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Doctoral dissertation summary

titled: "Criminological aspects of searching for missing persons in Poland and in selected EU countries."

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This study is devoted to the multifaceted problem of missing persons, both in Poland and in selected European Union countries. Disappearances are an ever-present phenomenon that has accompanied the populations of all continents, countries and cultures for years. The aetiology of the phenomenon makes it possible to single out several main factors as causes of people going missing. The scale of the problem fluctuates, with increases and small decreases, but ultimately has remained at a similar level for years.

Analysis of cases of disappearances shows that the problem affects people of different age categories, but certain groups seem to be particularly vulnerable to disappearance. Legislatures worldwide are grappling with the problem of missing persons by implementing solutions aimed at effectively preventing disappearances and undertaking efficient search operations. Even a preliminary analysis of the phenomenon reveals the controversial nature of legal regulations.

The main objective of the dissertation is to evaluate the functioning of the system of searching for missing persons through a comprehensive study of the phenomenon, both in legal, sociological, criminological and forensic aspects. When undertaking the multifaceted study of the problem of missing persons, it has also proved necessary to analyse the recorded statistical data, to determine the causes of the phenomenon and, finally, the currently applied and effective methods used to search for missing persons.

Due to the complexity and large scale of the problem, cooperation between many bodies is essential to ensure safety and to combat threats. Obviously, only an appropriate level of cooperation can guarantee an effective search and rescue operation. A part of the research being

the subject of this paper is devoted to the issue of cooperation between the uniformed services involved in the search for a missing person and non-police entities, e.g. volunteer rescue units or non-governmental organisations (foundations, associations), both at national and international level.

Within the conducted research, a detailed analysis was carried out of the legal acts that constitute the basis for initiation and conducting search activities. In order to determine the actual scale of the phenomenon, the reports of disappearances recorded by police units in Poland were analysed in detail, determining their dynamics and key determinants.

Special attention was paid to the disappearances of young people. Children and young people are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. When young people go missing, there is a high risk that their life and health may be threatened, even if they leave their place of residence voluntarily. In order to assess the extent of this phenomenon, a statistical analysis was used to establish its actual scale.

Given the problem of identification of unnamed persons and corpses related to the issue of missing persons, a review of methods used to establish their identity was carried out, and their value was assessed. The proposed division took into account the proven solutions used for many years and indicated the possibility of using the latest technologies.

In the next part of the work, an analogous list of methods used to search for missing persons is made, among which measures directly aimed at finding a missing person in the field are included, as well as analyses based on the latest technologies to support the determination of the whereabouts of a missing person.

An important aspect of the analyses carried out turned out to be the establishment and the subsequent assessment of the procedures for handling missing person cases undertaken by state services. In view of this analysis, the most important entities involved in the search for missing persons in Poland were listed, and the basis of their cooperation was indicated. While appreciating the activities of entities not directly involved in the search activities, the role of institutions supporting the search for missing persons was emphasised.

The dissertation concludes with a conclusion, which summarises and concludes the work.

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