBlog,* 2025/3/05, https://verfassungsblog.de/rearm-europe-law/

7. Duff, A., *"NATO and the European Union: Bridging the gap",* in European Policy Centre, Brussels, 13 May 2024.

8. Grund, S., Steinbach, A., *"European Union debt financing: leeway and barriers from a legal perspective", Working Paper* 15/2023, in Bruegel: https://www.bruegel.org/working-paper/european-union-debt-financing-leeway-and-barriers-legal-perspective

9. ERR, *"Minister: Estonia's defense spending will be over 4% of GDP in 2026",* in ERR, 19.02.2025: https://news.err.ee/1609610003/minister-estonia-s-defense-spending-will-be-over-4-of-gdp-in-2026

10. *Fox, J., "Defence budget should reach highest level of €3bn, says Tànaiste",* in RT*É, 22.02.2025:* https://www.rte.ie/news/2025/0222/1498201-defence-forces/

11. Guttenberg, V.L., Redeker, N.,*"How to Defend Europe without Risking Another Euro Crisis",* Hertie School, Jack Delors Center, Policy Brief, 21 February 2025

12. Frei, M. *"The European Peace Facility: Yet another important stage for the external relations of the European Union", in* Juris Gradibus, 4, 2025, 2ss.

13. Karnitsching, M., Alipour, N., *"With an eye on Trump and Putin, Germany's likely new coalition prepares to rebuild the military and jumstart the economy"*, in Euractiv, 06.06.2025: https://www.euractiv.com/news/germanys-centrist-parties-plan-to-unlock-billions-for-defence-and-infrastructure/

14. Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, M., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024

15. Irto, G., Kharitonov, I., Nishikawa, T., Trebesch, C., *"Ukraine Aid: How Europe Can Replace US Support"*, in *Kiel Policy Brief* 186, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 2025: https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/ukraine-aid-how-europe-can-replace-us-support-33907/

16. Larres, K., *"The United States and the "Demilitarization" of Europe: Myth or Reality?",* in Politique étrangère, n. 1, 2014, 117-130

17. Liakopoulos, D., *"Interpretations, thoughts and critics of international responsibility of the European Union in the implementation of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)",* in International and European Union Legal Matters-working paper series, 2018, 4ss

18. Liakopoulos, D., "*Funding and Proposals of the European Commission for Resources in the Field of European Defense Policy",* in Studies in Law and Justice, n. 4 (4), 2025, pp. 57-68

19. Liakopoulos, D., *"The future of European defense through blockchain as a way to integrate, fill gaps and address the crises of wars in a European context",* in Public Security and Public Order, n. 36, 2024, pp. 124-134.

20. Liboreiro, J., *"Poland pitces rearmament bank to boost Europe's defence spending",* in Euronews, *6 February 2025:* https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/02/06/poland-pitches-rearmament-bank-to-boost-europes-defence-spending

21. Pollman, E. *"The crime of aggression and the case of Ukraine",* in American Yearbook of International Law-AYIL, n. 1, 2023, 694-729.

22. Reuters, *"German Upper House of Parliament Oks Debt Reform, Half-Trillion Found",* in Reuters, 21 March 2025: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-upper-house-parliament-oks-debt-reform-half-trillion-fund-2025-03-21

23. Reuters, *"Belgium aims to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP this year",* in Reuters, 4 March 2025: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belgium-aims-hike-defence-spending-2-gdp-this-year-de-tijd-reports-2025-03-04/

24. *Romania Journal, "EU plans balck sea security hub, invests in Romania, Bulgaria", in Romania Journal. 29 August 2025:* https://www.romaniajournal.ro/politics/eu-plans-black-sea-security-hub-invests-in-romania-bulgaria/

25. *Sorgi, G., Martuscelli, C., Faggionato, G.,* "EU wide borrowing dfor defence a "no brainer", says Spain's finance minister", *in Politico, 17-02-2025:* https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-wide-borrowing-for-defense-a-no-brainer-says-spains-finance-minister/

26. Vanholme, E., *"Military Interoperability. Assessing the European Defence Initiatives of 2009 and 2016",* in FINABEL, Bruxelles, Working Paper, 1/2021, https://finabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.-EU-Law-and-Military-Interoperability-1-compressed.pdf.

FREEDOM TO CRITICIZE OR THE RIGHT TO RESPECT? ETHICAL BOUNDARIES OF PUBLIC INSULTS DIRECTED AT POLICE OFFICERS

Giedrė PAURIENĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: pauriene@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2902-2855

Annotation. *The article analyzes the ethical boundaries between the public criticism of police officers that is essential in a democratic society and public insults that violate their human and professional dignity. The expansion of digital communication and the growing role of social media have intensified interactions between citizens and law enforcement institutions, but have also contributed to an increase in degrading and aggressive forms of communication. Drawing on the theoretical foundations of professional police ethics, human rights, discourse ethics, the harm principle, and virtue ethics, the article aims to establish where legitimate, argument-based public criticism ends and dignity-violating, destructive public insults begin. The aim of the study is to determine the ethical boundaries distinguishing permissible public criticism of police officers from forms of communication that violate their human and professional dignity and undermine the authority of the police institution. To achieve this aim, two objectives are set: to discuss the concepts of police professional ethics and dignity, highlighting their significance for public trust in police, and to theoretically substantiate a system of ethical criteria separating constructive criticism from degrading, dignity-violating communication. The study employs scientific literature and document analysis, comparative theoretical analysis, and logical and systemic analysis, which together made it possible to integrate different ethical perspectives into a coherent system of criteria. The analysis reveals that police professional ethics rests on two interrelated dimensions of dignity, an innate human dignity and socially constructed professional dignity, which derives from the societal importance of police functions and the ethical expectations placed on officers. Public insults violate both dimensions, causing psychological and professional harm to officers, weakening their motivation, and undermining the legitimacy of the police institution. Based on discourse ethics, the harm principle, and virtue ethics, a five-criterion system is formulated to clearly distinguish constructive criticism from insult: the object of criticism must concern actions rather than the person; the intention must be to correct rather than to degrade; justification must rely on arguments rather than emotions; proportionality must correspond to the situation; and the impact must not violate dignity. The article concludes that respectful, reasoned criticism is an essential condition of a democratic society, whereas degrading communication cannot be regarded as a legitimate form of public debate, as it harms both individual officers' dignity and the public's trust in the police as an institution.*

Keywords: *freedom of expression, public criticism, respect for dignity, police ethics, public insults, ethical boundaries, professional dignity.*

Introduction

In recent years, the digital public sphere, particularly social media, has become a central platform for interaction between citizens and state institutions. This transformation has increased the accessibility of information while simultaneously contributing to the growth of unsubstantiated and degrading forms of communication. In Lithuania, police officers regularly encounter verbal and non-verbal insults, often arising in conflict situations (Kaminskaitė & Paurienė, 2021). International studies likewise show that insults, even when they do not involve physical violence, can have significant psychological and social consequences for officers (Haller et al., 2020), and that derogatory communication online affects police legitimacy and public cooperation (Mensah et al., 2023; Graziano & Gauthier, 2018).

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

MRU
Mykolas Romeris
University

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

Empirical data confirm that negative messages, stereotypes, and aggressive discourse reduce the sense of police legitimacy and citizens' willingness to cooperate (Cross & Fine, 2022; Jackson, 2021; Tyler, 2025). A public discourse dominated by degrading or dehumanizing language becomes a risk factor not only for individual officers but also for institutional reputation and social security (Hassim et al., 2024; Narula & Chaudhary, 2024). Therefore, public insults directed at police officers constitute not merely a communication issue but also a problem of democratic interaction, institutional legitimacy, and civic culture.

The scientific novelty of this study is revealed in several directions. First, the article develops and theoretically substantiates a system for determining ethical boundaries, integrating three distinct ethical theories: discourse ethics, the harm principle, and virtue ethics into a coherent evaluative model. This integration of theoretical perspectives enables a comprehensive analysis of public insults toward police officers, taking into account communicative intention, argumentative validity, impacts on dignity, and the norms of democratic discourse. Second, no comparable attempts have yet been made in Lithuanian academic literature to systematically define the boundary between ethically permissible criticism and dignity-violating insults directed at police officers. Therefore, the criteria system formulated in this article fills an existing theoretical gap and can be used in further scholarly research as well as in practical fields such as police communication, ethics training, and public discourse assessment.

Although research exists in Lithuania examining the prevalence and ethical aspects of dignity violations against police officers (Kaminskaitė & Paurienė, 2021), there is a lack of a systematic ethical analysis that would integrate professional ethics theories, principles of public discourse critique, and the dimension of institutional legitimacy. Although public criticism of institutions is a fundamental element of democratic society, the contemporary communication environment has become a space in which constructive remarks increasingly overlap with derogatory or dehumanizing language. This creates a situation in which the public's right to criticize intersects with the obligation to uphold human dignity and institutional legitimacy. Lithuanian and international studies indicate not only the prevalence of verbal insults but also their impact on officers' psychological wellbeing and on public trust in law enforcement. However, there is still no clear definition of where exactly the ethical boundary lies between acceptable criticism—typical of democratic oversight—and public insults that violate officers' dignity and weaken the legitimacy of the police as an institution. For this reason, **a problematic situation emerges**: the democratic right to criticize and the obligation to maintain respect for human dignity collide in such a way that existing theoretical and practical discussions lack clear ethical criteria for distinguishing between these two domains. This gap is particularly evident in the Lithuanian context, where research tends to focus on the prevalence of incidents rather than on the ethical foundations of these boundaries. This lack of clarity not only complicates institutional responses to disrespectful communication but also poses challenges for the normative regulation of public discourse. Therefore, it becomes essential to systematically identify the ethical criteria that allow us to determine when public criticism remains legitimate and constructive, and when it crosses the line and becomes a dignity-violating insult with negative consequences both for individuals and for public trust in the police. This article seeks to fill this gap by theoretically substantiating the ethical boundaries between permissible public criticism and dignity-violating insults directed at police officers. The **central research question** posed is: where is the ethical boundary between legitimate public criticism of institutions or officers and intolerable public insults that violate personal dignity and may undermine public trust in law enforcement institutions?

Object of the study: the ethical boundary between public criticism and insults directed at police officers.

Aim of the study: to determine the ethical boundaries between permissible public criticism and dignity-violating insults targeting police officers.

Objectives of the study:

1. To discuss the concepts of professional ethics and dignity in relation to the status of police officers and the environment of public communication.
2. To theoretically substantiate a system of ethical criteria that enables the distinction between constructive criticism and dignity-violating public insults.

Research methods: analysis of scientific literature, document analysis, theoretical comparative analysis, and logical and systemic analysis. The study is conceptual and based on theoretical examination aimed at systematically defining the ethical boundaries between permissible public criticism and insults that violate the dignity of police officers.

The scientific literature analysis was conducted using targeted selection criteria: included sources that examine principles of professional police ethics, notions of human and professional dignity, ethics of public communication, application of the harm principle, and the impact of degrading language on institutional trust. Literature was selected based on novelty (with priority given to publications from 2018 to 2025), thematic relevance, and international recognition (peer-reviewed journals, documents of international organisations, authoritative monographs). Lithuanian authors were also included to supplement the international perspective with the national context.

The document analysis focused on national and international codes of ethics regulating police activities, human rights documents, and guidelines developed by institutional organisations (the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights). This analysis made it possible to identify the normative principles that define officers' right to respectful treatment and the protection of their dignity in the public sphere.

The theoretical comparative analysis was conducted in order to integrate three different ethical approaches, like discourse ethics, the harm principle, and virtue ethics into a single coherent evaluative framework. This analysis helped determine which normative features are shared across these ethical traditions and how they can be applied to the assessment of public insults directed at police officers.

Logical and systemic analysis was used to structure the obtained insights into a five-criterion system that clearly distinguishes constructive criticism from dignity-violating communication. The systemic approach enabled the integration of diverse theoretical elements into a unified model applicable to the analysis of public discourse.

This methodological combination grounds the study as conceptual and analytical, oriented not toward the collection of empirical data but toward the synthesis of theoretical principles and the formulation of normative evaluative criteria. The subsequent sections of the article present the theoretical analysis of police professional ethics and dignity concepts, followed by the ethical criteria system that enables the differentiation between constructive criticism and actions that violate officers' dignity.

Professional police ethics and the concept of dignity: theoretical foundations

Professional police ethics as a normative foundation. In contemporary literature, professional police ethics is understood as a normative framework that defines the behavioural standards reasonably expected of officers and the values that legitimise the use of police powers in a democratic society. In J. Kleinig's classic monograph The Ethics of Policing (1996), police

work is analysed as a constant balancing act between two poles: the need to ensure public safety and the duty to respect the rights and dignity of every individual (Manning & Wood, 2025). This duality implies that police ethics cannot be reduced merely to compliance with formal rules. It is linked to broader issues of moral judgment, responsibility, and institutional trust. Recent studies show that officers' ethical competencies, such as virtues, responsibility, and the use of discretion, are directly related to police professionalism and public attitudes toward policing (Maile et al., 2022; Thompson et al., 2019).

More recent research emphasises that police professional ethics should be understood not as an "add-on" to legal regulation but as a condition enabling the police to operate lawfully and with perceived legitimacy. Crehan et al. (2025) argue that responsibility for ethical policing should focus not only on sanctioning violations "from the outside," but on creating conditions that enable officers to act well by fostering ethical reasoning, cultivating a supportive organisational culture, and strengthening normative sensitivity. Professional ethics and adequate training are essential foundations of police legitimacy (Thompson et al., 2019). In their systematic review of police ethics and decision-making, Dempsey et al. (2023) conclude that increasing public criticism of policing only reinforces the need to integrate ethical competencies into officer training and everyday practice, as this is crucial for maintaining professional integrity and public trust.

International documents complement this direction through a human rights perspective. The guide for law enforcement officials prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights states that ethical and lawful policing is grounded in three interrelated principles: respect for the law, respect for human dignity, and thereby respect for human rights. Materials produced by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the Council of Europe, and other organisations define policing as "human-rights-based policing" (Neyroud et al., 2001; FRA – Fundamental Rights-Based Police Training, 2021), where officers' duties derive specifically from the protection of the dignity and rights of all individuals.

Taken together, these theoretical insights allow us to conclude that contemporary police professional ethics is understood not merely as an internal "code" of the profession but as an expression of human-rights-based obligations and responsibility to society. This perspective is crucial when evaluating public insults directed at police officers, as such insults affect not only the individual officer but also public trust in the police institution as a guarantor of security.

Concepts of human and professional dignity. In the discourse of professional ethics, dignity is often defined as a fundamental value linking an individual's moral status with their social role. At the theoretical level, two closely related but distinct dimensions are identified: human dignity and professional dignity (Paurienė, 2022).

Bratiloveanu (2019), examining the issue of professional dignity in the public sector, proposes distinguishing between ontological (human) dignity, which belongs to every person by virtue of human nature, and professional dignity, which is associated with the status of a particular profession, the recognition of competence, and societal expectations. Human dignity is inviolable and inalienable; it does not depend on education, social status, or position. Professional dignity, in contrast, is more socially constructed: it arises when society recognises a certain profession as important for the common good and expects appropriate conduct from its members.

In the case of police officers, these two dimensions overlap. Kaminskaitė and Paurienė (2021), in their analysis of violations of police officers' honor and dignity, distinguish between human dignity, which is violated when essential inherent rights (life, liberty, inviolability) are disregarded, and personal/professional dignity, which is violated through the actions of others, such as insults, humiliation, unfounded accusations, or degrading behavior. This distinction is

important when evaluating public insults directed at officers: even when such insults do not escalate into physical violence or threats, they can significantly damage the officer's professional dignity, which is tied to their status as a guarantor of public safety.

According to Bratiloveanu (2019), professional dignity is directly linked to the mission of the profession and the responsibility of its members to society: society recognises the value of a profession and grants it a "credit" of trust, while expecting high standards of conduct and ethical sensitivity in return. Because police authority depends on public trust, dignity violations in the public sphere directly undermine police legitimacy (Bradford & Jackson, 2021). The professional dignity of officers is associated not only with their personal reputation but also with the broader image of the police institution: the public humiliation of one officer may be perceived as an affront to the entire profession.

Professional dignity in police work. In specifying the concept of professional dignity within the police, both normative and legal dimensions are important. Ignătescu and Sandu (2019), applying the perspective of virtue ethics, identify "operational ethical values" whose observance helps officers uphold professional dignity: honesty, impartiality, respect for persons, responsibility in the exercise of authority, and the conscious avoidance of any behaviour that could diminish the reputation of the policing profession in society. Professional dignity here is understood not merely as "external protection of status," but as an active effort by officers to behave in ways that ground their reputation in genuinely virtuous conduct.

At the same time, an increasing number of scholars emphasise that the protection of professional dignity cannot rely solely on the individual officer's "resilience." Ukrainian author Zaika (2022), examining the protection of police officers' honour and dignity under wartime conditions, concludes that civil legal remedies alone are insufficient; what is needed is a comprehensive legal and institutional protection mechanism, as officers continually face threats, slander, and other actions that degrade their honour and dignity. Pevko (2023) and Popova (2023) likewise highlight gaps in current Ukrainian law concerning mechanisms for protecting the honour and dignity of police officers and compensating moral harm, arguing for the necessity of additional legal safeguards.

Buhaichuk, in a comparative analysis, demonstrates that in many countries, liability for insulting police officers (especially when related to the performance of official duties) is considered an essential element for protecting not only the individual but also the prestige and authority of public security institutions.

In the Lithuanian context, Kaminskaitė and Paurienė (2021) emphasise that the police are "an institution created by society to meet its own security needs," which means that the protection of officers' honour and dignity is linked to the stability of the state and the safeguarding of public security. When officers are repeatedly confronted with public insults, slander, or threats, this can reduce their motivation, undermine their professional self-esteem, and negatively affect institutional trust, even when formal legal measures exist.

Dignity, human rights, and the public sphere. European police ethics documents clearly link police activity and the protection of officers' dignity with human rights standards. The European Code of Police Ethics requires that police officers respect the dignity and integrity of all individuals in all circumstances, while also recognising that officers themselves must be protected by clear principles and safeguards against unjustified pressure, discrimination, or aggression. Training materials from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (2021) emphasise that, from a human rights perspective, police officers face dual requirements: they must respect the rights and dignity of others, but they also have the right to expect respect and protection from unlawful attacks.

This allows us to conclude that the professional dignity of police officers in the public sphere is embedded not only in professional codes of ethics but also in broader human rights instruments. National police ethics codes explicitly identify respect for human dignity as a core principle of policing and highlight the interdependence between officers' behaviour and public attitudes toward them: without public respect and trust, the police cannot effectively perform their functions (Hough, 2012; OECD, 2021).

This human rights dimension becomes especially important when considering public insults directed at police officers. If officers' professional dignity and honor are legally and normatively protected values, then the public sphere cannot be viewed as a "neutral backdrop" where any type of expression is acceptable. The language used toward officers—particularly in media and social networks—affects not only their individual psychological burden but also the overall state of institutional legitimacy of the police.

In summary, theoretical literature and international documents enable the formulation of several key points relevant to the first research objective:
- Professional police ethics is closely linked to human rights protection and institutional legitimacy; it defines what behavioural standards can reasonably be expected of officers and what kind of relationship should exist between the police and society.
- The concept of dignity in policing consists of two dimensions—human and professional; the latter is tied to the status of the profession and trust in the institution, meaning that the humiliation of officers in the public space affects not only the individual but also the reputation of the entire institution.
- The protection of police officers' professional dignity is clearly established in both national and international law and ethical guidelines, which emphasise that police officers have the right to protection from unjustified insults, slander, and degrading behaviour, especially while performing their duties.

This provides a conceptual basis for the further analysis in the article, which examines how these notions of dignity and professional ethics allow for the ethical evaluation of public insults directed at police officers and the distinction between permissible criticism and destructive, dignity-violating communication.

Ethical criteria for distinguishing constructive criticism from dignity-violating communication

Democratic criticism is necessary and desirable, but it must be grounded in arguments and directed toward actions or decisions rather than toward diminishing a person's worth. Social psychology research has established that the tone of civilian behaviour, respectful or contemptuous, strongly affects officers' emotions, reactions, and professional decisions (Nix, Pickett, and Mitchell 2019). Theories of public communication, professional ethics, and human rights provide several interrelated foundations that allow for a normative determination of when citizens' criticism of police officers is ethical and democratically justified, and when it crosses the boundaries of permissible communication, turning into degrading behaviour and violating professional dignity.

Recent empirical studies also show that negative, demeaning communication causes real harm to police officers, institutional trust, and the quality of public discourse: officers perceive insults as psychological violence (Pritz & Chou, 2025), degrading language affects decision-making and emotional states (Nix, Pickett & Mitchell, 2019), and aggressive media rhetoric contributes to the erosion of police legitimacy (Graziano & Gauthier, 2018; Tyler 2025; Jackson et al., 2021). These theoretical and empirical aspects enable the construction of a systematic

ISSN 2029-1701
ISSN 2335-2035 (Online)

Research Journal
PUBLIC SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER
2025, Vol. 37, Nr. 4

MRU
Mykolas Romeris University

ethical criteria framework based on three theoretical fields: (1) discourse ethics, (2) the harm principle, and (3) virtue ethics.

Discourse ethics: criticism must be reasoned and oriented toward the issue, not the person. The tradition of discourse ethics, particularly associated with J. Habermas's theory of communicative action, emphasises that democratic criticism is legitimate insofar as it is:

- directed at actions, decisions, or institutional processes rather than at demeaning a person's qualities;
- grounded in arguments rather than emotional or degrading expressions;
- aimed at seeking a shared solution rather than intending to insult, demean, or provoke confrontation.

These criteria allow for a clear distinction between two communication models:

- constructive criticism ("the officer conducted the check improperly," "the action did not meet professional standards");
- demeaning commentary ("you are worthless," "idiot cop," "animals in uniform").

Empirical studies support this theoretical distinction. Nix, Pickett, and Mitchell (2019) demonstrated that contemptuous behaviour by civilians toward police officers directly weakens officers' ability to make rational decisions and increases the risk of conflict. This means that violations of discourse ethics have not only theoretical but also practical consequences. They distort the quality of interaction between the police and the public.

Discourse ethics holds that criticism becomes illegitimate when it deviates from analysing actions and instead attacks a person's dignity, because such communication disrupts rational public discussion and undermines the moral structure of dialogue.

The harm principle: evaluating not only the form of expression but also its impact. The harm principle, extensively developed in Joel Feinberg's Harm to Others (1984) and conceptually grounded in contractualist ethics by T. M. Scanlon in What We Owe to Each Other (1998), provides a basis for determining when freedom of expression becomes morally harmful and violates a person's dignity. Public statements that cause unjustified harm to an officer's dignity, reputation, or the legitimacy of the institution must be assessed as ethically impermissible. Empirical research shows that verbal attacks against police officers constitute a significant form of external violence and have psychological and professional consequences (Pritz and Chou 2025; van Reemst et al. 2019). In this context, harm can take several forms:

- individual harm – psychological diminishment of the officer, erosion of professional self-esteem;
- institutional harm – undermining the authority of the police as a public-trust institution;
- social harm – normalisation of degrading language and the growth of aggressive communication in social media.

Empirical data strengthen the argument grounded in the harm principle. Pritz and Chou (2025) found that verbal aggression, including public insults, is one of the most common forms of psychological harm experienced by police officers, with long-term effects on their emotional well-being, professional self-worth, and work motivation. Graziano and Gauthier (2018) further showed that media content portraying the police in a degrading manner reduces public trust in law enforcement and contributes to institutional delegitimisation. Accordingly, criticism is considered ethical when it is fact-based, pursues the public interest, and does not aim to cause harm. Insults, in contrast, are characterised by a destructive purpose and cause real harm to both the individual and the institution.

Virtue ethics: respect, restraint, and civic responsibility. Virtue ethics helps to clarify the moral meaning and intention behind communication. Constructive criticism reflects virtues such as:

- respect – criticism that acknowledges the dignity of the person;
- temperance – emotional self-control, adherence to rational argumentation;
- justice – directing criticism toward actions rather than personal traits;
- civic responsibility – seeking to correct a problem rather than provoke conflict.

Insults, on the other hand, reveal contempt, retaliation, and the desire to demean; this is a moral disposition incompatible with a democratic public sphere.

This perspective aligns with empirical observations. Cross and Fine (2022) found that negative and demeaning portrayals of the police on social media contribute to the stigmatisation of the profession and decrease the public's willingness to cooperate with the police or even consider policing as a potential career. This demonstrates that degrading language has broader social consequences beyond individual dignity violations. The virtue ethics perspective emphasises that a public insult is not merely an "inappropriate expression" but an indication of a moral character deficit that harms the quality of the public sphere.

Summarising insights from the three theoretical fields, five ethical criteria can be identified (see Table 1) that help distinguish constructive criticism from dignity-violating communication:

- Object (criticism is directed toward actions, decisions, procedures; insult is directed at a person's worth, honour, or reputation).
- Intention (criticism aims to correct, inform, or draw attention; insult aims to demean, inflict harm, or provoke conflict).
- Justification (criticism is grounded in arguments, facts, legal or ethical norms; insult lacks argumentative grounding and relies on emotions).
- Proportionality (criticism is appropriate to the situation and proportional to the severity of the issue; insult is excessive, escalating, and detached from the context).
- Impact (criticism does not violate dignity or cause unjustified harm; insult has a degrading, stigmatising, or destructive effect).

Table 1. Ethical criteria for distinguishing constructive criticism from insult (compiled by the author).

ETHICAL CRITERIA	CRITICISM	INSULTS
Object	actions	person
Intention	correct	degrade
Justification	arguments	emotions
Proportionality	adequate response	excessive reaction
Impact	respect for dignity	violation of dignity

These criteria provide theoretical justification for why certain expressions cannot be regarded as part of democratic debate even within a "free criticism" environment. Such expressions constitute clear violations of dignity because they stigmatise the profession, create a hostile public sphere, and diminish police legitimacy (Jackson 2021; Tyler 2025).

The analysis of public insults directed at police officers makes it evident that ethically permissible criticism and impermissible insult differ not only in linguistic form but also in content, intention, level of argumentation, and impact on the officer's dignity as well as on the legitimacy of the police institution. Constructive criticism is an essential condition of democracy, yet it cannot be conflated with degrading communication that violates a fundamental moral value, i.e. human and professional dignity.

The practical value of this study lies in the applicability of the developed ethical criteria system across various contexts of police activity and public discourse management. First, the criteria can be integrated into police communication guidelines, helping to more clearly distinguish constructive public feedback from dignity-violating attacks on officers. Second, the model can be employed in training on police ethics and professional communication, strengthening officers' ability to recognise degrading language and respond appropriately. Third, the criteria system can be used as an analytical tool for evaluating public discourse, particularly content on social networks, which directly influences public perceptions of police legitimacy. Thus, the study has both theoretical and practical significance, contributing to the professionalisation of police work and the improvement of democratic public discourse.

Conclusions

The theoretical analysis revealed that the professional ethics of police officers is grounded in two interrelated dimensions of dignity: human dignity and professional dignity. Human dignity is inherent and universal, while professional dignity arises from the societal importance of police functions and from officers' responsibility for ensuring public safety. Actions in the public sphere that violate officers' dignity (insults, degrading comments, disrespectful behaviour) cause harm both to the individual officer and to the reputation of the police institution, as well as to public trust. Therefore, protecting officers' dignity is an essential component of professional ethics and democratic public order.

By integrating the perspectives of discourse ethics, the harm principle, and virtue ethics, a five-criterion system was formulated to clearly distinguish constructive criticism from insult. Constructive criticism is characterised by a focus on actions, the use of arguments, proportionality, and respect for human dignity. In contrast, an insult targets the degradation of an officer's personal worth, lacks argumentative grounding, is driven by destructive intent, and causes harm both to the individual officer and to the institutional authority of the police. Thus, the distinction between ethically permissible criticism and dignity-violating communication is clearly defined by normative criteria and can be applied when evaluating cases in public discourse.

References

1. Bratiloveanu, Irina. 2019. "Considerations on Professional Dignity." *Challenges of the Knowledge Society. Public Law*, 474–81.
2. Buhaichuk, K. L. 2021. "International Experience of Legal Regulation of Liability for Insult of Police Officers and Possibilities of Its Use in Ukraine." *Law and Safety* 80 (1): 13–20. https://doi.org/10.32631/pb.2021.1.01.
3. *Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials*. 1979. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/code-conduct-law-enforcement-officials.
4. Corbo Crehan, A., R. Delaforce, and B. Shipton. 2025. "A New Focus for Accountability: Enabling Police to Act Well." *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 37 (1): 1–18.

5. Council of Europe. 2001. *European Code of Police Ethics: Recommendation Rec(2001)10*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. https://rm.coe.int/the-european-code-of-police-ethics-pdf/.

6. Cross, Caleb P., and Adam Fine. 2022. "Police-Related Social Media Exposure and Adolescents' Interest in Becoming a Police Officer." *Journal of Adolescence* 94: 95–109.

7. Dempsey, Ronald P., Elizabeth E. Eskander, and Veljko Dubljević. 2023. "Ethical Decision-Making in Law Enforcement: A Scoping Review." *Psychologie* 5 (2): 576–601. https://doi.org/10.3390/psych5020037.

8. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2021. *Fundamental Rights-Based Police Training: Manual*. Vienna: FRA.

9. Feinberg, Joel. 1984. *Harm to Others*. New York: Oxford University Press.

10. Graziano, Lisa, and Holly L. Gauthier. 2018. "Media Consumption and Perceptions of Police Legitimacy." *Policing: An International Journal* 41 (5): 610–27.

11. Haller, Birk, Torsten Kolind, Geoffrey Hunt, and Thomas Friis Søgaard. 2020. "Experiencing Police Violence and Insults: Narratives from Ethnic Minority Men in Denmark." *Nordic Journal of Criminology* 21 (2): 170–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/2578983X.2020.1839712.

12. Hassim, Mohammad Nurhafiz, Nur Nasir, and Norena Abdul Karim Zamri. 2024. "Hate Speech in the Digital Age: A Study in Terms of Impact and Social Implications." *International Journal of Law, Government and Communication* 9 (3): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.35631/IJLGC.938001.

13. Hough, Mike. 2012. "Trust in Justice: Why It Matters for Legitimacy and Effective Policing." *European Journal of Criminology* 9 (4): 300–313.

14. Ignătescu, C., and A. Sandu. 2019. "From Virtues Ethics to Operational Ethical Values in Police Activity." *Jurnalul de Studii Juridice* 14 (3–4): 62–76. https://doi.org/10.18662/jls/51.

15. Jackson, Jonathan, Ian Brunton-Smith, Ben Bradford, et al. 2021. "Police Legitimacy and the Norm to Cooperate: Using a Mixed Effects Location-Scale Model to Estimate the Strength of Social Norms at a Small Spatial Scale." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 37: 547–72. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-020-09467-5.

16. Kaminskaitė, Rūta, and Giedrė Paurienė. 2021. "Violation of the Honour and Dignity of a Police Officer: Prevalence of the Phenomenon and Its Ethical Aspects." *Public Security and Public Order* 28.

17. Kleinig, John. 1996. *The Ethics of Policing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

18. Maile, Andrew, Sarah Ritzenthaler, Aidan Thompson, and Kristján Kristjánsson. 2022. "Professional Policing and the Role of Autonomy and Discretion in Decision-Making: A Qualitative Study from a Virtue Ethical Perspective." *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* (advance online publication). https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paac086.

19. Manning, Mary L., and David A. Wood. 2025. "Understanding the Moral Dimension of Policing: The Need to Normalise Ethical Reasoning within Police Practice." *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles* 0 (0). https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258X251340532.

20. Mensah, Debranique, James Jones, and Veronica Ford. 2023. "Exploring Social Media's Impact on Societal Perceptions of Police Legitimacy and Cooperation."

Journal of Sociological Research 15 (1): 15–29.
https://doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v15i1.21154.

21. Narula, R., and P. Chaudhary. 2024. "A Comprehensive Review on Detection of Hate Speech for Multi-Lingual Data." *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 14: 244. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-024-01401-y.

22. Neyroud, Peter, Jack Straw, and Alan Beckley. 2001. *Policing, Ethics and Human Rights*. Cullompton: Willan.

23. Nix, Justin, Justin T. Pickett, and Colleen Mitchell. 2019. "Compliance, Noncompliance, and the In-Between: Effects of Civilian Demeanor on Police Officers' Cognitions and Emotions." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 56 (2): 219–57.

24. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2021. *Trust in Public Institutions: Policy Brief*. Paris: OECD.

25. Paurienė, Giedrė. 2022. "Žmogaus orumas kaip žmogaus teisių pagrindas." *Public Security and Public Order* 31: 122–30.

26. Pevko, S. H. 2023. "The Quintessence of Protecting the Honor and Dignity of a National Police Officer." *Law and Safety* 88 (1): 224–35. https://doi.org/10.32631/pb.2023.1.20.

27. Popova, S. O. 2023. "Compensation for Moral Damages for Violation of Police Officer's Personal Non-Property Rights: Problems of Law Enforcement." *Law and Safety* 89 (2): 98–110. https://doi.org/10.32631/pb.2023.2.09.

28. Pritz, Katherine R., and Han-Chun Chou. 2025. "External Workplace Violence towards Police Officers: A Scoping Review." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 22 (1): 112–30.

29. Scanlon, T. M. 1998. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

30. Thompson, Jeremy, and Brian Payne. 2019. "Towards Professionalism and Police Legitimacy? An Examination of the Education and Training Reforms of the Police in the Republic of Ireland." *Education Sciences* 9 (3): 241. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9030241.

31. Tyler, Tom R. 2025. "Legitimacy-Based Policing." *Criminology & Public Policy* 24 (2): 165–87.

32. van Reemst, Lisa, and Thomas F. C. Fischer. 2019. "Experiencing External Workplace Violence: Differences in Indicators between Three Types of Emergency Responders." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 34 (9): 1864–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516657913.

33. Zaika, Yu. 2022. "Protection of the Professional Honor and Dignity of a Police Officer in War." *Entrepreneurship, Economy and Law*, no. 3: 21–27. https://doi.org/10.32849/2663-5313/2022.3.03.

PROPAGANDA NARRATIVES AS AN INSTRUMENT OF HYBRID THREATS IN LITHUANIA

Aurelija PŪRAITĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: aurelija.puraite@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9228-1396

Žygimantas KRASNICKAS
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: zygimantas.krasnickas@gmail.com

Abstract *This article examines propaganda as a key instrument of hybrid threats affecting Lithuania's information security environment. Drawing upon theoretical models of propaganda and analysis of publicly available sources, the study identifies the main groups of propaganda narratives circulating in the Lithuanian information space: the delegitimisation of democratic institutions, the discrediting of NATO and Western policies, the manipulation of historical memory, and narratives related to the war in Ukraine. The findings demonstrate that these narratives function as an interconnected architecture of information influence aimed at weakening state legitimacy, societal cohesion, and national defence policies. The analysis reveals several structurally vulnerable sectors: institutional legitimacy, historical identity, societal polarisation, perceptions of national defence, and energy security. These vulnerabilities are amplified by political tensions, gaps in media literacy, and socio-economic anxieties. The article also identifies likely future propaganda trends targeting Lithuania, including narratives about an "impending war", efforts to delegitimise NATO troop deployments, the instrumentalisation of migration, economic crisis narratives, and the reframing of historical interpretations. The study concludes that propaganda narratives in Lithuania represent a long-term, adaptive hybrid threat with significant implications for public and national security. Strengthening societal resilience, improving strategic communication, and enhancing media literacy are critical components in mitigating the impact of hostile information operations.*

Keywords: propaganda, hybrid threats, information security, narratives, public security, information environment.

Introduction

In recent years, the European security architecture has been facing its most serious challenges since the end of the Second World War. The full-scale war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, together with the systematic application of hybrid threats, has fundamentally transformed the regional security environment and highlighted the growing significance of information influence instruments in contemporary conflicts. The information domain has become one of the central arenas of geopolitical competition, where propaganda is used to shape public opinion, fragment democratic societies, undermine societal resilience, and delegitimise strategic political decisions.

Lithuania is among the states that are consistently exposed to hostile narratives and coordinated disinformation campaigns. Despite increased public awareness of security-related issues, data from the *Democracy Sustainability Barometer* indicate that societal resilience to Kremlin propaganda remains moderate (58.6 out of 100 in 2024). This suggests that Lithuania's information environment continues to be vulnerable to systematically constructed narratives capable of influencing political processes, societal cohesion, defence policy, and overall strategic stability of the state.

Problem statement. Within the context of hybrid threats, propaganda has become one of the key instruments used to influence internal state processes. However, in the Lithuanian case, there is a lack of systematic analyses that would identify specific propaganda narratives, their dissemination mechanisms, and the most vulnerable sectors of society and state institutions.

Research novelty. This article integrates three analytical dimensions:

- content analysis of propaganda narratives circulating in the Lithuanian information environment;
- identification of the most vulnerable societal and institutional sectors;
- expert insights into propaganda narratives that may be activated in the near future.

By combining these elements, the study provides a comprehensive picture of propaganda as an instrument of hybrid threats in Lithuania—an area that has so far remained fragmented in academic literature.

Aim of the article. The aim of this article is to reveal the role of propaganda narratives as an instrument of hybrid threats in Lithuania, to identify the main types of these narratives, their dissemination channels, and the most vulnerable areas of Lithuania's information security.

Research objectives:

1. to review the phenomenon of propaganda and its place within the structure of hybrid threats;
2. to identify and classify Russian propaganda narratives relevant to the Lithuanian information environment;
3. to assess the most vulnerable sectors of Lithuanian society and the state;
4. to determine propaganda narratives that are likely to be activated in the near future.

Research Methodology. This study employed a qualitative research design combining systematic content analysis of publicly available information sources with semi-structured expert interviews. The methodological approach was chosen to capture both the empirical manifestation of propaganda narratives in Lithuania's information environment and expert-level assessments of their strategic logic, dynamics, and future trajectories.

The content analysis was conducted between December 2024 and April 2025 and focused on identifying recurring, targeted, and interconnected elements of propaganda narratives circulating in the Lithuanian information space. The analysis covered publicly available media content, social media materials, institutional threat assessment reports, and recognised propaganda monitoring sources. Narratives were analysed in relation to their thematic focus, semantic structure, and intended domains of influence.

The analytical framework was based on models commonly applied in democratic states for the assessment of information threats. These models enabled the classification of information messages according to their target audiences and areas of impact, allowing for the reconstruction of narrative functions and their underlying strategic logic within the broader context of hybrid threats.

To assess not only currently circulating narratives but also those likely to emerge in the near future, the content analysis was supplemented with semi-structured interviews conducted with three high-level institutional experts. The interview participants were: Vilmantas Vitkauskas, Head of the National Crisis Management Centre; Lieutenant Colonel Vidas Grunda, Deputy Director of the Strategic Communications Department of the Lithuanian Armed Forces; and Agnė Ivanauskienė, Head of the Planning and Analysis Division at the Strategic Communication and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of National Defence.

The selection of experts was based on purposive sampling, taking into account their professional experience, institutional responsibilities, and direct involvement in information

security policy, threat assessment, and strategic communication coordination. The interviews were conducted in person using pre-prepared thematic question blocks, which enabled open discussion and the generation of forward-looking insights into potential hostile propaganda directions.

The combination of empirical analysis of the information environment and expert insights made it possible to identify not only dominant propaganda narratives but also structural vulnerabilities within society and public institutions that could be exploited in the future. This multi-layered methodological approach allowed propaganda to be analysed as a dynamic and adaptive instrument of hybrid threats, whose content, intensity, and framing evolve in response to geopolitical developments, domestic political processes, and societal sensitivities.

Theoretical Aspects of Propaganda as a Hybrid Threat

In contemporary security policy, propaganda is regarded as one of the most effective instruments of information influence, capable of shaping public attitudes, undermining institutional legitimacy, and affecting state political decision-making. Within the framework of hybrid threats, propaganda functions as a systematic, targeted, and long-term process aimed at modifying the behaviour and value orientations of selected societal groups.

Classical scholars of propaganda propose different definitions of this phenomenon; however, they converge on one essential element: the primary objective of propaganda is to influence the thinking and behaviour of audiences through selectively chosen, manipulatively framed, or distorted information.

Harold D. Lasswell (1938) defined propaganda as a mechanism of public opinion control based on the use of symbols and meanings to influence collective behaviour. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (2012) emphasise that propaganda constitutes "the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognition, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist." From a NATO perspective, propaganda is understood as an organised activity aimed at manipulating specific target audiences in pursuit of political or strategic objectives (NATO, 2023).

Lithuanian scholars also highlight the psychological dimension of propaganda. Viktor Denisenko (2021) conceptualises propaganda as an integral component of psychological warfare designed to influence individual cognition and behaviour, while Mantas Martišius (2010) defines it as a consistent and methodical form of persuasion oriented towards transforming identity, values, and behavioural patterns.

These definitions underline that propaganda should not be understood as neutral information dissemination but rather as a manipulative practice driven by strategic objectives.

This study relies on the traditional trichotomy of propaganda:
- **White propaganda**, which employs selectively chosen but factually accurate information (Martišius, 2010);
- **Grey propaganda**, which combines factual and fabricated elements to create an illusion of credibility (Martišius, 2010);
- **Black propaganda**, which consists of entirely false information while concealing its true sources (Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2017).

Grey and black propaganda are particularly prevalent in information operations targeting the Baltic States (Denisenko, 2020; Buinauskas et al., 2016).

The effectiveness of propaganda depends on the systematic application of psychological influence techniques. Lithuanian and international scholars identify several core methods (Denisenko, 2021; Maliukevičius, 2008; Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2017):

- **Agenda-setting**, whereby relevant topics are reframed in a direction favourable to the propagandist;
- **Card-stacking**, involving selective presentation of facts;
- **Labelling**, which assigns emotionally charged negative attributes to individuals or groups;
- **Testimonial techniques**, using purported experts or authority figures to legitimise messages;
- **Bandwagon effects**, creating the illusion of majority support;
- **Association transfer**, particularly effective in the manipulation of historical narratives (Maliukevičius, 2008).

These techniques enable propaganda narratives to become embedded within society through emotional stimuli, stereotypes, and repetition.

According to OECD (2024) and European Commission terminology:

- **Disinformation** refers to deliberately created false or misleading information intended to cause harm;
- **Fake news** denotes entirely fabricated informational units designed to provoke emotional reactions and increase chaos.

Denisenko (2020) notes that fake news is frequently employed as a tactical instrument for the rapid dissemination of hostile narratives.

Hybrid threat theory (Hoffman, 2007; Treverton et al., 2018; Giannopoulos et al., 2021) emphasises several key functions of propaganda:

- preparing the information environment for other hostile actions, such as cyber operations or political interference;
- normalising adversarial narratives through sustained repetition and alternative interpretations of reality;
- fragmenting societies by eroding trust in democratic institutions.

Lithuanian researchers (Pūraitė, Vasiliauskienė, Bučiūnas, Bajarūnas, Keršanskas) consistently highlight that the information domain constitutes one of the most vulnerable spheres of hybrid aggression in the Baltic region. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives demonstrate that propaganda within the framework of hybrid threats should be understood not merely as a communication tool, but as a strategic, adaptive, and long-term instrument designed to exploit structural societal vulnerabilities, reshape collective perceptions, and weaken the institutional foundations of democratic states.

Propaganda Narratives in the Lithuanian Information Environment

Russian information operations targeting Lithuania are characterised by systematic implementation, methodological consistency, and a long-term strategic vision. Propaganda in this context should not be understood as an accidental or fragmented phenomenon; rather, it constitutes a continuous process of narrative construction aimed at identifying and exploiting structural vulnerabilities within society in order to influence public perception. Although individual narratives may appear isolated at first glance, they in fact form an interconnected information architecture directed against the foundations of Lithuanian statehood, security, and democratic governance.

The analysis of propaganda narratives in this study was conducted using qualitative content analysis, allowing for the systematic identification, classification, and interpretation of hostile information elements within Lithuania's information environment. The analysis drew on publicly available media and social media content, institutional threat assessment

documents, and recognised propaganda monitoring sources. Narratives were grouped according to their thematic structure, semantic features, and intended directions of influence. The classification methodology was based on established typologies of propaganda (white, grey, and black) and the application of influence techniques discussed in the theoretical literature and further operationalised in this study.

The narrative analysis identified four principal thematic clusters that are consistently reproduced in the Lithuanian information space: narratives targeting Lithuanian statehood and the political system; narratives discrediting NATO and the so-called "collective West"; narratives manipulating historical memory and identity; and narratives related to the war in Ukraine and regional security. The structure of these narratives reflects broader Kremlin information strategies adapted to the Lithuanian context.

a) Narratives Undermining Lithuanian Statehood and the Political System

One of the most deeply embedded narrative clusters focuses on delegitimising Lithuania's political system. Propaganda messages consistently portray Lithuanian authorities as incompetent, corrupt, or externally controlled. The strategic objective of this narrative is to cultivate distrust in democratic institutions, reduce civic engagement, and foster political cynicism. These narratives frequently employ card-stacking techniques, whereby isolated incidents are removed from their broader context and presented as evidence of systemic failure. For instance, corruption cases—common to many democratic states - are reframed as proof of an inherently flawed political system. In this way, selective fragments of reality are instrumentalised to erode institutional legitimacy. Another recurring element within this narrative cluster is the claim that Lithuania lacks political autonomy and merely implements decisions imposed by external actors or the "Western dictate". This aligns with a broader strategy employed in Russian information operations to diminish the perceived sovereignty of small states and create conditions conducive to their geopolitical weakening.

b) Narratives Targeting NATO and the "Collective West"

A second major narrative cluster seeks to discredit NATO and undermine Lithuania's membership in the Alliance. Within these narratives, NATO is depicted as an aggressive, expansionist military organisation, while Lithuania is framed as a passive, peripheral state lacking real decision-making power.

A particularly prominent technique in this cluster is the bandwagon effect, whereby propaganda creates the illusion that the majority of society opposes NATO's presence in the region. Such claims are often supported by fabricated opinion polls, pseudo-analytical data, or alternative "expert" opinions. This narrative strategy aims to portray security institutions as acting against public will and to recast NATO troop deployments as a source of instability rather than security. These narratives are frequently linked to energy, migration, or social issues, portraying NATO as a destabilising force across multiple policy domains. Such linkages reflect a broader information strategy designed to undermine Western unity and weaken transatlantic ties.

c) Manipulation of Historical Memory and Identity

Historical memory represents one of the most sensitive dimensions of information security in the Baltic region, and consequently occupies a central place in Russia's propaganda architecture. In the Lithuanian case, two dominant directions can be identified.

The first involves the reinterpretation of the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, promoting claims that its heritage is "Belarusian" and that Lithuania has illegitimately appropriated this legacy. The second focuses on reframing narratives related to the Second World War and the Soviet occupation, seeking to relativise or deny the occupation and to legitimise the Soviet regime.

These narratives extensively employ association transfer techniques, whereby historical symbols are infused with alternative meanings favourable to the propagandist. Core elements of Lithuanian identity—such as national symbols, key historical dates, and prominent historical figures—are depicted as fabricated, misrepresented, or illegitimately claimed.

Such operations are designed not only to destabilise historical self-perception but also to create fertile ground for broader geopolitical narratives portraying Lithuania as an artificial or historically unjustified state.

d) Narratives Related to Ukraine and Regional Security

Since the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukraine-related narratives have become a central axis of propaganda operations directed at Lithuania. These narratives typically follow three interrelated lines.

First, Ukraine's statehood is delegitimised through claims portraying the country as failed, corrupt, or non-existent. Second, Western support for Ukraine is discredited, particularly by emphasising its alleged futility or economic burden on Lithuanian society. Third, military escalation narratives suggest that Lithuania's support for Ukraine will inevitably draw the country into war.

These narratives frequently rely on emotionally charged fake news, including fabricated incidents near the Lithuanian–Belarusian border, fictitious accounts of foreign soldiers killed in Lithuania, or invented stories depicting refugees and migrants as sources of chaos. The strategic objective is to weaken public support for Ukraine, undermine Lithuania's international positioning, and create the false impression of excessive national involvement in the conflict.

Taken together, these narrative clusters operate in a systemic manner. Delegitimising Lithuania's political system simultaneously weakens trust in NATO and Western partners (NATO, 2024). Manipulating historical memory undermines identity and resilience to information manipulation. Distorting narratives related to Ukraine contributes to a broader reconfiguration of geopolitical perception.

This analysis demonstrates that propaganda narratives targeting Lithuania are not fragmented or isolated; rather, they function as an integrated architecture of influence aimed at the long-term erosion of national security and democratic resilience.

Vulnerable Sectors of Lithuania's Information Security

The effectiveness of propaganda narratives depends not only on their content or dissemination channels, but also on the structural vulnerabilities of society and state institutions. Information environments characterised by social tension, unresolved historical grievances, or fragile identity narratives are particularly susceptible to hostile information operations. In the Lithuanian case, several sectors can be identified where propaganda narratives exert the strongest influence and where vulnerability is systematically exploited by hostile information campaigns (Buinauskas et al., 2016; Denisenko, 2021; Vasiliauskienė, 2022).

Statehood and the Legitimacy of Democratic Institutions. Lithuania demonstrates a particular sensitivity to narratives that undermine state institutions, question their competence, or challenge the transparency of political decision-making. This vulnerability is reinforced by several structural factors, including:

- partial public distrust in the political system;
- periodically emerging corruption cases, which are hyperbolised and instrumentalised by hostile counter-propaganda;
- an increasingly polarised political discourse.

Research indicates that the erosion of institutional legitimacy constitutes one of the primary objectives of hybrid operations, as weakened trust in public institutions creates favourable conditions for the entrenchment of more radical narratives (Pūraitė, 2021). In this way, information attacks seek not only to foster political cynicism, but also to create the perception that democratic procedures are unreliable or ineffective.

Historical Memory and Identity. Historical consciousness in Lithuania is closely intertwined with the foundations of national identity; therefore, attempts to transform it may have direct consequences for societal resilience. Particularly sensitive areas include:

- the heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania;
- interpretations of the Second World War;
- narratives related to the Soviet occupation.

Kremlin information operations consistently seek to rewrite these historical elements by constructing ambiguous or distorted interpretations of the past (Maliukevičius, 2008). This strategy is oriented towards the fragmentation of identity, aiming to alter societal value orientations and reduce resilience to hostile narratives. The politicisation of history thus becomes a long-term instrument capable of undermining social cohesion and trust in the state's historical narrative.

Perceptions of National Defence and Security. The defence sector represents one of the primary targets of hybrid operations in the Baltic States (Keršanskas, 2020). Propaganda narratives in this domain typically focus on:

- diminishing the perceived capabilities of the Lithuanian Armed Forces;
- discrediting the presence of NATO forces in Lithuania;
- emphasising the alleged "futility" of military support for Ukraine.

The impact of these narratives is amplified by public fears related to regional security instability. Propaganda exploits natural feelings of insecurity by constructing claims that defence policy allegedly "provokes conflict" or "increases the risk of being drawn into military confrontation". Such narratives are particularly effective during periods of crisis, when society seeks simple explanations for complex security situations.

Social Cohesion and Societal Polarisation. Like many democratic states, Lithuania is experiencing increasing political and value-based polarisation. This phenomenon creates fertile ground for the dissemination of propaganda narratives, particularly within social media environments where information is easily fragmented into ideological segments.

Hostile actors deliberately seek to accentuate societal divisions by exploiting:

- value-based conflicts (e.g. human rights, migration, family policy);
- cultural and regional differences;
- issues of socio-economic inequality.

Research shows that social tension and distrust between societal groups are among the strongest factors increasing vulnerability to information manipulation (Giannopoulos et al., 2021). In the Lithuanian case, this means that narratives reinforcing "us versus them" logic become particularly effective.

Energy and Economic Security. Energy-related issues occupy a prominent place in hostile propaganda, particularly in light of Lithuania's energy transition, disconnection from Russian energy resources, and synchronisation projects. Propaganda narratives frequently focus on:

- the alleged "inefficiency" of energy independence projects;
- supposedly increased prices;
- the motif of "damage caused by Western policies".

Such rhetoric aims not only to generate dissatisfaction with economic decisions, but also to create the impression that Lithuania's strategic orientation towards Western energy policy is misguided. Energy security thus becomes a domain where geopolitical, economic, and informational narratives intersect, rendering it especially vulnerable to manipulation (Bajarūnas, 2018).

Systemic Vulnerability: Gaps in Information Literacy and Critical Thinking. A segment of Lithuania's population demonstrates limited information literacy, constraining the ability to critically evaluate sources, distinguish facts from opinions, and identify disinformation. Data from the OECD and the European Commission indicate that information literacy levels across the Baltic region remain uneven, creating additional risks for information influence operations.

This structural vulnerability creates conditions in which even low-quality narratives may gain traction if they are presented through simulated authority, emotional framing, or appealing but simplified interpretations of complex phenomena.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Lithuania's vulnerability to propaganda narratives is rooted not in isolated informational incidents, but in structural weaknesses related to institutional legitimacy, identity formation, social cohesion, security perceptions, and economic sensitivities. These vulnerabilities create favourable conditions for hostile narratives to gain long-term traction, particularly when they exploit existing societal tensions and cognitive gaps. Accordingly, these structural weaknesses not only shape the effectiveness of currently circulating narratives but also provide a framework for anticipating the directions of future propaganda campaigns, which are examined in the following section..

Narratives of Military Involvement and the "Impending War"

One of the most prominent future propaganda directions is likely to revolve around claims that Lithuania is being "inevitably" drawn into a military conflict. Current trends observed on social media already indicate the circulation of narratives alleging "forced mobilisation", the existence of a "secret NATO plan" to use Lithuanian territory for escalation, and the deliberate fuelling of public anxiety through "impending war panic". These narratives rely on instruments of fear, threat, and uncertainty, and their primary objective is to reduce societal preparedness for defence while simultaneously delegitimising state security policy (Keršanskas, 2020; Treverton et al., 2018). This narrative direction tends to intensify during periods of crisis, heightened public debate on mobilisation, or the conduct of military exercises.

Closely related to this trend is the delegitimisation of NATO's military presence in Lithuania. In light of NATO's plans to strengthen forward defence and integrate a German brigade into the country, propaganda efforts are likely to intensify against these processes. Narratives portraying foreign troops as a threat to Lithuanian sovereignty, framing Lithuania as a NATO military training ground, or suggesting that brigade deployment will provoke a Russian response are expected to become increasingly visible. Research conducted by NATO StratCom COE demonstrates that such narratives are systematically activated wherever the Alliance strengthens its eastern flank capabilities (NATO StratCom COE, 2024). In the Lithuanian context, these messages may be used to erode public support for defence policy and promote ideas of "neutrality".

Another persistent and highly effective propaganda direction concerns the instrumentalisation of migration and demographic change. For several years, Kremlin information policy has exploited migration as a catalyst for social tension, and this trend is likely to continue. Narratives suggesting that migration is destroying Lithuanian identity, that

the state has lost control of its borders, or that Western policies are forcing Lithuania to accept unwanted migrants remain particularly potent. Hybrid threat experts emphasise that migration constitutes one of the most effective topics for societal polarisation and will therefore continue to be exploited in hostile information operations (Giannopoulos et al., 2021; OECD, 2023). This narrative direction is especially sensitive during electoral cycles, when societal divisions are more easily amplified.

The erosion of historical narratives and national identity is also expected to remain a central target of propaganda activity. The domain of historical memory continues to be used to destabilise identity and undermine state legitimacy through claims that Lithuanian statehood lacks historical foundations, that the heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is Belarusian, or that the Soviet occupation was not a genuine occupation. Research demonstrates that such narratives function as long-term instruments of influence, shaping not only political attitudes but also deeper value orientations (Maliukevičius, 2008; Denisenko, 2021). Their impact is further reinforced by polarised historical discourse and heightened societal sensitivity to identity-related issues.

Economic hardship and energy security likewise constitute highly manipulable informational themes. Propaganda narratives are likely to continue emphasising claims that Western sanctions harm Lithuania itself, that energy independence has caused a price crisis, or that Lithuania is responsible for its own economic decline. These narratives often emerge synchronously with key energy policy decisions or inflationary spikes and are aimed at fuelling public dissatisfaction while weakening trust in the state's economic policy (Bajarūnas, 2019).

In the longer term, propaganda narratives are expected to increasingly shift towards the social domain, particularly by exploiting value-based conflicts, regional disparities, and socio-economic inequality. Hybrid threat analyses indicate that one of the most effective ways to weaken a state is to stimulate internal polarisation (EU Hybrid CoE, 2022). In this context, the social media ecosystem—driven by algorithmic recommendation systems—provides an especially conducive environment for the amplification of polarising narratives.

It is important to emphasise that propaganda narratives are not static phenomena. They are continuously adapted to situational developments, tailored to emerging crises, and reconfigured to resonate with prevailing societal emotional states. This indicates that, within the context of hybrid threats, future narratives evolve not solely according to the strategic intentions of hostile actors, but also in response to the structural vulnerabilities of Lithuania's information security environment. Overall trends suggest that propaganda will continue to focus on delegitimising defence policy, eroding historical identity, amplifying economic distrust, and strengthening social polarization.

Taken together, the projected propaganda narratives demonstrate a clear continuity with existing patterns of information influence, while simultaneously adapting to emerging political, security, and social dynamics. Rather than introducing fundamentally new themes, future propaganda is likely to intensify and recombine established narratives in ways that maximise emotional resonance and exploit Lithuania's identified structural vulnerabilities. This forward-looking assessment provides a necessary foundation for the subsequent discussion, which situates these findings within a broader analytical and comparative context and evaluates their implications for public and national security.

MRU
Mykolas Romeris
University

Discussion

The analysis of propaganda as a hybrid threat in the Lithuanian context reveals several essential structural aspects that allow for a better understanding of the operational logic of hostile narratives. First, narratives are not self-contained phenomena – they are constructed according to a targeted strategy aimed at exploiting specific societal vulnerabilities. This is confirmed both by international research (Giannopoulos et al., 2021; NATO StratCom COE, 2024) and by insights provided by Lithuanian analytical centres (Maliukevičius, 2008; Keršanskas, 2020), which demonstrate that propaganda seeks to influence not only the information environment but also institutional, social, and political processes.

Second, the Lithuanian case clearly shows that propaganda narratives operate in a multi-layered manner. Seemingly separate topics – NATO, history, energy, migration – are in fact interconnected, and their impact is amplified synergistically. By drawing parallels between state policy decisions, historical interpretations, and economic arguments, propaganda seeks to construct an alternative model of world interpretation that gradually becomes attractive to social groups inclined towards scepticism or distrust. In this way, information manipulation acquires a deeper effect – it not only distorts facts but also reconstructs the cognitive reference points upon which society relies when assessing reality.

Third, attention must be paid to the fact that propaganda narratives are particularly effective in polarised societies. Over the past decade, value-based and political divisions have intensified within Lithuanian society, creating favourable conditions for the impact of hybrid threats. Research shows that polarisation reduces societal resilience to manipulation and encourages emotionally driven evaluation of information (Hybrid CoE, 2022). This is especially relevant in the Lithuanian case, where the social media ecosystem becomes the primary space for the dissemination of narratives, while algorithmic mechanisms often amplify radical or polarising messages.

Fourth, Lithuania's information security challenges are similar to those faced by other Baltic States. In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, a consistent pattern of propaganda activity can be observed: the instrumentalisation of identity issues, the rewriting of historical narratives, the delegitimisation of the political system, and attempts to fragment society (OECD, 2024). This regional similarity indicates that propaganda mechanisms are not local in nature but form part of a broader strategy aimed at reducing the resilience of democratic states in Eastern Europe.

A fifth important aspect concerns the impact of propaganda on public security. Public security research identifies several threats that arise directly from the long-term influence of narratives (Treverton et al., 2018):
1. declining trust in institutions,
2. fragmentation of society,
3. destabilisation of the political process,
4. weakening of the capacity for collective crisis response.

In Lithuania, all of these processes are already observable in a fragmented manner, and in some cases are becoming increasingly pronounced, particularly within energy and defence security discourses.

Finally, it must be noted that propaganda narratives transform more rapidly than states are able to respond to them. This creates challenges for strategic communication and public sector institutions. Lithuania's response to hybrid threats has become more coordinated in recent years; however, there remains a lack of: a unified interinstitutional strategy; consistently funded information literacy programmes; systematic data collection on the effects of

propaganda. These shortcomings allow hostile actors to retain informational initiative, particularly during crisis situations.

In summary, it can be stated that propaganda narratives in Lithuania function as an integrated architecture of influence operating through institutional, social, and cultural mechanisms. This confirms the necessity of analysing propaganda processes comprehensively, not limiting the analysis to the identification of individual narratives, but also assessing their interconnections and long-term impact on national security. Taken together, these findings highlight that propaganda in the Lithuanian context operates as a sustained and adaptive process rather than a series of isolated informational incidents. Its effectiveness is closely linked to structural societal conditions, institutional vulnerabilities, and the broader regional security environment. This underscores the importance of addressing propaganda as a long-term security challenge, requiring continuous analytical attention and strategic response.

Conclusions

Propaganda is one of the central instruments of hybrid threats, enabling not only the manipulation of the information environment but also the systematic influence of a state's political, social, and cultural spheres. In the Lithuanian case, propaganda is employed to pursue long-term objectives, including the reduction of trust in democratic institutions, the weakening of societal cohesion, and the erosion of symbols of statehood. The propaganda narratives circulating in Lithuania's information environment are interconnected, even though they may appear fragmented on the surface. Narratives related to statehood, NATO, history, and Ukraine form a unified system of influence aimed at constructing an alternative representation of political reality and destabilising public trust in the state's strategic choices.

The most vulnerable areas include the legitimacy of statehood, historical narratives, perceptions of national defence, social cohesion, and energy security. Structural vulnerabilities existing within these sectors create favourable conditions for the entrenchment of narratives and their long-term impact. These trends correspond to the findings of international research on the logic of hybrid actions in Eastern Europe.

Future propaganda narratives are likely to focus on military policy, the presence of NATO forces, migration, economic challenges, and the transformation of historical narratives. These topics possess the greatest emotional potential and can be easily adapted to ongoing crises. This indicates that propaganda exploits not only informational gaps but also societal emotional states.

Lithuania's response to propaganda and hybrid threats requires a systemic approach encompassing the consistent strengthening of societal information literacy, the coordination of interinstitutional strategic communication, data-driven monitoring of narratives, and the reduction of critical vulnerabilities in politics and the public sector. These measures are necessary to prevent long-term information influence and to maintain state resilience.

In summary, propaganda narratives in Lithuania operate as an integrated architecture of influence characterised by adaptability, long-term orientation, and a focus on the state's structural vulnerabilities. Only a consistent, coordinated, and forward-looking response can reduce the threat they pose to national and public security.

Beyond its empirical findings, this article underscores the importance of approaching propaganda not as an episodic informational disturbance but as a structural and long-term security challenge embedded within broader political, social, and cultural processes. The Lithuanian case demonstrates that effective responses to hybrid threats must move beyond reactive counter-narrative measures and instead focus on strengthening democratic resilience

at multiple levels, including institutional credibility, societal cohesion, and critical engagement with information. By conceptualising propaganda as an integrated architecture of influence, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of hybrid threats in small democratic states and highlights the necessity of sustained, coordinated, and anticipatory policy responses in an increasingly contested information environment.

References

1. Bajarūnas, E., Keršanskas, V. (2018). Hybrid Threats: Analysis of Content, Challenges Posed and Measures to Overcome. Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review 16(1):123-170. DOI: 10.2478/lasr-2018-0006

2. Buinauskas, D., Keršanskas, V. ir Kasčiūnas, L. (2016) Propagandos tyrimo modelis Rusijos propagandai Lietuvoje analizuoti". *Politologija 83* (2016): 3-40. https://www.zurnalai.vu.lt/politologija/article/view/10236/8103

3. Denisenko, V. (2021) *Propagandos apsupty*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla.

4. Denisenko, V. (2020). Threats of propaganda and the information war on Lithuanian security. *Lithuania in the global context: national security and defence policy dilemmas*. Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos karo akademija (2020): 235-248. https://kam.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/lithuania-in-the-global-context.pdf#page=235

5. Hybrid CoE. (2022). *Hybrid Threats: A Comprehensive Resilience Ecosystem*". Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023. https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/CORE_comprehensive_resilience_ecosystem.pdf

6. EUvsDisinfo. (2023). *EEAS Stratcom's responses to foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) in 2023*. Brussels: European External Action Service. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/EEAS%20Stratcom%20Annual%20Report%202023.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

7. Giannopoulos, G., Smith, H., Theocharidou, M. „*The Landscape of Hybrid Threats: A Conceptual Model. Public Version*". Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021. https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/conceptual_framework-reference-version-shortened-good_cover_-_publication_office.pdf

8. Hoffman, F. G. (2007) Conflict in the 21 st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars. Arlington: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf

9. Jowett, G. S., & O'Donnell, V. (2012). *Propaganda and Persuasion* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

10. Lasswell, H. D. (1938). *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. New York: Knopf. https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015000379902&seq=15

11. Maliukevičius, N. (2008) *Rusijos informacijos geopolitikos potencialas ir sklaida Lietuvoje*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla. https://etalpykla.lituanistika.lt/object/LT-LDB-0001:B.03~2008~1367165404656/B.03~2008~1367165404656.pdf

12. Martišius, M. (2010) *(Ne)akivaizdus karas: nagrinėjant informacinį karą*. Vilnius: Versus Aureus.

13. Martišius, M. (2022) *Atsargiai – propaganda.* Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2022.

14. NATO StratCom COE. (2024). *Russia's Information Influence Operations in the Nordic - Baltic Region*. Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/russias-information-influence-operations-in-the-nordic-baltic-region/314

15. NATO StratCom COE. (2023). Kremlin Communication Strategy for Russian Audiences Before and After the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine. Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/kremlin-communication-strategy-for-russian-audiences-before-and-after-the-full-scale-invasion-of-ukraine/293

16. OECD (2024) „*Facts not Fakes. Tackling disinformation, strengthening information integrity*". Paris: OECD Publishing https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/03/facts-not-fakes-tackling-disinformation-strengthening-information-integrity_ff96d19f/d909ff7a-en.pdf

17. Pūraitė, A., Banelis, A. (2024) Information threats and legal means to combat them: the case of Lithuania. *Public Security and Public Order No. 35*(2024): 208-230. https://ojs.mruni.eu/ojs/vsvt/article/view/8142

18. Pūraitė, A.(2022). Deepfake, propaganda, disinformation: is there a difference, and how law enforcement can deal with it. *Public Security and Public Order Vol. 31* (2022)*: p. 171-182. https://cris.mruni.eu/server/api/core/bitstreams/27adf263-7b95-4429-b6eb-7486ce1490c4/content*

19. Rytų Europos studijų centras (2017) „*Rusijos propaganda: analizė, įvertinimas, rekomendacijos*". Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas. http://www3002.vu.lt/uploads/news/id987/RESC%20monografija_propaganda.pdf

20. Treverton, G., F., Thvedt, A., Alicia R. Chen Kathy Lee Madeline McCue (2018) „*Addressing Hybrid Threats*". Bromma: Arkitektkopia. https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1219292/FULLTEXT01.pdf

21. Vasiliauskienė, V., Stumbrys, V. (2023) Problematic aspects of the legal definition of hybrid warfare. *Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka*, Vol. 33, (2023): p.142-153. https://cris.mruni.eu/server/api/core/bitstreams/1a66237f-f1e6-4359-b070-a92076c6a168/content

PROTECTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES FROM INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT: CONVERGING STANDARDS OF THE CRC, THE CRPD AND THE ECHR

Violeta VASILIAUSKIENĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: v.vasiliauskiene@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0743-4015

Gabrielė GINTAUTAITĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: gintautaite@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-3808-215X

Abstract. *Children with disabilities remain at heightened risk of discrimination, institutional neglect, and various forms of violence due to the compounded vulnerabilities of age and disability. International human rights law recognizes this intersectional vulnerability and has developed increasingly specific protections. This article examines how the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) applies Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) — the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment — in cases concerning children with disabilities, and to what extent this judicial interpretation incorporates principles derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The research applies doctrinal, comparative, and interpretative analysis of ECtHR case law, focusing on judgments addressing institutional neglect, involuntary medical treatment, sexual violence, and systemic failures in protection. It further evaluates the Court's references to CRC "best interests" and protection-from-violence standards, as well as CRPD-based rights to dignity, autonomy, personal integrity, and inclusion. The findings reveal clear jurisprudential convergence between the ECtHR and UN treaty bodies. The Court has increasingly recognized that States bear extensive positive obligations toward children with disabilities: not only to refrain from abuse but to proactively prevent foreseeable risks, ensure adequate safeguards in care settings, and conduct effective investigations into allegations of harm. The Court's jurisprudence demonstrates that systemic institutional neglect, involuntary medical treatment, and failures to protect against violence may engage State responsibility under Articles 2, 3, 8, and 13 ECHR. Representative judgments illustrate that disability-sensitive and child-rights-based approaches are now integral to the interpretation of Article 3. Overall, the analysis shows that disability-sensitive and child-rights-based approaches are now integral to the ECtHR's interpretation of Article 3. This reflects a broader alignment of European human rights protection with CRC and CRPD standards, reinforcing that equal dignity and effective protection for children with disabilities must be ensured in practice, not only in law.*

Keywords: *children with disabilities, inhuman and degrading treatment, European Court of Human Rights, positive obligations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities*

Introduction

Persons with disabilities remain one of the most vulnerable groups in society, often experiencing the risk of discrimination or degrading and other inappropriate treatment. The concept of disability itself has changed over time. The concept of disability can be perceived through various prisms – the medical definition of disability, the social definition of disability, the Human Rights definition of disability and so on. According to the medical definition of disability, disability is a disorder of physical, psychological or intellectual functions that limits the ability to perform certain activities. According to this approach, a person with a disability was assessed as having certain shortcomings, and the difficulties they experience were

associated only with their health condition. According to the social definition of disability, disability is perceived as the result of the interaction between the person and their characteristics. This means that disability occurs not only due to the person's health condition, but also due to inadequate conditions for full participation in society: limited services, unsuitable architecture, inaccessibility of information and other obstacles. According to this view, environmental barriers become the main factor that limits the opportunities of a person with a disability to participate in social life. The human rights perspective further emphasizes the social aspect of the definition of disability. From a human rights perspective, the main reasons why people with disabilities experience certain limitations are discrimination and exclusion. According to this perspective, disability is defined not only as an individual disorder or environmental obstacle, but also as a consequence of society, which takes disabled people too little or not at all into account and therefore separates them from mainstream activities. Therefore, like racism or sexism, disability is described as a consequence of discrimination. These different perspectives are particularly relevant in the context of children with disabilities. Given that people with disabilities are generally more vulnerable than people without disabilities, it is important to realize that children with disabilities often experience even greater vulnerability due to their age and other circumstances. From a human rights perspective, every child has the right to dignity, development, education and protection from all forms of violence. International conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) establish specific provisions that states must follow in order to protect the rights of children with disabilities.

Despite this normative framework, the protection of children with disabilities from inhuman and degrading treatment remains fragmented in practice, particularly where neglect, institutionalisation, or medical interventions are concerned. The aim of the article is to examine how the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) interprets and applies the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment (Article 3 ECHR) in cases concerning children with disabilities, and to what extent this interpretation integrates principles from the CRC and CRPD. Methodology: Doctrinal, comparative, and interpretative analysis of selected ECHR judgments involving children with disabilities; examination of cross-references to UN treaty bodies and emerging standards of "intersectional vulnerability."

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and children with disability

From the perspective of protection against inhuman and degrading treatment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (hereinafter – CRC) contains provisions aimed at protecting special needs of children as a vulnerable part of society, it establishes preventive obligations aimed at shielding children with disabilities from violence, institutional harm and neglect. The Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and entered into force in 1990. It is the most comprehensive international legal instrument relating to the rights and well-being of children. This Convention sets out the fundamental rights of the child and the obligations of states to ensure them. The provisions of the Convention cover the best interests of the child, the right to life and development, education, health and protection from violence or other exploitation.

This Convention applies and is relevant also to children with disabilities. The Convention specifically addresses the special needs of children with disability in Article 23. The article stipulates that every mentally or physically disabled child has the right to a full life, a guarantee of dignity, the development of self-confidence and active participation in public life. States

must provide such children with special care and support, taking into account the needs of the child and the situation of his or her parents or those caring for him or her. This assistance should be provided free of charge, as far as possible. Children with disabilities must be provided with opportunities to receive education, vocational training, as well as health care, rehabilitation and recreation. In this way, the aim is to ensure that children with disabilities can participate in society as much as possible, develop properly and realize their potential. Article 23 of the Convention specifically emphasizes the needs of children, establishes their rights and responsibilities, and the well-being of children with disabilities.

In addition, there are other articles that are relevant when it comes to the rights and interests of children with disabilities. Article 3 of this Convention emphasizes the primacy of the interests of the child in deciding issues related to him. It states that states undertake to provide the child with protection and care necessary for his or her well-being. This is relevant for children with disabilities, since ensuring their well-being requires additional protection. Article 19 states that states are obliged to protect children from all forms of violence - psychological, physical, sexual or neglect. This is important in relation to children with disabilities, since such children are more vulnerable in case of violence or neglect, they need additional protection and assistance. Article 37 of the Convention prohibits torture, other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as unlawful deprivation of liberty. The provisions of this article also apply to children with disabilities who may face maltreatment.

In order to ensure that the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are properly implemented, the activities of the States Parties are overseen by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Committee on the Rights of the Child (2025) is a body of 18 independent experts that monitors the activities of the States Parties in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee examines reports submitted by the States Parties, evaluates the activities of the States Parties in ensuring the protection of children's rights and shares recommendations, which provide advice on improving legal, social or educational systems. The Committee also investigates individual complaints about violations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and may initiate investigations into systemic and most serious violations, such as the involvement of children in armed conflicts, the sale or exploitation of children. In addition to monitoring, the Committee prepares thematic comments and discussion days that help States Parties implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in practice. In this way, it is ensured that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols are actually applied in the daily lives of children (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2025).

In addition to directly monitoring the activities of States and examining reports, the Committee on the Rights of the Child also prepares general comments. They discuss in detail specific children's rights and problems, including the rights of children with disabilities and their protection from different forms of violence. Important general comments in this context are General Comment No. 9 ("Children with Disabilities") and General Comment No. 13 ("Freedom from All Forms of Violence"). These are not legal laws, but these comments provide interpretations and guidelines for States on how to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in practice.

General Comment No. 9 "Children with Disabilities" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006) provides a comprehensive interpretation of Article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It emphasizes that the fundamental principle of Article 23, paragraph 1, is the right of children with disabilities to live a full and decent life, ensuring dignity and creating conditions for active participation in community activities. All State measures to implement the rights set forth in the Convention shall be aimed at the maximum inclusion of children with

disabilities in society, in particular in the areas of health care, education and leisure. The Committee emphasizes that, in accordance with article 23, paragraphs 2 and 3, children with disabilities have the right to individually adapted assistance free of charge. Such assistance shall ensure effective access to education, training, health care services and recreational opportunities. With regard to article 23, paragraph 4, the Committee notes that the international exchange of information between States Parties in the areas of prevention and treatment is limited. The Committee therefore recommends that States actively share experiences and disseminate information in order to strengthen skills in the areas of prevention and treatment of children with disabilities. Thus, this commentary shows that the purpose of article 23 of CRC is not limited to the formal guarantee of rights - the main focus is on the inclusion of children with disabilities on an equal footing in society.

Another relevant commentary on this topic is General Comment No. 13 "Freedom from All Forms of Violence" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). This commentary provides a broad interpretation of Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to Article 19, States must ensure the protection of children from all forms of violence – psychological, physical, sexual, negligent or other – regardless of the environment in which they grow up. Children must not be seen as victims of violence, but as legal subjects with the right to dignity, expression of their views, health and participation in society. States must take all appropriate legal, social, educational and administrative measures to establish a comprehensive system of child protection, including risk identification, prevention, provision of services, treatment, monitoring and, where necessary, legal intervention. The commentary also highlights the role of the family, the community and institutions and the need to combat discrimination in order to ensure equal protection for all children. The ultimate goal is to create a coordinated system of the state, community, and family that would actively protect children from violence, promote their psychological, emotional, physical, and social development, and ensure their rights.

Thus, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Committee's interpretative comments form a unified framework of protection that ensures children's rights not only in law but also in practice. They emphasize the dignity of the child, protection from all forms of violence, equality, participation and full development, while obliging States to establish preventive and effective child protection systems.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and protection of children from violence

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) (hereinafter- CRPD) complements child-specific protections by framing ill-treatment of children with disabilities as a violation of dignity, autonomy, and bodily integrity rather than a welfare concern. The CRPD is an international human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006, which sets out the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities. The aim of the Convention is to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities, to promote respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities and their active participation in society. The Convention consists of two parts: the main Convention, which sets out the principles of human rights, and its additional protocol. It obliges Member States to guarantee persons with disabilities autonomy, inclusion in society, protection from discrimination and the opportunity to participate in public, cultural and social life (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2025).

In the context of children with disabilities, the relevant article of this convention is Article 7, which specifically deals with children with disabilities. Article 7 of the Convention particularly emphasizes the rights of children with disabilities, in order to ensure their equal opportunities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The article establishes the provision that in all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. This means that States parties must take all necessary measures to ensure that the best interests of the child are a priority in all actions concerning them. It also provides for the right of children with disabilities to express their views freely on all matters affecting them. This right must be implemented taking into account the age and level of maturity of the child. In addition, States are obliged to provide appropriate assistance to children with disabilities, taking into account the child's level of disability and individual needs, so that every child with disabilities can effectively exercise this right.

Furthermore, in the context of children with disabilities, articles 15, 16, 17 are also of particular importance, which establish the protection of persons with disabilities from torture, ill-treatment, various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse and guarantee physical and mental integrity (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, 2006). Article 15 of the Convention emphasizes that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including any medical or scientific experimentation without their free consent. States parties must take all effective legislative or other measures to protect persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, from such treatment. Article 16 of the Convention establishes protection from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, both in the home and in the public environment. States parties must take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities and their families are protected. When providing such protection, the person's age, gender and the nature of the disability must be taken into account. The article also emphasizes that states must guarantee the protection, rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons with disabilities, taking into account the age, gender and individual needs of the particular person, and take appropriate measures to identify, investigate and adequately address cases of violence, exploitation or other similar nature. Article 17 of the Convention emphasizes the right of every person with a disability to physical and mental integrity. Thus, these discussed articles of the Convention, together with the entire Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are particularly important in revealing the topic of children with disabilities, since the Convention defines the rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities and the mechanisms for their protection.

The CRPD Committee's General Comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016) focuses on Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which regulates the rights and freedoms of women and girls with disabilities. This article establishes the obligation of States parties to guarantee the empowerment, participation in society and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls with disabilities. The Committee emphasizes that women and girls with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination – based on gender, disability and other factors, such as age, ethnicity, social status or sexual orientation. For these reasons, they often face obstacles in accessing education, participating in the labour market, being legally recognized and having the opportunity to make decisions about their lives, using health care services and more. The comment draws attention to the fact that women with disabilities are not a homogeneous group – they come from different ages, types of disabilities and social situations, including refugees, migrants and women with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. In this context, there is a need to ensure legal, policy, social and educational measures to combat discrimination and overcome barriers, with particular attention to issues

related to health care, sexual and reproductive health, family rights and protection from coercive medical interventions. The Commentary also highlights the importance of the participation of women with disabilities in public life. It is important that women with disabilities are able to express their opinions and make their own decisions, ensuring that they are not punished for expressing their opinions or views. In conclusion, the CRPD Committee's General Comment No. 3 discusses Article 6 of the Convention, noting that this article is a key instrument guaranteeing the equality, protection and full integration of women and girls with disabilities into society.

Another relevant Committee comment is the CRPD Committee's General Comment No. 4 on inclusive education (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016a). This comment addresses Article 24 of the Convention, which establishes the right of persons with disabilities to education. The Committee emphasizes that persons with disabilities are not merely recipients of social care but are full rights-holders, entitled to quality education and learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Despite progress, many persons with disabilities still lack opportunities to learn alongside others due to stereotypes, discrimination, lack of knowledge, technical and financial resources, and gaps in legal protection. Inclusive education entails not only physical access to schools but also accessible learning materials, technologies, and individualized support measures. Special attention should be given to blind, deaf, and hard-of-hearing individuals, as well as persons with intellectual disabilities or those on the autism spectrum. For such persons, States must ensure appropriate teaching, specialist support, assistive technologies, and alternative communication tools, taking into account their specific needs. Thus, the CRPD Committee's General Comment No. 4 addresses Article 24 of the Convention, which is crucial for clarifying the principles of inclusive education and ensuring the right of persons with disabilities, including children, to equal, accessible, and quality education.

Thus, the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aim to ensure the rights and freedoms of persons, including children with disabilities. Articles 15, 16, 17 of this Convention are most relevant for the protection of the rights of children with disabilities. Article 7 of the Convention is of particular importance, which enshrines provisions that specifically emphasize the rights of children with disabilities and the obligation of states to protect their rights. The Committee's general comments No. 3 and No. 4 further strengthen the standards related to children's rights by providing interpretations of the articles of the Convention.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and protection of children with disability from violence

Further protection of children from violence, inhuman or degrading treatment is established in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (1950). This document ensures the protection of fundamental human rights in Europe. Unlike the CRC and CRPD, the ECHR provides a judicial enforcement mechanism through which the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment can be concretely applied. The European Court of Human Rights, operating in Strasbourg, was established to implement the Convention, which monitors how states fulfil their obligations to guarantee the rights enshrined in the Convention to all persons within their jurisdiction and provides individuals with the opportunity to protect their violated rights at the international level. The ECHR consists of a main text and additional protocols. In general, the Convention enshrines fundamental human rights and freedoms that ensure personal dignity, security, self-expression and protection from state abuse. Although this Convention is

not specifically intended for persons with disabilities, its provisions are universal and the rights enshrined in the Convention can be protected by everyone, including persons with disabilities.

In the context of children and persons with disabilities in general, Article 3 of the ECHR is relevant, which establishes an absolute prohibition of torture (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2021). Torture is the intentional infliction of extremely severe or cruel physical or mental pain or suffering on a person for such purposes as intimidating, coercing, extracting information or punishing him (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2021). The Convention prohibits torture as well as inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Inhuman treatment or punishment is manifested in actions that cause severe and intense physical or emotional suffering. Degrading treatment is manifested in actions that seriously violate a person's dignity. The provisions of Article 3 of the Convention are particularly important for persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, as such persons are more likely to experience violence, neglect or other treatment that degrades their dignity. Torture or other inappropriate treatment of children with disabilities can be manifested in physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, forced or inappropriate treatment and other forms. Physical abuse includes unlawful physical restraints (tying up), unreasonable use of force (hitting, pushing). Sexual abuse includes any sexual acts against a child. Psychological abuse includes intimidation, threats, manipulation, humiliating comments about a disability or other matters. Neglect includes living in unsafe conditions, inadequate hygiene, constant inadequate nutrition, failure to provide necessary medical care that is necessary due to a disability, and the like. Forced or inappropriate treatment includes procedures performed without explicit consent, painful procedures, prescribing inappropriate medications, and more (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2021). It is important to emphasize that children with disabilities are often extremely dependent on the help of other people, therefore not necessarily only active actions, such as the use of physical violence, but also passive actions, such as the failure to provide necessary assistance, systematic neglect, can be treated as torture or inhuman treatment of a child. Thus, Article 3 of the ECHR establishes the absolute obligation of the state to protect persons, including children with disabilities, from any violence, neglect, degrading or other negative treatment that violates their rights.

Article 8 of the ECHR (1950)– right to respect for private and family life – guarantees the right to respect for private and family life, inviolability of the home and secrecy of correspondence. In the context of this article, private life means that everyone has the right to live their life in private, without interference by the State. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects a broad concept of private life, which includes a person's physical and psychological integrity, personal identity, autonomy, reputation, personal data, and decisions about their own body and relationships. It also extends to respect for one's home and correspondence, safeguarding individuals from arbitrary state interference in their personal and family sphere. 'Private life' also means that the media or other persons may not interfere in a person's life, personal data must be protected and may not be used without their consent, with certain exceptions. 'Family life' includes the relationship between unmarried couples, an adopted child or the adopter, a foster child or the foster parent. In this context, 'home' does not mean the right to housing. It means the right of an individual to live in peace in their own home, and authorities should not deny access to or enter a home without reasonable cause or permission, regardless of ownership (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021a). The provisions of this article are also relevant for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities are more controlled and dependent on others, and therefore face a greater risk of interference in their daily lives, so the state must take effective measures to ensure that the family life, personal data and other protected information of such children are adequately

protected. Any interference with the private life of a child with disabilities must be lawful and proportionate, in order to ensure the best interests of the child. Thus, Article 8 of the Convention is important for children with disabilities, ensuring their right to respect for private and family life.

Article 13 of the ECHR (1950) is intended to ensure the right to an effective remedy. The article establishes the provision that everyone whose rights or freedoms are violated has the right to apply to the appropriate state authorities for effective legal protection, regardless of whether the violation was committed by persons acting in their official capacity. This article is also relevant in the context of children with disabilities, since disabled children are generally at greater risk of their rights being violated. In the event of a violation of the law, children themselves are often unable to adequately defend their rights, therefore it is important to ensure effective legal assistance through parents, guardians or appropriate authorities. Thus, Article 13 of the Convention guarantees individuals, including children with disabilities, effective legal remedies in order to protect their best interests.

Article 14 of the ECHR (1950) – prohibition of discrimination – ensures that all human rights and freedoms set out in the ECHR are to be enjoyed without discrimination. According to this article, everyone must be guaranteed the right to equality, prohibiting discrimination on any ground. Discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, membership of a national minority, property, birth or any other ground is prohibited. Both direct and indirect discrimination are prohibited. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar or identical situation. Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule or policy, formally applied equally to all people, in fact disadvantages a particular person or group of people (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021b). This article is particularly important in relation to children with disabilities, since it is precisely such children who most often experience discrimination, and the main reason for it is often their disability. Children with disabilities may face various restrictions in certain activities due to discrimination. The provisions of the article require that all rights of persons, including children with disabilities, be ensured without discrimination, therefore, in the event of such a violation, states must ensure necessary support and protection for children with disabilities.

To conclude, the ECHR is an important tool for preventing violations of individual rights and freedoms. Articles 2, 3, 8, 13 and 14 of this Convention are most relevant in ensuring the rights of children with disabilities, as they enshrine the most important rights of children with disabilities: the right to life, the prohibition of torture, the right to privacy and family life, the right to an effective remedy and the prohibition of discrimination. The aforementioned articles provide a legal basis for ensuring equal rights for children with disabilities.

ECHR Jurisprudence: Protection from Inhuman and Degrading Treatment

While the CRC and CRPD establish normative standards for the protection of children with disabilities, their practical effectiveness depends on judicial interpretation and enforcement. The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights plays a crucial role in translating these standards into binding obligations under the ECHR, particularly through the interpretation of Article 3. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has consistently recognized that vulnerable individuals – especially children and persons with disabilities – require specific protection against ill-treatment in institutional settings. Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) impose positive obligations on States, obliging them not only to refrain from abuse but also to actively prevent foreseeable risks of

harm and to investigate allegations of mistreatment. These obligations are particularly crucial in contexts where children or adults with disabilities are placed in care institutions, hospitals, or other settings that may limit their autonomy or expose them to neglect, abuse, or exploitation. While the Convention does not always explicitly refer to children or persons with disabilities, the Court has increasingly applied CRC principles – such as the best interests of the child (Article 3) and the right to life and development (Article 6) – and CRPD principles – including dignity, personal integrity, and inclusion (Articles 10 and 19) – to evaluate systemic violations. Across a range of cases, from institutional neglect and abuse to involuntary psychiatric treatment and forced labour, the Court's jurisprudence underscores the State's duty to ensure both substantive protections (preventing harm) and procedural protections (effective investigations and remedies) in safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable (Czepek, 2023).

Systemic Neglect and Institutional Abuse

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has repeatedly emphasized the vulnerability of institutionalized children and young adults with disabilities, underscoring the State's positive obligations under Articles 2 and 3 of the Convention. In cases involving systemic neglect, the Court has recognized that inadequate institutional conditions, lack of medical care, and insufficient oversight may amount to inhuman or degrading treatment, even in the absence of direct physical abuse.

In Nencheva and Others v. Bulgaria (2013), the Court examined the deaths of 15 children and young adults with intellectual and mental disabilities in a state-run institution. The facts revealed extremely poor living conditions, including lack of food, medicine, clothing, and heating. Authorities had been repeatedly informed of these conditions by local and central bodies, yet no measures were taken to protect the children. The Court found that the Bulgarian State had breached its positive obligation to safeguard the lives of vulnerable individuals, constituting a substantive violation of Article 2. Furthermore, the post-mortem investigation was ineffective: it started only two years later, was superficial, and did not cover all deaths, leading to a procedural violation of Article 2. The Court highlighted that the State knew or ought to have known about the life-threatening risks and failed to act, confirming that positive obligations extend beyond refraining from abuse to include proactive protection.

Similarly, in Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania (2014), the Court addressed the death of Valentin Câmpeanu, a young adult with severe intellectual disability and HIV. After being transferred to a medical and social care facility, he was deprived of antiretroviral treatment, placed in inadequate housing, and suffered both physical and psychological neglect. Independent expert reports concluded that his death resulted from gross medical negligence. The ECHR held that Romania had violated Article 2 (both substantive and procedural aspects) and Article 13, noting that Valentin had no effective remedy to challenge the inadequate protection. The Court emphasized that the State must anticipate foreseeable risks, ensure effective oversight, and provide safeguards, especially when individuals are institutionalized and vulnerable.

The Validity Foundation (T.J.) v. Hungary case (2025) further illustrates systemic abuse and neglect. T.J., a woman with severe intellectual disabilities, had been institutionalized from age 10. Over the years, she suffered physical injuries, chemical and mechanical restraints, malnutrition, and insufficient medical care, ultimately dying from bacterial pneumonia. The Court noted that Hungarian authorities failed to provide adequate supervision and protection, holding violations of Articles 2, 13, and 14. The judgment highlighted both life-threatening

neglect and discriminatory treatment based on disability, reinforcing that systemic institutional deficiencies can constitute inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 3.

Across these cases, the ECHR consistently interprets the State's positive obligations expansively. Authorities must not only refrain from abuse but also actively prevent foreseeable risks of harm. Failure to respond to systemic deficiencies, to provide adequate supervision, or to ensure effective legal remedies engages State responsibility.

In assessing these systemic violations, the Court increasingly drew upon CRC and CRPD principles. The CRC emphasizes the child's right to life, survival, and development (Article 6) and the best interests principle (Article 3), which requires that all actions concerning children prioritize their well-being. The CRPD highlights respect for inherent dignity, personal integrity, and inclusion (Articles 3, 19), principles that are clearly breached when institutional environments deprive children and young adults of basic rights, subject them to neglect, or isolate them from social participation.

These cases collectively demonstrate that systemic neglect and institutional abuse constitute not only a failure to prevent harm but also a breach of the core human rights of children and persons with disabilities. The ECHR jurisprudence thus illustrates the convergence of CRC, CRPD, and ECHR standards, providing a comprehensive framework to protect institutionalized vulnerable populations from inhuman and degrading treatment.

Psychiatric and Medical Treatment without Consent

The ECTHR has addressed cases involving involuntary psychiatric hospitalization, forced medication, and the failure to provide adequate protection for adults and minors with disabilities. The cases of V.I. v. Moldova (a minor) and I.C. v. Moldova (an adult with intellectual disability) illustrate the State's positive obligations to protect vulnerable individuals from inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 3 of the Convention and highlight the evolving jurisprudence regarding consent, autonomy, and rights-based protection.

In V.I. v. Moldova (2024), the applicant, a minor, was repeatedly hospitalized in the Codru Psychiatric Hospital between 2012 and 2014, often without clear explanations or his informed consent. He was diagnosed with mild intellectual disability and a psychopathiform syndrome, though psycho-pedagogical assessments later confirmed his development matched his chronological age and he had no special educational needs. Despite this, he was subjected to forced administration of sedatives (diazepam, diphenhydramine) and neuroleptics (risperidone, levomepromazine). The Court found that the involuntary hospitalization and treatment were disproportionate, considering the applicant's age, developmental stage, and psychological state. The poor conditions in the adult ward, including exposure to severely ill patients, strong cigarette smoke, limited outdoor access, and medication-induced drowsiness and loss of appetite, amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment, violating Article 3. Furthermore, the State's failure to arrange appropriate care after hospitalization represented a breach of Article 13 (right to an effective remedy). The Court emphasized that the authorities' actions failed to protect the minor's dignity and personal integrity, highlighting the relevance of international standards for the rights of children and persons with disabilities.

In I.C. v. Moldova (2025), the applicant, an adult woman with moderate intellectual disability, was placed under state guardianship and transferred to live with a family where she was subjected to forced labour on a farm and repeated sexual abuse. Despite her repeated complaints, the State failed to provide adequate protection, and no effective investigation was conducted. The ECtHR found violations of Article 3 (prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment), Article 4 (prohibition of forced labour), Article 8 (right to private and

family life), and Article 14 in conjunction with these rights (discrimination based on disability). The Court highlighted the State's positive obligation to prevent foreseeable harm, protect the applicant's dignity, and ensure her inclusion and autonomy, directly invoking CRPD principles.

Together, these cases demonstrate that the ECtHR interprets States' positive obligations broadly: authorities must not only refrain from abusive practices but actively safeguard the rights of individuals with disabilities, including providing effective protection, ensuring free and informed consent, and preventing foreseeable harm. The jurisprudence shows a clear shift from a paternalistic medical model toward a rights-based approach, where the principles of dignity, personal integrity, inclusion (CRPD Articles 10 and 19), and best interests of the child (CRC Article 3) are central in assessing systemic and individual violations in psychiatric and social care settings.

Violence, Degrading Conditions, and State Failure to Protect

Article 3 of the ECHR establishes an absolute prohibition of torture which is not limited to the prevention of physical violence as a form of torture, but also covers psychological violence and other forms of torture. This is particularly relevant in ensuring the rights of children with disabilities, as such children are often discriminated against, bullied, and do not receive sufficient support or assistance due to their health condition. Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, and therefore states are required to take action to ensure the protection of children with disabilities. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights contains cases that illustrate that a state can be held responsible for both physical violence and inaction when the rights of children with disabilities are violated as a result.

In the case of A.P. v. Armenia (2024), the European Court of Human Rights examined a case of sexual abuse of a child with a disability, more precisely an intellectual disability. The case established that at the time of the events in question the applicants were 14 years old and in the ninth grade at school. At the same school, A. G. - the then head of the village administration, a married man of 49 years old - worked as a sports teacher. The applicant's mother filed a police report about the criminal act committed by A. G. - the applicant's sexual abuse in her school classroom. During her testimony, the applicant recounted three separate incidents when A. G. sexually assaulted her. After one of the incidents, the applicant recounted the incident to several girls in her class, one of whom reported it to her class teacher. Despite the fact that some school staff and villagers had noticed the unusual behaviour, the local authorities failed to react appropriately. The case found that A. G., abusing his authority as head of the village administration and school teacher, sexually assaulted the applicant four times. Moreover, this violence took place in the village administration building during A. G.'s working hours and at school during lessons, although he was obliged to protect the applicant's safety and interests. Based on the Court's case-law and relevant domestic and international legal instruments related to children's rights and the rights of persons with disabilities, it was alleged that, despite its international obligations, including under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from violence, including sexual abuse, the State had failed to establish the necessary measures and mechanisms for the protection of children (in particular children with disabilities) in State schools and public institutions. In this case, the ECtHR emphasised the State's responsibility for the protection of a child with disabilities from sexual violence and the obligation to ensure an adequate response to such threats. The Court found that the state failed to adequately protect the child, i.e. failed to effectively investigate the criminal act and stop A. G.'s criminal actions, and that the school staff and administration failed

to provide the necessary protection, although they were informed about the potentially dangerous treatment of a child with a disability. The court found violations of Article 3 (prohibition of torture), Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 13 (right to an effective remedy) of the European Convention on Human Rights. In addition, the case highlights the importance of the principles of the international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, emphasizing that persons with disabilities require additional state protection, since they are more vulnerable than other persons, especially when it comes to cases of violence.

When analysing violations of the prohibition of torture enshrined in Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, it is important to highlight the vulnerability of not only children with disabilities, but also adults with disabilities to experiencing violations of the law. One such example in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights is the case of Đorđević v. Croatia, in which the European Court of Human Rights examined the failure of the state to fulfil its positive obligation to protect a person from ill-treatment and psychological suffering. The first applicant is a person who has lost legal capacity due to mental and physical disability. He is cared for by his mother, the second applicant. The case established that the applicants – the mother and her severely disabled adult son – were constantly subjected to systematic psychological and physical violence, humiliation and other cruel treatment by school-age children. The schoolchildren frequently harassed them, especially the first applicant – they shouted obscenities at the first applicant, called him insulting names, often spat at him, burned his hands with cigarettes, pushed him and committed other acts of physical violence. The second applicant also complained that unknown young men had damaged the applicants' balcony, uprooting all the flower beds and throwing stones and dirt on it. The incidents were so frequent that the first applicant, who has a disability, lived in a constant state of fear and stress. Although the second applicant – the mother of a disabled son – had contacted the police, social services, the school, the municipality, the ombudsmen and even the heads of state on many occasions, all the institutions responded superficially: the police often did not arrive or, when they did, did not take any necessary action, the juvenile perpetrators were not identified, the prosecutor's office refused to initiate pre-trial proceedings due to the age of the children, and the social and educational institutions also failed to take effective measures, limiting themselves to interviews and general calls for parents to talk to their children.

The ECtHR found that such inaction constituted a violation of Article 3 of the ECHR, as it failed to fulfil the positive obligation to protect the individual from degrading and inhuman treatment amounting to torture. In this case, the first applicant – a person who was particularly vulnerable due to his disability and dependent on his mother – was unprotected from long-term and systematic psychological and physical violence. The Court also found that the second applicant, the mother of a person with a disability, had suffered a violation of her right to respect for her private and family life, as enshrined in Article 8 of the Convention. The violation of this right was found on the basis that the second applicant, due to constant noise, threats, hostility in the social environment and the need for isolation, could no longer live her own life normally and properly and protect her son. The Court also found a violation of Article 13 of the Convention. The applicants were awarded compensation for non-pecuniary damage and litigation costs. Thus, taking into account the situation of this case and assessing all the circumstances, it should be noted that even when the suspects are minors, the state must organize such supervision, protection and prevention measures that would effectively ensure the safety of vulnerable persons.

Another case in which the situation is different and Article 2 of the ECHR was violated is Jasinskis v. Latvia (2010). In this case, the Court examined a situation where the applicant's

son, Valdis Jasinskis, a man who had been deaf and mute since birth, and several of his friends were drinking in a bar. After leaving the bar, the applicant's son and his friends went to a party at a nearby school. In front of the school entrance, a minor pushed the applicant's son, Valdis Jasinskis, who fell backwards down the stairs, hit his head on the ground and lost consciousness for several minutes. When the security guards saw the applicant's son lying unconscious on the ground, they called an ambulance and the police. The officers who arrived mistakenly thought that the disabled man was simply very drunk. Despite the fact that the officers were informed that this person had fallen down the stairs, had lost consciousness and that he had a disability – the person was deaf and mute, they decided not to wait for the ambulance and took the applicant's son to the police station. At the police station, the applicant's son was placed in a recovery room without any medical examination. The officers did not make sufficient efforts to notice symptoms indicating a head injury, although considering that the man could not stand, did not speak, did not react properly and gesticulated a lot, it was possible to understand that he needed a medical examination and assistance. The complainant's son also knocked on the door and walls, but after a while he stopped doing so and fell asleep. Much later, after many repeated requests from the father, the son was taken to the hospital, where it was determined that his condition was already very serious and soon the complainant's son Valdis Jasinskis died from massive head fractures and internal bleeding. The tests also determined that no traces of alcohol were found in his blood. The complainant complained that the actions of the services were insufficient - his son was not provided with the necessary medical assistance, attention was not paid to his son's unusual behaviour, and the police failed to comply with their duty to protect the health of detainees.

The ECtHR found in this case that the state had failed to fulfil its positive duty to protect life in this case: the police officers did not provide a person with a disability with the necessary medical assistance, violated the requirements of domestic law regarding the protection of the health of detainees, and the post-mortem investigation was ineffective, insufficiently independent, and avoided assessing the responsibility of the police officers. The Court found a violation of Article 2 (right to life) of the ECHR. Thus, this case shows that states have a duty to ensure special care for persons with disabilities who are in vulnerable situations. States must protect such persons from human rights violations.

Summarizing the cases presented, it can be concluded that all persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, regardless of whether their disability is mental or physical, are more vulnerable than persons without disabilities. This is why, in the event of a violation of the rights of such persons, states must respond actively, rather than formally. The case of A.P. v. Armenia highlights the vulnerability of children with disabilities in cases of sexual violence and the importance of taking timely and effective protective measures. Other cases – Đorđević v. Croatia and Jasinskis v. Latvia – show that adults with disabilities are also vulnerable, especially when such persons find themselves in situations in which rights such as the right to life or the prohibition of torture are violated.

Conclusions

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, together with the Committee's interpretative guidance, establishes a coherent protective framework that secures children's rights not only through formal legislation but also in practice. It underscores children's inherent dignity, protection from all forms of violence, equality, participation, and full development, while placing clear duties on States to create preventive and effective child protection systems.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities safeguards the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities, including children. Articles 15, 16, and 17 are particularly significant for the protection of children with disabilities, while Article 7 holds special importance as it explicitly focuses on their rights and sets forth State obligations to ensure these rights are upheld. The Committee's General Comments No. 3 and No. 4 further reinforce these protections by clarifying the Convention's standards related to children.

The European Convention on Human Rights serves as a fundamental instrument in preventing violations of individual rights and freedoms. Articles 2, 3, 8, 13, and 14 are especially relevant for safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities, as they affirm essential guarantees: the right to life, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, respect for private and family life, access to an effective remedy, and protection against discrimination. These provisions together form a legal basis for ensuring equality and non-discrimination of children with disabilities.

The judgments in Nencheva and Others v. Bulgaria, Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania, and Validity Foundation (T.J.) v. Hungary collectively show that systemic neglect and institutional abuse constitute not only a failure to prevent harm but also a violation of the fundamental human rights of children and persons with disabilities. This ECtHR case law demonstrates the alignment of CRC, CRPD, and ECHR standards, creating a robust framework to shield institutionalized vulnerable groups from inhuman or degrading treatment.

The cases V.I. v. Moldova and I.C. v. Moldova further indicate that the ECtHR interprets States' positive obligations broadly: authorities must go beyond simply avoiding harmful practices and must actively protect the rights of individuals with disabilities—ensuring effective safeguards, free and informed consent, and prevention of foreseeable harm. The Court's jurisprudence reflects a clear shift from a paternalistic, medicalized approach to a rights-based perspective, where dignity, bodily integrity, inclusion (CRPD Arts. 10 and 19), and the best interests of the child (CRC Art. 3) are central to the evaluation of systemic and individual rights violations in psychiatric and social care environments.

In conclusion, all persons with disabilities—including children—are more vulnerable than those without disabilities, whether their impairments are physical or mental. Therefore, when their rights are violated, States must take proactive and meaningful measures rather than merely formal steps. A.P. v. Armenia demonstrates the heightened vulnerability of children with disabilities in cases of sexual violence and the necessity of prompt and effective protection. Meanwhile, Đorđević v. Croatia and Jasinskis v. Latvia confirm that adults with disabilities are also at increased risk—particularly where core rights such as the right to life or the prohibition of torture are endangered. Overall, the ECtHR's case law confirms an emerging convergence of European and international human rights standards, recognising the intersectional vulnerability of children with disabilities and reinforcing States' obligations to provide effective protection against inhuman and degrading treatment.

References

1. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2025) *Introduction to the Committee* [Online]. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc/introduction-committee (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

2. Committee on the Rights of the Child (no date) *Committee on the Rights of the Child*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

3. United Nations (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* [Online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

4. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006) *General Comment No. 9 (2006): The rights of children with disabilities*. [Online] Available at: https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=7EkKVoQjzAcvVrq1S%2BXnifEfU0LA5cKyafb0NKhsv70eHsJTj%2Fll6K191cop0ziifuOtfJZMQ6qzwiOs0WqJ8w%3D%3D (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

5. Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011) *General Comment No. 13 (2011): The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence*. [Online] Available at: https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=ILviUbu5EFC9rm1di9wgejN5XY9X%2FlfLCjh%2BtwyNcDfotHogShr02wqN4bmR90%2B8TDvUsjbtvFHQpnJ3xh4%2BAw%3D%3D (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

6. United Nations (2006) *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

7. Australian Human Rights Commission (2025) *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)*. [Online] Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/know-your-rights/rights-of-individuals/disability-rights/disability-rights/international-opportunities-and-the-crpd/united-nations-convention-rights-persons-disabilities-uncrpd (Accessed: 30 November 2025)

8. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016) *General Comment No. 3: Women and girls with disabilities*. [Online] Available at: https://docs.un.org/en/CRPD/C/GC/3 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

9. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016a) *General Comment No. 4: Inclusive education*. [Online] Available at: https://docs.un.org/en/CRPD/C/GC/4 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

10. Council of Europe (1950) *European Convention on Human Rights*. [Online] Available at: https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_ENG (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

11. Equality and Human Rights Commission (2021) *Article 3 – Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment*. [Online] Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/human-rights-act/article-3-freedom-torture-and-inhuman-or-degrading-treatment (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

12. Equality and Human Rights Commission (2021a) *Article 8 – Respect for your private and family life*. [Online] Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/human-rights-act/article-8-respect-your-private-and-family-life (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

13. Equality and Human Rights Commission (2021b) *Article 14 – Protection from discrimination*. [Online] Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/human-rights-act/article-14-protection-discrimination (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

14. Czepek, J. (2023) 'Protection of rights of minor victims of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, or punishment under the European Convention on Human Rights', *Prawo i więź*, 3(46), pp. 252–254. Available at: https://doi.org/10.36128/priw.vi46.730 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

15. Nencheva and Others v. Bulgaria (2013) *Application no. 48609/06*, European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 18 June 2013. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-120956 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

16. Centre for Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania (2014) *Application no. 47848/08,* Grand Chamber judgment, European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 17 July 2014. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre?i=001-145577 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

17. Validity Foundation on behalf of T.J. v. Hungary (2024) *Application no. 31970/20*, European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 10 October 2024. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-236193 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

18. V.I. v. the Republic of Moldova (2024) *Application no. 38963/18,* European Court of Human Rights (Second Section), judgment of 26 March 2024. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-231739 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

19. I.C. v. the Republic of Moldova (2025) *Application no. 36436/22,* European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 27 February 2025. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-241986 (Accessed: 30 November 2025)

20. A.P. v. Armenia (2024) *Application no. 58737/14*, European Court of Human Rights (Fourth-Section Committee), judgment of 18 June 2024. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/?i=001-234259 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

21. Đorđević v. Croatia (2012) *Application no. 41526/10*, European Court of Human Rights, judgment 24 July 2012. [Online] Available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-112322 (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

EDUCATORS ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

Vaiva ZUZEVIČIŪTĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: vaiva.zuzeviciute@mruni.eu
ORCID: 0000-0001-5768-1626

Dileta JATAUTAITĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: diletajatautaite@mruni.eu
ORCID: 0000-0003-4753-618X

Rūta ADAMONIENĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Maironio str. 27, LT 44211 Kaunas, Lithuania
E-mail: rutadam@mruni.eu
ORCID: 0000-0002-7716-8093

Abstract. According to democratic ideas, a contemporary, mature, well-functioning, sophisticated, and democratic society honours both law and order and human rights, and, surely, their implementation in the everyday experiences of its citizens. The members of the public of such a society expect all societal institutions to perform their assigned tasks in a professional, reliable, and transparent way, including safeguarding human rights. This paper aims to present some of the regulations and the realities of contemporary police officers' work, as well as the dominant concepts of Emotional Intelligence (EI) with an emphasis on contextualizing these theoretical concepts within the framework of specific empirical data. The paper is based on two research questions: RQ1: What are the aspects of the law enforcement officer's professional activities and recent theoretical considerations regarding communication and EI? RQ2: What are the perspectives of the Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers regarding the communication of law enforcement officers today? The empirical data was collected during the 1 quarter of 2024, under the framework of the POL-COM (KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications) project, where Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers were invited to share their perspective on contemporary challenges, problem issues regarding communication competencies of law enforcement officers. Methods of critical analyses of references, such as studies, legal documents, theoretical considerations, and argumentation, an empirical study involving respondents – Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers - were used for the development of this paper. Part of the data from this same stage of the multi-stage study, concerning the perspectives of law enforcement officers, was presented in previous publications and also in the pending publication.

Keywords: Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers, Emotional Intelligence (EI), Communication.

Introduction

Following the democracy ideals, formulated more than 200 years ago, a mature, well-functioning, sophisticated, and democratic society honours both law and order, human rights, and, surely, their implementation in the everyday experiences of the citizens of such a society. The members of the public of such, we assume our, contemporary Lithuanian society, expect all institutions to perform their assigned tasks in a professional, reliable, and transparent way,

including safeguarding human rights. These expectations for a state to be governed (including its institutions, such as law enforcement) in a democratic, professional, reliable, and transparent way are considered necessary by most of its members. Suppose an infringement of these expectations is noticed. In that case, the members of such a society immediately use all the legal tools to rectify the situation, such as expressing their disappointment on social IT-based media, in mainstream media, or taking on other, more direct and compelling legal actions. These expectations are thus linked to law enforcement officers' communication skills and their ability to convey requirements, which, in turn, relate to Emotional Intelligence (further referred to as EI). EI is understood as the ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, control, evaluate, and use emotions to communicate with and relate to others, with respect, effectively, and constructively.

Research **object**: the perspectives of Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers regarding the communication and EI of contemporary law enforcement officers.

The **aim** of this paper is to present aspects of the law enforcement officer's professional activities and the dominant concepts of Emotional Intelligence (EI), with an emphasis on contextualizing these theoretical concepts within the framework of empirical data.

The paper is based on two research questions:

RQ1: What are the aspects of the law enforcement officer's professional activities and recent theoretical considerations regarding communication and EI?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of the Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers regarding the communication of law enforcement officers today?

Methods: The data items were collected during the first quarter of 2024, under the framework of the POL-COM (KA220-VET – Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals with respect to communication) project, where members of the 1) Lithuanian public, 2) police officers in Lithuania, and 3) Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers were invited to share their opinions on the contemporary communication of law enforcement/police (the terms are used synonymously here) officers.

Part of the data from this same stage of the multi-stages study, concerning the perspectives of law enforcement officers, was presented in previous publications[1] (and in the pending publication: Zuzeviciute V., Jatautaite D., Butrime, E. Enhancing Emotional Intelligence in Students via ICT and Gamification: Insights from the Pol-Com Project); here, the emphasis is on the perspectives of educators.

Contemporary police officers' professional activities, requirements for them and the realities

The vision, values, mission, tasks, and functions of the Lithuanian police are closely related and complement each other. The mission of the Lithuanian police is to effectively use available resources to defend the rights and freedoms of the Lithuanian people, protect society and the state, and help individuals, families, and communities.[2]. The vision is focused on society, its safety, and the police officer.

---

[1] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Butrimė, Edita. Democracy as a Worth Living Environment and Law Enforcement: What is the Role of Emotional Intelligence? // International Journal of Environmental Sciences. [S.l.] : Integrated Publishing Association. eISSN 2229-7359. 2025, vol. 11, no. 17, p. 2750-2758. <https://theaspd.com/index.php/ijes/article/view/5707

[2] Lietuvos policija, „vizija, misija, vertybės", (2020), accessed on 31 September, 2025., https://policija.lrv.lt/lt/apie-mus/vizija-misija-vertybes (**Note** - translation of texts in this paper is provided by the authors, thus certain discrepancy between texts in different versions is possible)

The vision is indicated as to strive to have police force that is attractive, motivated, and effective for the people and the state. The document exemplifies that attractive means respect for people, citizens, residents and visitors. Police officers must be respected and trusted, therefore it is important to provide conditions for improvement and the performance of duties. Officers must be motivated, police officers must be honest, loyal to police values, determined, and effective, which means officers must be competent in solving problems of people and society; they must use effective methods of combating crime, strive for concrete results at minimal cost. The police force is for the people, thus police officers unconditionally defend human rights, and it is important to ensure a safety of a person, because that leads to a safe state. Police officers strive for trust and partnership, ensuring public order and public security, which includes prevention of crime.[3]

The Lithuanian police identifies three core values that reflect the institution – people, family, society. These three values give rise to many positive and motivating qualities that characterize the close relationship between the police and society. Police officers are assigned six tasks, which they carry out during their service. These tasks serve as guidelines for officers on what to focus on and what exactly to do; these tasks are indicated below[4]. Although the tasks assigned to police officers seem achievable, they nevertheless require effort, as they face an officer every day while on duty. In order to implement and foster the above, police officers must perform certain functions. In performing their functions and facing daily challenges, police officers need to reason and react fast, fast information processing skills, patience, and strong psychological and physical astuteness. The Law on Police of the Republic of Lithuania establishes 22 functions of police officers (here we mention only a few that are most relevant to the topic of this article): within their competence, they develop or participate in the preparation of projects for prevention and control, law enforcement strengthening measures, and implement these measures; within their competence, they implement the prevention, detection, and investigation of criminal offenses and administrative violations (misdemeanors); analyze and reveals the causes and conditions of criminal offenses and administrative violations (misdemeanors) and take measures established by law to eliminate them; conduct searches for suspects, accused persons, convicted persons, persons who have absconded, and persons who have left healthcare institutions to whom the court has applied coercive medical measures, and other persons, establish the identity of persons, as well as the identity of unidentified corpses found; implements the provisions of European Union and international legislation within its competence, participate in the activities of European Union institutions, bodies, services, agencies, and international organizations; organize and implement measures to ensure public order and public safety; (one of the most important points in this paper): provide immediate assistance to victims of criminal offences and administrative offences (misdemeanors) or for persons in a helpless state, as necessary to preserve life, health, or property. Article 6(1) (13) of the Law on the Police of the Republic of Lithuania, referred above, also specifies a function of police officers in communicating with victims.

---

[3] „Lietuvos Respublikos policijos įstatymas, Nr. VIII-2048", LRS, žiūrėta 2023 m. rugsėji 2 d., https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.111665/asr

[4] „Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statuto pakeitimo įstatymas Nr. XIII-1381", LRS, žiūrėta 2024 m. vasario 1 d., https://www.infolex.lt/portal/start_ta.asp?act=doc&fr=pop&doc=41119 (1) protection of human rights and freedoms; 2) ensuring the safety of individuals, society, and public order; 3) providing urgent assistance to persons when necessary due to their physical or mental helplessness, as well as to persons who have suffered from criminal acts, administrative offenses (misdemeanors), extreme situations, or similar factors; 4) prevention of criminal offenses and administrative offenses (misdemeanors); 5) detection and investigation of criminal offenses and administrative offenses (misdemeanors); 6) supervision of road traffic).

Police officers must know how to communicate with victims and understand a challenge that victim faces, why a person seeks help. Since police officers spend most of their time at work communicating only with victims, it takes a lot of emotional energy to listen to each person, understand a person, and find a way to help a person. It is important to note that stress is inevitable in police officers' work, because their work involves witnessing human suffering, such as witnessing incidents in which children are abused, where making split-second decisions about life and death, bearing great social responsibility, and complying with strict legal norms describe 'just another day at work'[5],[6]. Taking into account the vision, mission, values, tasks, and functions presented, it is important to note that everything presented applies both to the police community as a whole and to each police officer individually. Police officers are subject to high standards, they are the executors of the listed criteria, their work is mainly focused on ensuring security, even solving social problems, communicating with citizens, which is why officers must know the law, be able to listen, be able to resolve conflicts, and make decisions here and now – all at once!

Sources of stress in the professional activities of contemporary police officers

Almost all able-bodied members of society devote a large part of their lives to their professional activities, which is why people often experience various stressors in the workplace.

Data published by the Police Department reveals that the number of police officers is decreasing every year recently. In 2024, there were 7314 police officers, and in the previous year: 7495, in 2022: 7537[7]. Although the number of reported crimes is decreasing, as was also found in the other study, completed by the author of this paper a previous year[8], police officers are not expected to have less work and responsibilities. On the contrary, the police system must be strengthened because it is unclear when crime may increase. Due to the current geopolitical setting, situation may shift rapidly, producing new openings for the increase of crime levels, which will cause problematic issues for the Lithuanian public, the economy, and, surely, law enforcement.

There are several sources that cause of stress in each profession, however, they and especially their intensity may vary significantly. depending on the nature of the professional activity. Although studies confirm that representatives of other professions (e.g., teachers, social workers) also experience a lot of stress in their professional activities, however, the stressors affecting teachers or lecturers differ in their intensity from those affecting police officers, firefighters, or emergency medical professionals. First responders in general, including police professionals have to deal with situations that often pose a real and imminent threat to

---

[5] Jarašiūnaitė G. et al, Dėmesingu įsisamoninimu paremtos streso mažinimo programos taikymo policijos pareigūnų imtyje galimybės (2021), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gabija-Jarasiunaite-Fedosejeva/publication/359742820_Demesingu_isisamoninimu_paremtos_streso_mazinimo_programos_taikymo_policijos_pareigunu_imtyje_galimybes/links/624c5cb6ef01342066596169/Demesingu-isisamoninimu-paremtos-streso-mazinimo-programos-taikymo-policijos-pareigunu-imtyje-galimybes.pdf

[6] Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42 [accessed on 28 October, 2025]

[7] https://policija.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1740978344/10416/2024%20m.%20policijos%20veiklos%20ataskaita%20fin.pdf; [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

[8] Zuzevičiūtė V., Visockas E. (2022). Mažėjantis registruotų nusikalstamų veikų skaičius ir visuomenės santykis su policija. Vertinimai ir įžvalgos https://policija.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/kriminogenine-situacija-lietuvoje-kas-lieka-nematoma-ir-kodel/ [accessed on 31 October, 2025]

human life[9]. Police officers often find themselves in the thick of disaster, in a conflict situation, where firm and legally valid, as well as sensitive, action is necessary here and now[10].

Although the police profession may seem attractive and exciting from the outside, as it is full of action, but behind the facade lies stress and tension, because the police profession is one of the most stressful professions, affecting the physical and mental health and psychosocial well-being of officers[11]. As stress has been investigated for decades, we know the main characteristics, manifestations and the cause for stress, for example, we know that stress is an individual physiological and psychological reaction of the body to external and, sometimes, internal stimuli[12].

For example, stress can be felt when an officer has to perform assigned functions, but a person is overwhelmed with information that cannot be immediately and adequately processed. Therefore, an officer, experiencing stress, may be unable to make the correct decisions, and the level of stress increases even further, when an officer realizes the possible consequences of the decision made. This leads to occupational stress is defined as a psychological state, caused by work demands that cannot be met. Stress in the professional activities of a police officer can manifest itself in symptoms, such as heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, muscle tone, movement and coordination disorders, emotional tension, fear, and sometimes loss of control[13].

Sources of stress or tension felt in professional activities do not increase work productivity and results, nor, in most cases, do they provide positive emotions in the work environment. Moreover, extreme or prolonged stress is associated with a negative impact on a person's well-being and health[14]. Thus the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of police officers must be developed, as not every officer is able to cope with challenges, experiences, stress, and anxiety. Officers require knowledge, training, emotional collegial and professional support.

High-pressure environment of a police officer's work. The professional activities of a police officer are mainly related to ensuring public order, solving problems encountered by citizens, and preventing criminal acts or administrative offenses. In performing their duties, police officers constantly respond to various reports related to threats to life, traffic safety, violence (including domestic), conflicts, public order violations, and property crimes. Almost universally, officers respond to, are involved in, or participate in interactions with victims, witnesses, or suspects. Therefore, police officers' Emotional Intelligence must be constantly

---

[9] Žeriukaitė G. (2024). Emocinis intelektas ir policijos pareigūno profesinė veikla. MRU, magistro darbas. https://vb.mruni.eu/permalink/370LABT_MRU/bl9jnv/alma99985800208756 [accessed on 29 October, 2025]

[10] Conflict de-escalation and resolution (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42 [accessed on 28 October, 2025]

[11] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Butrimė, Edita. Teaching emotional intelligence techniques via ICT and gamification: some of the findings of the pol-com project // ICERI 2024: 17th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation, 11-13 November 2024, Seville, Spain: conference Proceedings // Edited by Luis Gómez Chova, Chelo González Martínez, Joanna Lees. [S.l.] : IATED Academy, 2024. eISBN 9788409630103. p. 3309-3315. (ICERI Proceedings, eISSN 2340-1095 ; 17).DOI: 10.21125/iceri.2024.0856.

[12] Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva. Inteligencja emocjonalna, studenci i Covid = Emotional intelligence, students and Covid // Uniwersytet - raport z rubieży = A University - a report from the frontier / editing by Anna Murawska, Paula Wiażewicz-Wójtowicz. Szczecin : Uniwersytet Szczeciński, 2022. ISBN 9788379725571. eISBN 9788379725588. p. 119-120. (Pedagogika szkoły wyższej, ISSN 2083-4381 ; t.3).

[13] Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials of the KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications project (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42 [accessed on 28 October, 2025]

[14] Bernard S. Mayer. *The Dynamics of Conflict : A Guide to Engagement and Intervention*. Vol 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass; 2012. Accessed May 31, 2024. https://search-ebscohost-com.skaitykla.mruni.eu/

developed. Officers must first understand and control themselves, then be able to understand others and manage their communication with other people and between them[15].

In most cases, police officers encounter aggressive individuals in conflict situations, where aggression is pronounced both between involved individuals and against police officers. This aggression takes various forms: verbal (non-verbal) insults, threats, and physical violence. Such situations evoke emotions that a police officer must be able to recognize, understand their causes, and deal with situations appropriately. In most conflict situations, people experience negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger, rage, or sadness. A person experiencing anxiety finds it more difficult to make reasonable decisions; thus, indecision intensifies, may have a negative impact on the officer's ability to resolve the conflict[16].

High professional demands and public expectations. We have already analyzed that officers are assigned many tasks and functions for their service, which require a high degree of responsibility and competence. Every year, a selection process is carried out for future police officers. For example, the applicants for the Lithuanian Police School must meet certain requirements. Article 2 of the Order of the Lithuanian Police Commissioner General "On the Approval of the Rules for the Selection of Persons for the Lithuanian Police School" states that the purpose of the selection of candidates for the School is to determine the competitive score of the candidates' knowledge, assess their physical fitness, logical thinking, psychological suitability, motivation, and ability to justify their decision to study at the School. The Order also specifies other requirements, as it is intended to select the best-rated candidates for admission to the School[17]. Order highlights the most important requirements that every future and current officer must meet: knowledge, physical and psychological fitness, adequate reasoning, and positive attitude. The commission assesses these requirements and takes them into account, thereby fostering competition. These high requirements are not only set for applicants to the Lithuanian Police School, but also accompany police officers in their daily work.

Huge (and ever-increasing) workload. As the number of service members leaving the service in Lithuania is increasing every year and is not being sufficiently replaced by new recruits, the workload of officers is, as a consequence, increasing. The heavy workload and shortage of police officers are becoming a pressing problem, making it difficult for officers to remain motivated and alert, to be empathetic, to listen and to help while performing their duties, which is a part of Emotional Intelligence. An analysis of the literature shows that statements about excessive workload, high demands and increased stress levels are accompanied by examples about poor work performance, mistakes, productivity, and declining motivation. The majority of officers leaving the service have long-term work experience. This creates not only the problem of increased workload, but also another problem, which is the integration of new officers into the system, and familiarization with the specifics of the work. There is a shortage of officers willing to mentor newcomers, and thus, often, due to a lack of experience, a new

---

[15] Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials of the KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications project (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42 [accessed on 28 October, 2025]

[16] Žeriukaitė G. (2024). Emocinis intelektas ir policijos pareigūno profesinė veikla. MRU, magistro darbas. https://vb.mruni.eu/permalink/370LABT_MRU/bl9jnv/alma99985800208756 [accessed on 29 October, 2025]

[17] 2016 m. vasario 21 d. Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro įsakymas Nr. 5-V-129 „Dėl Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro 2010 m. Birželio 15 d. įsakymo Nr. 5-V-496 „Dėl asmenų atrankos į Lietuvos policijos mokyklą taisyklių pavirtinimo" pakeitimo, TAR, , https://lpm.policija.lrv.lt/uploads/lpm.policija/documents/files/Atrankos%20taisykles(1).pdf [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

officer's anxiety intensifies, preventing them from trusting the skills they acquired during their studies. This is a vicious cycle: a lack of confidence further intensifies stress. Both mentors and new service mentors experience stress. During the adaptation period, there is tension and stress. Still, there is also the additional problem of assigning a colleague with long-term experience to supervise them during the probationary period. In order to prevent high levels of stress, anxiety, and tension among officers, they need support. Psychological assistance is also necessary[18].

The analysis of studies and the legal regulation documents indicate that the pressures that come from high-pressure situations where our officers operate in, the high requirements set by the legal regulations for the profession, by superiors, and by the public, in conjunction with at times excessive workload, lead to at times excessive pressure our officers endure in performing their professional duties. Thus, sensitive and reasonably targeted attention to officers' EI, along with psychological support for them, is essential to maintain effective law enforcement services.

Emotional Intelligence: history and concepts today

The formal concept of EI emerged in the 1960s (here from Davitz, 1976)[19] and gained global attention with Goleman's seminal work in 1995[20]. The author defined EI as a cluster of competencies essential for leadership, including self-motivation, impulse control, mood regulation, and empathy. Later, the author expanded this framework to include 25 competencies, including political awareness and an achievement drive.

Since then, three dominant models have shaped EI research: the ability model by Mayer and Salovey offered more than twenty years ago, the mixed model by Bar-On offered almost immediately afterwards[21], and the most recent trait model offered by Petrides *et al*[22]. Each of these models conceptualizes EI slightly differently. For example, Mayer and Salovey defined EI as a hierarchy of four competencies: perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions. Bar-On, on the other hand, framed it as a collection of non-cognitive skills, such as stress management, adaptability, and interpersonal competence. The level of these skills predict life success more reliably than traditional IQ. Petrides *et al* underlined the connection between strong EI and positive psychological, academic, and relational outcomes.

These theoretical insights are particularly relevant for law enforcement, where officers frequently face high-stress and emotionally charged situations. Black (2022)[23] showcased that EI is not innate but can be enhanced through targeted education and training. For example, skills such as self-regulation are fundamental for de-escalation of a conflict, as they allow officers to control their emotions and replace impulsive reactions with rational judgment. Therefore, the enhancement of Emotional Intelligence and communication skills has – at least

---

[18] D. Black, The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Public Safety. Cordico. Lexipol Team. May 4, 2022. https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/role-of-emotional-intelligence-in-public-safety/ [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

[19] Davitz, J. R., & Beldoch, M. (1976). *The communication of emotional meaning*. Greenwood Press.

[20] Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.

[21] Bar-On, R. (1997). *BarOn emotional quotient inventory* (Vol. 40). Multi-Health Systems.

[22] Petrides, K. V., Sanchez-Ruiz, M. J., Siegling, A. B., Saklofske, D. H., & Mavroveli, S. (2018). Emotional intelligence as personality: Measurement and role of trait emotional intelligence in educational contexts. In *Emotional intelligence in education: Integrating research with practice* (pp. 49–81). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17879-2_3

[23] Black, D. (2022). The role of emotional intelligence in public safety. Cordico. Lexipol Team. https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/role-of-emotional-intelligence-in-public-safety/

hypothetically - the potential to add to officers' resilience: officers may get better at communication, and ultimately be more effective in managing conflicts and building positive community relations, thus performing their professional activities in accordance with public expectations better.

Thus, while EI does not provide answers in most of the cases that make the police officer's work so demanding, nevertheless, it may provide an additional source for resilience in high-pressure situations that officers face in their everyday activities.

Lithuanian educators' perspective on future (and current) law enforcement officers. Selected empirical study results

In light of the theoretical considerations we provided above, an empirical study was designed and implemented during the first quarter of 2024 under the framework of the POL-COM (KA220-VET – Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals with respect to communication) project.

In the study, three groups of respondents were invited to share their opinions: 1) representatives of the general public, 2) law enforcement/police officers, 3) teachers/educators working in the field of educating future law enforcement officers. Though the total number of respondents, including those from Romania and the Czech Republic, exceeded 300, only responses from the Lithuanian sample are analysed here. Respondents in each group were asked to share their perspectives through respective questionnaires. The questionnaires, developed by the Czech Republic team, comprised both closed and open-ended questions. Here, only a portion of the data shared by the Lithuanian respondents is presented.

Educators of future (and current) law enforcement officers were invited to share their opinions on contemporary communication and other EI aspects of law enforcement officers (as mentioned above, a part of the data from this study concerning the perspectives of law enforcement officers had already been presented in a previous publication). An anonymous online survey was used to address the general research question (RQ2): What are the perspectives of educators regarding the communication and other aspects of EI of law enforcement officers today?

Participants of the study. A total number of respondents was 29, which is not high, and this is a limitation of the study. However, in a small country (Lithuanian population is approximately 2.7 mln), and in the country where we have only two institutions (at tertiary level: one at vocational and one at higher education level) providing education for future law enforcement officers, it is adequate for the identification of specific trends; also, the limitation is to some degree compensated by the anonymous and volunteer participation in the study. Next to educating future law enforcement officers in pre-service, the same educators also often provide in-service training, thus, they participate in in-service professional development, and know the situation in that field expertly.

Process. The respondents were asked in open-ended questions to indicate several issues, such as what techniques they find useful in teaching emotional intelligence, and in closed-type questions, respondents were asked to indicate their assessment (1- the least significant; 5-the most significant) regarding certain aspects.

Results. It was found that there was a significant difference between assessments, please, see Fig1.
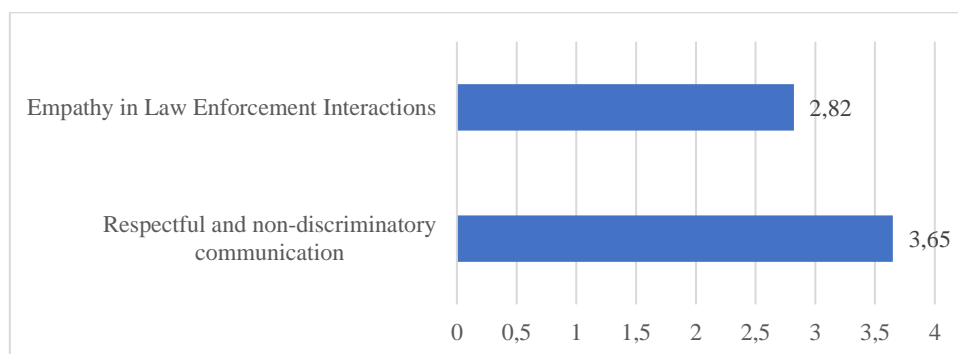
Figure 1. Respondents' (Lithuanian educators of future (and current) law enforcement officers) assessment (highest and lowest on the communication and the EI aspects; average (1- the least significant; 5-the most significant))

These findings are not surprising. It may be reasoned – and some, obviously do - that in the context of strict legal regulations for the profession, empathy may not have a defining role in discharging professional duties, or at times (not always) may even impede. Surely, these finding prompt discussion.

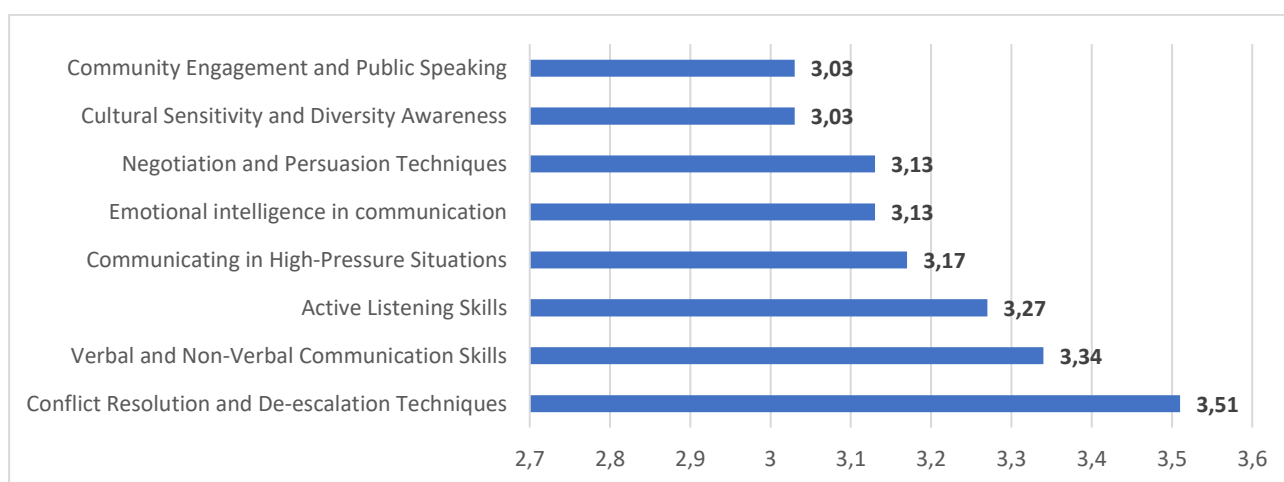Respondents' assessments on the other aspects are presented in Fig 2.

Figure 2. Figure 1. Respondents' (Lithuanian educators of future (and current) law enforcement officers) assessments on communication and EI aspects; average (1- the least significant; 5-the most significant))

Findings illustrate that educators think conflict resolution is one of the main competencies in this regard (following right after respectful and non-discriminatory communication).

Out of 29 respondents, 25 provided answers to an open-ended question (*In your experience, what are the challenges cadets face when learning about effective communication*?); the generalized reasons are as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Respondents on: *In your experience, what are the challenges cadets face when learning about effective communication?*

Contributions (answers were generalized for conveying a general idea)	No. of contributions allocated
Lack of practice and experience, backed up by excessive enthusiasm and excitement	7
Lack of general communicative competences, empathy, broader cultural awareness	6
Conflict situations, especially in domestic violence cases	4
General lack of communication skills, such as listening	4
The challenges can be very different, depending on the personality of the police officer	2
Lack of time in studies, too much other material (legal, tactics)	1

The findings indicate that the educators are rather worried that lack of experience in conjunction with the youthful – though commendable – enthusiasm may lead to unfavorable consequences, which may (and are) adverse to an officer and the service. The step-by-step, supervised learning seems to be in the background of the expressed anxiety. However, even if educators in most cases agree that the communication and EI aspects are essential in contemporary police officers' work, the general workload in the studies at both levels (tertiary vocational and tertiary higher) prevents them from emphasizing these aspects sufficiently (the findings seem to indicate).

Conclusions

While answering the first RQ (RQ1: What are the aspects of the law enforcement officer's professional activities and recent theoretical considerations regarding communication and EI?), the following conclusions may be formulated. The analysis of recent studies, the other studies completed by the authors of this paper, and the analysis of legal regulation documents indicate that the pressures that come from high-pressure situations in which our officers operate, the high requirements set by the legal regulations for the profession, by superiors, and by the public, in conjunction with at times excessive workload, lead to at times excessive pressure our officers endure in performing their professional duties. Thus, a sensitive and reasonably targeted attention to the EI of officers and the psychological support for them is essential in order to maintain effective law enforcement service. While EI does not provide answers in most cases that make the police officer's work so demanding, yet, it may provide an additional source for resilience in high-pressure situations that officers face in their everyday activities.

While answering the second RQ (RQ2: What are the perspectives of the Lithuanian educators of the future (or current) police officers regarding the communication of law enforcement officers today?), it may be stated that even if the limitations of the studies are considered, the educators seem to place a high significance on the following communication and the EI aspects: Respectful and non-discriminatory communication (average assessment: 3.65), Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques (av. assessment: 3.51).

Educators also indicated a lack of experience and the high study load as reasons preventing them from addressing communication and EI aspects more extensively in studies.

References

1. Bar-On, R. (1997). BarOn emotional quotient inventory (Vol. 40). Multi-Health Systems.

2. Bernard S. Mayer. The Dynamics of Conflict : A Guide to Engagement and Intervention. Vol 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass; 2012. . https://search-ebscohost-com.skaitykla.mruni.eu/ [accessed October 31, 2025]

3. Black. D., The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Public Safety. Cordico. Lexipol Team. May 4, 2022. https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/role-of-emotional-intelligence-in-public-safety/ [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

4. Conflict de-escalation and resolution. Course materials of the KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training project: A developmental and educational platform and gamified tools for training police officers and similar professionals, with respect to communications project, developed by MRU team V. Zuzeviciute, D. Jatautaite, V. Milasiunaite, R. Adamoniene, P. Lesko. (2025). https://polcom-training.eu/course/view.php?id=42 [accessed on 28 October, 2025]

5. Davitz, J. R., & Beldoch, M. (1976). The communication of emotional meaning. Greenwood Press.

6. Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. Bantam Books.

7. Jarašiūnaitė G. et al, Dėmesingu įsisamoninimu paremtos streso mažinimo programos taikymo policijos pareigūnų imtyje galimybės (2021), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gabija-Jarasiunaite-Fedosejeva/publication/359742820_Demesingu_isisamoninimu_paremtos_streso_mazinimo_programos_taikymo_policijos_pareigunu_imtyje_galimybes/links/624c5cb6ef01342066596169/Demesingu-isisamoninimu-paremtos-streso-mazinimo-programos-taikymo-policijos-pareigunu-imtyje-galimybes.pdf [accessed on 29 October, 2025]

8. Lietuvos policija, „vizija, misija, vertybės", (2020), accessed on 31 September, 2025., https://policija.lrv.lt/lt/apie-mus/vizija-misija-vertybes

9. Lietuvos Respublikos policijos įstatymas, Nr. VIII-2048", LRS., https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.111665/asr [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

10. Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus tarnybos statuto pakeitimo įstatymas Nr. XIII-1381", LRS, https://www.infolex.lt/portal/start_ta.asp?act=doc&fr=pop&doc=41119 (1) [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

11. 2016 m. vasario 21 d. Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro įsakymas Nr. 5-V-129 „Dėl Lietuvos policijos generalinio komisaro 2010 m. Birželio 15 d. įsakymo Nr. 5-V-496 „Dėl asmenų atrankos į Lietuvos policijos mokyklą taisyklių pavirtinimo" pakeitimo, TAR, , https://lpm.policija.lrv.lt/uploads/lpm.policija/documents/files/Atrankos%20taisykles(1).pdf [accessed on 3 November, 2025]

12. Petrides, K. V., Sanchez-Ruiz, M. J., Siegling, A. B., Saklofske, D. H., & Mavroveli, S. (2018). Emotional intelligence as personality: Measurement and role of trait emotional intelligence in educational contexts. In Emotional intelligence in education: Integrating research with practice (pp. 49–81). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17879-2_3

13. Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Butrimė, Edita. Democracy as a Worth Living Environment and Law Enforcement: What is the Role of Emotional Intelligence? // International Journal of Environmental Sciences. [S.l.] : Integrated Publishing Association. eISSN 2229-7359. 2025, vol. 11, no. 17, p. 2750-2758. https://theaspd.com/index.php/ijes/article/view/5707 .

14. Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva; Jatautaitė, Dileta; Butrimė, Edita. Teaching emotional intelligence techniques via ICT and gamification: some of the findings of the pol-com project // ICERI 2024: 17th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation, 11-13 November 2024, Seville, Spain: conference Proceedings // Edited by Luis Gómez Chova, Chelo González Martínez, Joanna Lees. [S.l.] : IATED Academy, 2024. eISBN 9788409630103. p. 3309-3315. (ICERI Proceedings, eISSN 2340-1095 ; 17). DOI: 10.21125/iceri.2024.0856.

15. Zuzevičiūtė V., Visockas E. (2022). Mažėjantis registruotų nusikalstamų veikų skaičius ir visuomenės santykis su policija. Vertinimai ir įžvalgos [accessed on 31 October, 2025]

16. Zuzevičiūtė, Vaiva. Inteligencja emocjonalna, studenci i Covid = Emotional intelligence, students and Covid // Uniwersytet - raport z rubieży = A University - a report from the frontier / editing by Anna Murawska, Paula Wiażewicz-Wójtowicz. Szczecin : Uniwersytet Szczeciński, 2022. ISBN 9788379725571. eISBN 9788379725588. p. 119-120. (Pedagogika szkoły wyższej, ISSN 2083-4381 ; t. 3).

17. Žeriukaitė G. (2024). Emocinis intelektas ir policijos pareigūno profesinė veikla. MRU, magistro darbas. https://vb.mruni.eu/permalink/370LABT_MRU/bl9jnv/alma99985800208756 [accessed on 29 October, 2025]

Autorių kolektyvas
Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka (37) Nr. 4: mokslinis žurnalas. – Kaunas: Mykolo
Romerio universiteto Viešojo saugumo akademija, 2025. – 139 p.
ISSN 2029–1701 (print) ISSN 2335–2035 (online)