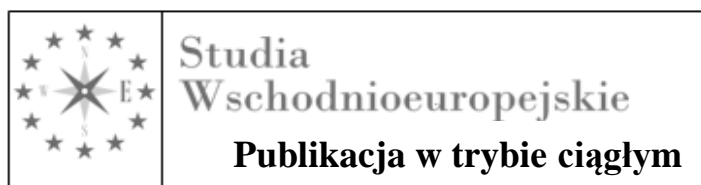


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Sustainable development and security of Poland in the context of Russian military aggression against Ukraine

Introduction

Nowadays, a lot of different threats are identified in Europe, which significantly affect the security of this region, and also undermine the implementation of the principle of sustainable development. Threats have always accompanied man and significantly affected his life. Over time, they evolved, adapting to changes in the environment. Also, man had to respond to these changes mainly by preventing the emergence of threats and preparing when prevention was not possible.

Threats evolve and despite the fact that man tries to prevent them and prepare for their occurrence, it is often not possible, and the threats themselves become more and more dangerous¹. Contemporary crises may last or start in one country, but their effects quickly spread beyond its borders and are felt on a regional and even global scale²⁻³. Hence, the effects of the Russian aggression against Ukraine are felt in the countries neighboring Ukraine, in particular in Poland, as well as in the countries of Western Europe.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has greatly affected Poland's security and sustainable development, mainly creating new challenges in this area. Poland directly borders Ukraine, and therefore the place where the armed conflict is taking place. Poland's eastern border is also NATO's eastern flank. The conflict in Ukraine contributed to an increase in

¹ A. Skrabacz, *Ochrona ludności w Polsce w XXI wieku. Wyzwania, uwarunkowania, perspektywy*, Mercuriusz: Tarnów, Polska, 2006; pp. 37-38.

² V. Galaz, F. Moberg, E. Olsson, E. Paglia, C. Parker, Institutional and political leadership dimensions of cascading ecological crises. *Public Administration* 2011, *Volume 89(2)*, pp: 361-380, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2010.01883>.

³ C.F. Parker, Complex negative events and the diffusion of crisis: lessons from the 2010 and 2011 Icelandic volcanic ash cloud events. *Geografiska Annaler: Series A, Physical Geography* 2015, *Volume 97(1)*, pp: 97-108, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoa.12078>

tension on NATO's eastern flank. Moreover, the energy security of Poland and other European countries has been significantly disturbed. Russia's activities are also carried out in cyberspace. This makes it necessary to strengthen protection also in this respect.

Materials and Methods

The aim of the article was to assess the impact of Russian aggression in Ukraine on security and the implementation of tasks related to maintaining sustainable development of Poland. Therefore, the following main research problem was formulated in the article: How is the impact of Russian aggression in Ukraine assessed on the implementation of tasks in the field of sustainable development and security of Poland? It was hypothesized that the Russian military aggression in Ukraine had a significant impact on Poland's security and the implementation of tasks related to achieving sustainable development, despite the fact that Poland is not the direct target of Russia's military attack.

Achieving the indicated goal, solving the formulated research problem and verifying the hypothesis was possible with the use of theoretical and empirical research methods. Among the theoretical methods, the following methods were used: analysis, synthesis, abstraction, comparison and inference. Among the empirical methods, the method of diagnostic survey with the use of the interview technique was used. The interview was carried out in a group of nine experts dealing with security issues, working in science, state administration and private companies. The interview was conducted at the turn of March and April 2023. Thus, even before Yevgeny Prigozhin launched a rebellion against Russian rule in June 2023.

It should be emphasized that in diagnostic survey research there is always a risk of incorrect judgment or its exaggeration. However, this risk has been minimized by selecting a group of experts who deal with the issues covered by the questions in the questionnaire. However, taking into account the fact that the experts selected for the study had limited time to complete the questionnaire, there were only a few questions in which the experts presented their opinions. From the point of view of Poland's sustainable development and security, the questions included in the questionnaire were as follows:

1. How has Poland's security environment changed after Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine, in particular in 2014 and 2022?
2. What are the threats to Poland's sustainable development and security caused by the conflict in Ukraine?

3. What are the benefits of the conflict in Ukraine for Poland's sustainable development and security?

Results

Characteristics of Russian aggression against Ukraine

The EuroMaidan protests and the new presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014 are indicated as the main cause of the conflict in Ukraine. At that time, President Yanukovich was stepping down from the presidency. This was related to the loss of Russian influence in Ukraine. In addition, it also meant that Ukraine would not join the Eurasian Economic Union, Russia's counterpart to the EU and would increase its ally with the West, being at the same time a way for Ukraine to join the European Union and NATO⁴. However, in the literature it is emphasized that tensions between the European Union and Russia arose before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, i.e. before 2013⁵. Some researchers believe that the conflict in Ukraine, which began in 2014, is only a consequence of Western policy and Russia's aspirations. Then it would mean that the fault for the conflict lies on both sides: the West and Russia⁶.

The literature indicates four main causes of Russian aggression against Ukraine:

- restoring the lands belonging to the Russian Empire that became parts of independent states that emerged from the former republics of the USSR,
- lack of acceptance by Vladimir Putin regarding Ukraine's independence,
- President Vladimir Putin's desire to demolish the European security architecture,
- Vladimir Putin's conviction that the power of Western countries is waning⁷.

In 2013, Viktor Yanukovich, the then president of Ukraine, suspended work on the implementation of the association agreement with the European Union, which was the beginning of an internal crisis in Ukraine. In particular, the inhabitants of the western regions

⁴ V. Bunce, A. Hozic, 'Diffusion-proofing and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 2016, Volume 24/4, pp. 435-446.

⁵ K. Raik, The Ukraine Crisis as a Conflict over Europe's Political, Economic and Security Order, *Geopolitics* 2019, Volume 24/1, pp. 51-70.

⁶ S.N. MacFarlane, Kto Vinovat? Why is there a crisis in Russia's relations with the West?, *Contemporary Politics* 2016, Volume 22/3, pp. 342-358.

⁷ P. Grzebyk, R. Kuźniar, A. Bieńczyk-Missala, R. Kupiecki, Agresja Rosji na Ukrainę – pierwsze dwa tygodnie wojny. Raport specjalny, In *Rocznik Strategiczny 2021/22*, Kuźniar, R., Eds., Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR: Warszawa, Polska, 2022, p. 31.

of Ukraine did not accept such decisions and started mass protests, which took extreme forms (e.g. taking over or setting fire to state buildings). In opposition to such decisive actions of the pro-Western forces, protests began in the east of the country on the initiative of the Russians, which took on an anti-Western character.

On March 16, 2014, a referendum was held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the separate city of Sevastopol. Its results showed that 96.8% of people were in favor of joining the territories to the Russian Federation. It was the result of voting with 83.1% turnout. On March 18, the annexation of the Republic and the city of Sevastopol was proclaimed. This decision was opposed by the Ukrainian authorities and was not recognized by Kiev⁸.

On March 21, 2014, decisions that were very important for Europe's security were made - on the one hand, the European Union and Ukraine signed the political part of the association agreement, and on the other hand, the Parliament of the Russian Federation ratified the treaty on the annexation of Crimea. On March 27, 2014, a vote was also taken at the UN General Assembly on the issue of Ukraine's territorial integrity. As a consequence, the UN adopted a resolution on the issue of Ukraine's territorial integrity⁹.

As a consequence of Russia's actions, on May 6, 2015, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine adopted a new state security strategy. It specifies, among others:

- general location,
- objectives of the new strategy,
- current threats to Ukraine's security,
- main directions of Ukraine's national security policy, with particular emphasis on integration with the European Union and partnership with NATO,
- issues of improving the budgetary policy in the field of national security and defense of Ukraine¹⁰.

⁸ T.A. Olszański, A. Sarna, A. Wierzbowska-Miazga, *Konsekwencje aneksji Krymu*, Available online: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-03-19/konsekwencje-aneksji-krymu> (accessed on 10.10.2022 r.).

⁹ Rezolucja Zgromadzenia Ogólnego ONZ A/RES/68/262 z dnia 27 marca 2014 roku.

¹⁰ Decree of the President of Ukraine 287/2015 - Указ Президента України 287/2015.

Then, on March 4, 2016, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine adopted a new concept for the development of the security and defense sector of Ukraine. At that time, it was assumed that the improvement of the forecasting and strategic planning system should be based on the principles and standards of the European Union and NATO. At that time, Ukraine assumed that the development and strengthening of the European Union and NATO would deepen pan-European and international security. It is also worth noting that the possibility of using the territory of Ukraine to conduct military operations in the event of an armed conflict between NATO countries and the Russian Federation was assumed¹¹.

Then, the National Security Strategy of Ukraine adopted on May 6, 2015 by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine was invalidated and replaced with a new version, which was adopted on September 14, 2020. The document emphasized that Ukraine strives to develop strategic relations with key foreign partners, including, above all, the European Union and NATO countries. It was also noted that Ukraine is interested in developing a special partnership with NATO in order to obtain Ukraine's full membership in the alliance¹².

Ukraine continued to maintain its willingness to cooperate with the EU or NATO. She also declared her willingness to undertake further changes in the security environment in Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, it canceled the military security strategy of Ukraine in force since September 2, 2015 and replaced it with a new version. It mentions, among others, on necessity:

- comprehensive defense of Ukraine,
- reconstruction after the end of hostilities,
- taking measures to support Ukraine by EU countries, NATO and other countries and international organizations,
- further modernization of the army based on national and Euro-Atlantic values, meeting the criteria for Ukraine's full membership in NATO,
- ensuring security in the Black Sea basin,

¹¹ Decree of the President of Ukraine 92/2016 - Указ Президента України 92/2016.

¹² Decree of the President of Ukraine 392/2020 - Указ Президента України 392/2020.

– start negotiations with the Russian Federation through partners from EU and NATO member states, as well as the OSCE¹³.

The situation between Ukraine and Russia became less and less peaceful. On February 24, 2022, the form of the conflict in Ukraine changed and military operations against Ukraine began. At 3:45 a speech by the Russian president was broadcast, in which he announced the start of the so-called special operation. Its purpose was to help and protect the population. In addition, the goal was also to help the two newly formed states: Donbass and Luhansk. The nature of this operation was therefore defined as peaceful and liberating¹⁴. On the same day, the attacks and the entry of Russian troops into the territory of Ukraine began.

Characteristics of Poland's security

Pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, "the Republic of Poland guards the independence and inviolability of its territory, ensures the freedoms and rights of humans and citizens, and the security of citizens, guards the national heritage and ensures protection of the environment, guided by the principle of sustainable development"¹⁵. The Constitution regulates that issues related to security are particularly important. The principle of sustainable development has also been given the rank of fundamental law, resulting from the provisions of the Basic Law.

Another noteworthy document in which issues related to ensuring security are included is the Act on Defense of the Homeland, which deals with, among others, issues related to the objective and subjective scope of the obligation to defend the Homeland, types, composition of the Polish Armed Forces and their tasks, as well as the authorities competent in matters of state defense and their tasks were indicated¹⁶. More detailed assumptions regarding Poland's security are included in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland and its supplementary documents. Implementation of tasks in the field of security is carried out through the National Security System of the Republic of Poland, which is based on the implementation of national interests, which are also pillars in the field of national security. "The national security system is aimed at the proper preparation and use of forces and means at the disposal of the state to

¹³ Decree of the President of Ukraine 121/2021 - Указ Президента України 121/2021.

¹⁴ P. Grzebyk, R. Kuźniar, A. Bieńczyk-Missala, R. Kupiecki, Agresja Rosji na Ukrainę – pierwsze dwa tygodnie wojny. Raport specjalny, In *Rocznik Strategiczny 2021/22*, Kuźniar, R., Eds., Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR: Warszawa, Polska, 2022, pp. 29-31.

¹⁵ Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r., Dz.U.1997.78.483, art. 5.

¹⁶ Ustawa z dnia 11 marca 2022 r. o obronie Ojczyzny, Dz.U. 2022 poz. 655, art. 1.

counteract threats to the survival of the nation and the state, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty, efficient functioning of state institutions and social development. economic. It is a system covering both elements of external and internal security, aimed at ensuring national security in connection with the socio-economic development of the country”¹⁷. In addition, it is worth noting that it is indicated that the National Security System is a set of related subsystems: management and executive. Runtime subsystems consist of operating and support subsystems. In turn, operational subsystems consist of defense and protection subsystems¹⁸.

The National Security Strategy contains a set of information related to:

- the surroundings of Poland,
- opportunities and threats to Poland's security,
- main areas of development of Poland,
- Polish national identity¹⁹.

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland is a document which defines the vision of Poland's national security. The strategy defines national interests and strategic objectives related to national security. The main national interests, which are also the pillars of national security, include:

- safeguarding independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and ensuring the security of the state and citizens,
- shaping the international order, which is based on solid cooperation and respect for international law, which guarantees the safe development of Poland,
- strengthening national identity and protecting national heritage,
- ensuring conditions for sustainable and sustainable social and economic development and protection of the natural environment²⁰.

¹⁷ Strategia rozwoju systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2022, 2013, s. 13.

¹⁸ Biała księga bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2013, s. 36.

¹⁹ P. Gil, Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP a polska tożsamość In *Strefy wpływów. Geopolityka Polski*, Sykuliski, L. Eds.; Wyd. Akapit: Toruń-Warszawa, Polska, 2021; pp. 17-18.

²⁰ Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP, 2020.

The impact of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine on the sustainable development and security of Poland in the opinion of experts

In the conducted study, the experts agreed on the fact that Russia's military aggression against Ukraine had a significant impact and changed the security environment of Poland, despite the fact that the armed conflict does not occur on Polish territory. Experts, however, were divided on whether Poland's security environment had improved or deteriorated. Five experts maintained that the security environment of Poland, as well as in their opinion the security environment of European countries, had improved. They assessed the situation in this way, despite the territorial disintegration of Ukraine (annexation of Crimea and the conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions) and the beginning of a regular armed conflict throughout Ukraine. Experts concluded that the improvement of Poland's security environment occurred as a consequence of taking a number of decisions and actions by international organizations of which Poland is a member, as well as as a consequence of decisions and actions taken by Poland to improve its security. Already after taking unofficial actions in Ukraine by Russia in 2014, many international organizations condemned Russia's actions. These activities included in particular:

- strengthening the number of trainings and trainings of the armed forces of individual NATO countries,
- a demonstration of strength by NATO member states,
- intensifying the Alliance's deterrence and defense activities,
- taking action to strengthen the security of NATO's eastern flank,
- imposing sanctions on Russia,
- lifting the arms embargo on Ukraine by the European Union,
- providing financial assistance and offering loans to Ukraine on preferential terms.

Other experts assessed that Poland's security environment has deteriorated, mainly due to the fact that Poland may be of interest to Russia and become the next target of its attacks. In the opinion of experts, the lack of decisive military action on the part of the West makes Russia

feel unpunished and, after successes in Ukraine, will take steps in stages to destroy security and a sense of security in Poland.

The experts' assessment in this regard was expressed despite the fact that Poland is a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and, pursuant to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, it can count on the help of the Allies when it is attacked²¹, and also despite the constant media assurances of the President of the United States of the United States of Joe Biden about the United States' assistance to its Allies when it is needed.

In addition, four experts concluded that Poland's security environment had deteriorated due to the fact that Poland focused mainly on helping Ukraine, e.g. by donating large amounts of valuable armaments. Not replacing it with a new one in time. Thus, it led to the deterioration of its defensive capabilities. These experts also emphasized that due to Poland's extensive involvement in helping Ukraine, Poland has become the target of unfavorable Russian actions, which include, among others, activities in cyberspace, mainly related to the dissemination of disinformation - which affects public opinion and makes it impossible to take rational actions in the field of further development of the country in accordance with the principle of sustainable development. In addition, Russia's unfavorable actions against Poland and Western European countries include the destabilization of energy security in the region, mainly through the use of blackmail in the field of extracted and sold energy resources. In the opinion of four experts, these actions prove a significant deterioration of the situation in Poland's security environment.

Experts also presented their opinions on the threats and possible benefits for security and activities in accordance with the principle of sustainable development of Poland resulting from Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. In this regard, experts pointed mainly to the threats arising from this situation. Some of them also pointed out that this situation creates opportunities for Poland, which may turn into benefits as a consequence of appropriate decisions and actions.

Firstly, attention was drawn to the threats related to the security of Poland's borders. Due to the fact that the conflict in Ukraine leads to increased instability in the region, border violations, smuggling, illegal migration and other threats to the security of Poland's borders can and do occur. In this context, it is very important to take care of the proper security of the state

²¹ Traktat Północnoatlantycki sporządzony w Waszyngtonie dnia 4 kwietnia 1949 r. (Dz.U. z 2000 r. nr 87, poz. 970, art. 5).

border, thanks to which the risk of Russia taking aggressive actions by its army or unidentified armed groups acting on its behalf is eliminated.

Secondly, the experts pointed out that the increase in political and ethnic tensions is also a threat. The influx of refugees from Ukraine and the increase in disinformation activities in cyberspace, mainly with the use of social media, can cause an increase in nationalist activities, xenophobia and prejudice. It may also threaten social stability and cause divisions in Polish society.

Thirdly, the Polish economy suffered as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine. There has been an increase in inflation, rising prices and a deterioration in the quality of life for many residents. In addition, as a consequence of the conflict, there may be disruptions in trade, a decrease in foreign investment, and an increase in the prices of raw materials and energy, which significantly hinders the activities of Polish enterprises and consumers.

Fourthly, Russia's military aggression in Ukraine brought tragic humanitarian consequences, including many refugees who managed to get to Poland, and many displaced people remained in the country. Poland, being a neighbor of Ukraine, is one of the most important countries being the destination point of escape of Ukrainians. Thus, it was mainly after the aggravation of the conflict in 2022 that it had to face an increased influx of refugees. The support provided to refugees and the associated logistical challenges put an additional burden on the country and its budget.

Fifthly, Ukraine was an important transit country for gas supplies from Russia to Western Europe. The conflict in Ukraine caused Russia to blackmail European countries with the lack of supplies of energy resources. As a consequence, the conflict led to disruptions in energy supplies, changes and even termination of contracts concluded in this respect, which had a negative impact on the Polish economy and energy security. This was reflected in the increase in energy prices.

As regards the benefits that Poland gains as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine, the opinions of experts were varied. Three out of all, in response to the question about the benefits, only emphasized that the conflict brings a number of threats and negative consequences for neighboring countries and stability in the region. Thus, these experts did not indicate any benefits that could be achieved by Poland. Among the answers of the remaining group, it was emphasized that as a consequence of this conflict, some benefits for Poland can

be indicated, but they are insignificant compared to the threats and negative effects of the conflict. Long-term benefits for Poland's sustainable development and security are closely related to maintaining peace, regional stability and international cooperation. One of the experts emphasized in his statement that war does not give wins. Only losers come out of it - some less, some more. Despite this, experts pointed out that there are some benefits for Poland from this conflict.

Firstly, in their opinion, Poland's importance in the region has increased. Poland's active involvement in resolving the conflict resulted in an increase in the prestige of Poland, which at the same time strengthened its position as a stable partner in relations with other countries.

Secondly, a number of measures have been taken in Poland to increase the level of energy security. A number of actions have been taken to diversify energy supplies, as well as to develop independent and renewable energy sources. Investments in these areas were also increased and activities related to the production of nuclear energy were intensified, which in the long term should contribute to strengthening Poland's energy security.

Thirdly, in Poland, there has been an increase in public awareness of security and potential and real threats to security in the region. As a consequence, there is a greater involvement of citizens in defense and stability issues. This is crucial from the point of view of sustainable development of the country.

Fourthly, the conflict in Ukraine reminded the population of the importance of democracy, human rights and freedom. Poland, being an active participant in the defense of these values on the international arena, can gain greater recognition and influence, which contributes to the sustainable development and security of the country.

Discussion

A lot of contemporary threats have a significant impact on the European security landscape²². However, the war in Ukraine is one of the key threats shaping Europe's security environment. The most important entities in the world are directly or indirectly involved in this war²³. It is also indicated that the war in Ukraine is one of the most serious geopolitical crises

²² K. Veljanovska, The Changing Nature of Security in Europe: the Triangle between Russia's New Foreign Policy, the CSDP and NATO, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 2015, Volume 15/3, pp. 51-65.

²³ C. Soroiu, Case of Ukraine and interests of the major players, *Research and Science Today* 2014, Volume 2/8, pp. 118-125.

in the world since the end of the Cold War²⁴. This crisis shows a dangerous dynamic that can destabilize Europe in particular, and even most of the world²⁵, while bringing many different negative consequences²⁶. Experts in the study also agreed that the military aggression against Ukraine had many negative consequences.

International organizations such as NATO, OSCE, UN and the European Union have become involved in resolving the conflict in Ukraine. In addition, selected countries, such as the United States, Germany, France and Poland, have become particularly involved in resolving this situation²⁷.

In 2014, a major political change took place in Ukraine, which consisted in the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the initiation of separatist activities in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts²⁸. Which caused a significant deterioration of the situation in Ukraine.

As a consequence of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the European security landscape was transformed, and various international organizations, including in particular the European Union and NATO, expressed their opposition to Russia's actions. This significantly worsened relations between Russia and the countries of Western Europe^{29,30}. Experts in the study indicated that the security environment in Poland has changed. They just didn't agree on whether it got better or worse. However, in the course of research, in the opinions of experts, it was confirmed that the war worsened relations between Russia and the West.

²⁴ S. Lilei, The Ukraine crisis: a multidimensional analysis in China, *Eastern Journal of European Studies* 2015, Volume 6/2, pp. 159-175.

²⁵ H. Gardner, The Russian annexation of Crimea: regional and global Ramifications, *European Politics and Society* 2016, Volume 17/4, pp. 490-505.

²⁶ D. Averre, The Ukraine Conflict: Russia's Challenge to European Security Governance, *Europe-Asia Studies* 2016, Volume 68/4, pp. 699-725.

²⁷ A. Bebler, Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 2015, Volume 15/1, pp. 35-54.

²⁸ O. Nedožogina, A Bitter Divorce: Narratives of Crimean Annexation and their Relation to Larger State Identifications, *Europe-Asia Studies* 2019, Volume 71/7, pp. 1069-1090.

²⁹ K. Veljanovska, The Changing Nature of Security in Europe: the Triangle between Russia's New Foreign Policy, the CSDP and NATO, *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 2015, Volume 15/3, pp. 51-65.

³⁰ C. Nitoiu, Towards conflict or cooperation? The Ukraine crisis and EU-Russia relations, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 2016, Volume 16/3, pp. 375-390.

The crisis in Ukraine was and still is a very serious geopolitical challenge for the European Union^{31,32} and other international organizations. Experts in the study confirmed that this crisis is a serious challenge that carries threats. In addition, they also pointed out that this is a threat that needs to be dealt with because it affects not only Ukraine, but also Western European countries, including Poland.

Aggressive actions taken by the Russian Federation, in particular the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbas, have significantly changed the perception of security in the region. It was then realized that security is not given once and for all. It was also understood that Ukraine is of great importance as a key factor in maintaining stability and security in the region³³.

Conclusions

Ukraine has been balancing between the European Union and Russia for years³⁴. Since 2006, the Ukrainian army has undergone a series of military reforms. When the conflict began in 2014, it turned out that the Ukrainian army was unable to use these changes to its advantage. In 2014, it turned out that it was even necessary to carry out further changes and reforms in the army³⁵.

In order to minimize all the threats to Poland's security and sustainable development identified in the course of the research, which are a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine, Poland can and should take various actions to increase the level of security. These include: maintaining border security, supporting diplomacy and mediation in order to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, providing assistance to refugees and undertaking joint actions with other European countries in order to strive for sustainable development and energy security.

Poland's membership in NATO has become particularly important in the context of Russian military aggression in Ukraine. This war has undoubtedly become a major challenge

³¹ N. Ikani, Change and Continuity in the European Neighbourhood Policy: The Ukraine Crisis as a Critical Juncture, *Geopolitics* 2019, Volume 24/1, pp. 20-50.

³² N. Chaban, O. Elgström, M. Knodt, Perceptions of EU mediation and mediation effectiveness: Comparing perspectives from Ukraine and the EU, *Cooperation and Conflict* 2019, Volume 54/4, pp. 506-523.

³³ M. Malskyy, I. Iznin, Ukraina w kontekście wybranych systemów bezpieczeństwa europejskiego w okresie konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego, *Wschód Europy* 2016, Volume 2(2), pp. 109-122.

³⁴ A.M. Costea, The Ukrainian crisis – an unpredictable event?, *CES Working Papers* 2016, Volume 8/3, pp. 333-347.

³⁵ D. Sanders, The War We Want; The War That We Get: Ukraine's Military Reform and the Conflict in the East, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 2017, Volume 30/1, pp. 30-49.

for Europe's security. At the same time, it still raises concerns among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, which have grounds to consider that they may become a possible target of a Russian invasion³⁶. It should be emphasized that the Russian aggression directed against Ukraine changed world institutions, including NATO. It also showed the incompetence of the world's major security institutions and identified the challenges of their rapid transformation. NATO actively joined this process, mainly by moving to the implementation of the peace engineering concept³⁷.

The North Atlantic Alliance was strongly revived by the armed conflict in Ukraine. As a consequence of this conflict, NATO had to and still has to face many challenges³⁸.

An important role in ensuring security is played by regional cooperation in Central Europe, which complements the activities undertaken within the transatlantic community. A special role in this respect is played by the Visegrad Group, the Three Seas Initiative and the Bucharest Nine³⁹.

The article assesses the impact of the conflict in Ukraine on the security and sustainable development of Poland. Thus, the research problem was solved and the hypothesis assumed for it was positively verified. It was established that the Russian aggression in Ukraine had a significant impact on Poland's security and the implementation of tasks related to maintaining sustainable development. It has not been decided whether Poland's security environment has improved or deteriorated, as experts' opinions in this regard were divided.

Streszczenie:

W artykule poddano ocenie wpływ Rosyjskiej agresji skierowanej przeciwko Ukrainie na zrównoważony rozwój i bezpieczeństwo Polski. Ustalono, że agresja rosyjska przeciwko Ukrainie w znacznym stopniu wpłynęła na bezpieczeństwo Polski i realizację zadań

³⁶ M. Gladys, Security of the Baltic States: Effectiveness of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy and Influence of the Ukrainian Crisis, *Przegląd Politologiczny* 2016, Volume 3, DOI : 10.14746/pp.2016.21.3.13.

³⁷ M. Lepskiy, N. Lepska, The War in Ukraine and its Challenge to NATO: Peacekeeping to Peace Engineering, *American Behavioral Scientist* 2023, Volume 67(3), DOI: 10.1177/00027642221144833.

³⁸ T. Tardy (eds.), *The nations of NATO: Shaping the alliance's relevance and cohesion*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2023.

³⁹ A. Orzelska-Stączek, P. Bajda, Security aspects of regional cooperation in central Europe: Visegrád group, Bucharest nine, and the Three seas initiative. *On-line journal modelling the new Europe* 2021, Volume 37, pp. 4-23, DOI: 10.24193/OJMNE.2021.37.01.

związanych z utrzymaniem zrównoważonego rozwoju. W toku badań ustalono również, że środowisko bezpieczeństwa Polski w ocenie niektórych ekspertów poprawiło się, w ocenie innych zaś uległo pogorszeniu.

Słowa kluczowe:

zrównoważony rozwój, bezpieczeństwo Polski, agresja Rosyjska, konflikt na Ukrainie, wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska

Keywords:

sustainable development, Polish security, Russian aggression, conflict in Ukraine, Russian-Ukrainian war

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