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PROFESSIONALIZATION OF POLICE NEGOTIATIONS IN POLAND AFTER 1990, EVOLUTION OF STANDARDS, TRAINING AND ETHICS

Summary

The work reveals the professionalism of police negotiations as a specialized form of official communication used during crisis incidents with increased risk to people's lives and safety. It is substantiated that negotiations in police activities differ from ordinary official communication in the conditions of acute stress, time shortage, incomplete information and high emotional tension of the parties. In such an environment, the word, speech pace, intonation, pause, consistency and the ability to build contact perform the function of de-escalation, and effectiveness is determined by reducing risks and minimizing harm. It is shown that an important feature of negotiations is the legal and organizational framework, the negotiator acts as an element of the team, coordinating communication steps with the head of the operation and other services, and trust is understood as predictability and respect without humiliation, and not as consent to dangerous actions. Special attention is paid to changes in Polish police negotiations after 1990, which reflect the transition from isolated practices to an institutionalized system with structural units, training, defined roles and regulated working methods. The evolution of standards towards a wider application of negotiations in various types of incidents is characterized, in particular where stabilization of behavior, reduction of tension and safe completion of the event are critical. The importance of professional ethics is emphasized, which includes honesty to the extent possible, refusal of promises without fulfillment, respect for human dignity, as well as responsibility for the consequences of communication decisions.

Introduction

Professionalism in police negotiations is now perceived as one of the key elements of safe, humane and effective work of law enforcement agencies. In a critical situation, a negotiator is often the first to create a bridge between chaos and a chance for a peaceful conclusion to events. This applies not only to hostages or barricades, but also to suicide attempts, family crises, mass

incidents, cases of mental disorganization, as well as events in which a person feels hopeless and is ready to act impulsively. In such conditions, words, tone, pauses, the ability to hear and reduce tension in time sometimes have no less power than any other police action. That is why the topic of the evolution of standards, preparation and ethics of negotiations is relevant, because it concerns the preservation of life, the trust of citizens and the legitimacy of state power. The importance of professional negotiations is enhanced by the change in the social environment in which crises arise. Modern conflicts unfold faster, are more often captured by cameras and social media, and the recipients of police actions are often under the influence of severe stress, substances or information stimulation. In parallel, public expectations for de-escalation, harm minimization, transparency and respect for human dignity are growing. In this configuration, the negotiator faces a double challenge: it is necessary to influence the situation in real time, and at the same time act in such a way that each step meets legal and moral requirements. Professionalism here means the ability to work stably in conditions of uncertainty, without substituting the goal of security for the desire for a quick result at any cost. The evolution of police negotiation standards is taking place in the direction of intuitive, situational approaches to structured, evidence-based models. Modern standards are usually built around de-escalation, the priority of saving lives, risk management and team interaction, where the negotiator does not act alone, but is part of a decision-making system. Clear communication protocols, role definitions, agreed boundaries, and ongoing analysis of the situation based on facts rather than assumptions are becoming essential. The evolution of standards is also linked to the understanding that critical incidents often have a psychological component, and therefore negotiations cannot be reduced to persuasion. They include active listening, validating emotions, creating a sense of control in the person who has lost it, and carefully formulating alternatives without aggravation or humiliation.

Negotiator training is seen as a set of competencies, where conversational techniques are only one component. Knowledge of the psychology of crisis, stress and trauma, the ability to recognize signs of psychotic states or suicidal risk, safe communication practices with aggression and fear, as well as self-regulation skills are required so as not to transfer one's own tension into contact. No less important are the team aspects, interaction with the operation leader, tactical units, medics, psychologists, and sometimes with the family of the person at the epicenter of the incident. Professional training increasingly includes simulations, analysis of real cases, voice and non-verbal communication training, as well as post-incident procedures that support resilience and reduce the risks of professional burnout. The ethics of police negotiations are central, because the negotiator works with the vulnerability of a person who is in a critical state. Here, the limits of permissible influence,

honesty regarding key conditions, avoidance of humiliation, respect for human dignity and proportionality of methods are important. Ethical principles are also needed to protect the public interest, since the outcome of negotiations is assessed not only by whether the incident was resolved, but also by the cost of this and whether trust in the police institution was maintained. In the modern sense, the professionalism of a negotiator combines efficiency and moral responsibility, when the goal of security is not separated from the means of achieving it. That is why the evolution of standards, training and ethics is not a purely internal topic for departments, but an important direction in the development of public security management, where human life, law and dignity become real quality criteria.

Chapter 1. Peculiarities of negotiations in police activities

Negotiations in policing are a specialized form of professional communication used in high-risk situations, where the main goal is to save lives and reduce the level of danger for all participants. Unlike ordinary official communication, negotiations in a crisis take place in conditions of acute stress, time constraints, incomplete information and strong emotions that affect a person's thinking, perception and behavior. In such circumstances, words are not just a tool of influence, but a way to stabilize the situation. A properly constructed conversation can reduce impulsiveness, return a person to a sense of control, slow down the development of the conflict and create a window for safe decisions [1-2]. That is why negotiations are an important part of the modern approach to police safety, where priority is given to de-escalation and harm minimization. The specificity of police negotiations is determined by their context. The police act within the framework of the law and a public mandate, that is, the negotiator must simultaneously ensure safety and compliance with procedures, human rights and the requirements of service discipline. This creates multi-level responsibility. The negotiator works not only with the person in crisis, but also with the consequences of each of his decisions for others, for the victims, for witnesses, for colleagues, for the reputation of the institution. In addition, negotiations often take place under the close watch of the environment, cameras, social networks, relatives, journalists. The pressure of publicity changes the behavior of the parties, increases the risk of escalation, provokes demonstrativeness. Because of this, professional negotiations require not only psychological flexibility, but also discipline, the ability to stay within the role and act consistently (Table 1).

Table 1

Essential principles of the police negotiation process

Essential principle	Practical meaning for the negotiator and the operation
Preservation of life and minimisation of harm as the overriding priority	Every communication choice is evaluated through risk reduction. The negotiator slows the tempo, avoids humiliation, and aims to stabilise behaviour before seeking compliance. Even when enforcement is necessary, the process prioritises preventing irreversible outcomes, protecting victims and bystanders, and keeping options open long enough to choose the safest resolution
De-escalation through structured contact and emotional stabilisation	The first goal is not persuasion but connection. Active listening, respectful tone, careful pacing, and validation of emotions reduce threat perception and impulsivity. As arousal drops, the person can process information, consider alternatives, and accept small steps. De-escalation is treated as a process, not a single "winning argument."
Reliability, credibility, and ethical restraint	Trust is built through predictable behaviour, honest boundaries, and avoiding promises that cannot be kept. Credibility is protected by consistent messaging across the team, minimal contradiction, and clarity about what can and cannot happen. Ethical restraint prevents manipulation that could later collapse cooperation, trigger escalation, or undermine legitimacy of the police response
Team integration and clear role division	Negotiation is not a solo performance. The negotiator shares relevant information with the commander, receives operational constraints, and aligns messaging with tactical safety measures. Role clarity prevents mixed signals, reduces internal conflict, and supports controlled risk management. A coordinated team can maintain pressure without provoking panic, and can shift strategy without breaking rapport

Source: formed by the author

A separate feature of such negotiations is the inequality of resources and goals of the parties, but at the same time negotiations cannot turn into humiliation or forceful dictate in verbal form. In a crisis, a person often does not think rationally, he may be overcome by fear, anger, shame, despair, or experience disorganization of thinking. Sometimes the reason for an incident is not the intention to cause harm, but the need to be heard, to escape from pain, to regain the dignity that the person feels lost. The negotiator does not justify dangerous actions, but recognizes the reality of emotions, because without this it is impossible to establish contact. Contact is the first condition for de-escalation, and de-escalation is the first condition for safety

An important feature is the variety of situations in which negotiations are used. These may be cases when a person threatens himself, when there is an acute family conflict, when someone has barricaded himself and refuses to make contact, when there is a risk of violence, when the incident has a public resonance, or when there are signs of a mental crisis. In each case,

the negotiator must simultaneously maintain two frames, the frame of humanity and the frame of safety. The first requires respect, restraint, active listening and refusal to humiliate [3-5]. The second requires risk control, precision of formulations, avoidance of provocations, careful management of the pace of the conversation and coordination of actions in the team. Negotiations in the police are always part of teamwork. Even if one specialist is in contact, there is a decision-making system nearby, the head of the operation, units, support services, doctors, sometimes psychologists or crisis specialists. This team spirit determines another feature, the negotiator cannot act as an autonomous actor. He must communicate with the team, convey relevant information, receive feedback, and agree on possible solutions. Professionalism here is manifested in the ability to keep the focus on the conversation and at the same time integrate safety requirements and resource constraints. The negotiator must also help the team understand the person's psychological state, predict possible changes in behavior, and suggest which actions of the external environment can increase tension. The pace of speech, short and clear sentences, lack of ambiguity, control of intonation, and attention to pauses are important. A pause can be a tool for stabilization, but it can also be perceived as ignoring if contact has not yet been established. Words that seem neutral in an office conversation can sound like a threat or sarcasm in a crisis. Therefore, the negotiator has a language of safety that reduces triggers and does not increase the feeling of being cornered. It is also important to understand that in a crisis, a person often perceives not the content, but the intention, and intonation is sometimes more important than arguments [6-7]. Another feature is working with trust, which is difficult in a police context. A person may perceive the police as a threat, may have a previous negative experience, may be hostile due to fear of punishment or loss of face. Therefore, trust in negotiations does not mean friendship or agreement, but a minimum level of predictability and a feeling that the interlocutor is heard and not humiliated. The negotiator builds trust through consistency, honesty within the limits of what is permitted, control of his own emotions, willingness to repeat and clarify when the person is having difficulty concentrating. Particular attention is paid to boundaries, since an overpromise or an inconsistent signal can destroy contact and increase the risk of dangerous developments. Therefore, professionalism includes ethical restraint, saying only what can be done, and doing what has been said (Table 2).

Table 2

The impact of changes in situations on the system of introducing police negotiations

Changes in the incident landscape	Impact on how the negotiation system is introduced and used
Expansion of crisis types beyond classic barricade or hostage events, including suicide threats, public blockades, threats involving weapons or dangerous means, and incidents with terrorism related risk	The system must define broader activation criteria, prepare negotiators for psychologically complex encounters, and integrate protocols for fast risk assessment and multi-agency coordination. Training and procedures expand from "one scenario" thinking to a flexible framework that can be adapted quickly while keeping safety and legality central

Source: formed by the author

A characteristic feature of police negotiations is that they often take place against the background of a strong sense of shame and threat to the status of the person being contacted. The person may be afraid that they will be humiliated, exposed, condemned, or exposed to everyone. Because of this, they hold on to control and may react aggressively to any attempt at pressure. Relatively speaking, sometimes the central issue is not the subject of the demands, but the need to save face. The negotiator takes this into account, offering a way out that allows the situation to be resolved without additional loss of dignity. It is important to emphasize here that it is not about concessions that create risks, but about the form of communication and the way to organize the conclusion that do not provoke humiliation. The information factor is also essential in police negotiations. Information is needed not for curiosity, but for assessing risks and planning safe actions. At the same time, the negotiator cannot turn the conversation into an interrogation, because then the contact quickly disappears. Therefore, a balance between the two tasks of maintaining emotional contact and gradually clarifying the facts that affect safety is characteristic. Professionalism is manifested in how questions are introduced gently and appropriately, how paraphrasing is used, how understanding is checked, and how respect is maintained even during clarifications that may be unpleasant for the person. An important feature is the influence of the digital environment [8-10]. In real incidents, people often use the telephone, instant messengers, broadcasts, and sometimes connect third parties who write messages, incite or, conversely, calm down. This creates a multi-channel communication, where the negotiator must take into account that the interlocutor may simultaneously receive external signals that contradict the logic of de-escalation. Such situations require particularly clear boundaries and procedures agreed upon within the team so that random remarks by third parties do not undermine the work of the contact. The negotiator in such conditions

focuses on stabilization and consistency, on a calm pace and returning the conversation to safe steps. The psychological load, which is a constant feature of this type of activity, cannot be ignored. Crisis negotiations are associated with a high cost of mistakes and prolonged emotional stress. The negotiator must be able to withstand the strong emotions of another person without reacting in a mirror manner, and at the same time remain attentive to details. After the incident is over, possible consequences in the form of exhaustion, secondary traumatization, intrusive memories or doubts about one's own decisions. Therefore, professionalism in police negotiations also includes a culture of post-incident support, analysis of actions, learning from mistakes without humiliation, as well as concern for the psychological stability of specialists. This is directly related to the quality of subsequent negotiations, because an exhausted negotiator becomes less accurate and less stable.

Chapter 2. Characteristics of changes in police negotiations in Poland after 1990

After 1990, police negotiations in Poland began to develop in the context of a profound institutional transformation of the entire law enforcement system. The very fact of the creation of the police as a new formation, the definition of its tasks and the limits of its powers in the law, laid the foundation for a more modern approach to security, where the protection of life and health of people is considered the basic function of the service. The law on the police, adopted on April 6, 1990, directly states that the police is created to protect the safety of people and maintain public safety and order, and among the main tasks is the protection of life and health of people and property from unlawful encroachments. In this kind of logic, negotiations gradually began to be perceived not as an additional option, but as a tool that helps to implement the key mission, namely to stop the threat with the minimum possible damage (Table 3).

Thus, the first stage of changes covers the early 1990s, when negotiations began to take shape as a separate specialization within the framework of police actions associated with high risk. According to the Polish police, the first negotiation training took place in the early 1990s, and the first negotiation section was established on September 1, 1991 in the Anti-Terrorist Department of the Metropolitan Police Command. An important institutional event followed: in 1992, on the basis of an organizational decision of the Chief Police Commander, the first full-time negotiation section was established within the structure of the anti-terrorist unit, and the effective date, October 1, 1992, is given as the beginning of the formation and development of organizational structures for police negotiations. It is also important that the first section immediately provided for positions related to psychological competence, which reflected an early awareness of the psychological nature of many crisis incidents.

Table 3

The impact of events after 1990 on the Polish negotiation system

Post-1990 developments in Poland	Impact on the negotiation system and day-to-day practice
Institutional transformation of policing after 1990 and the redefinition of police tasks around public safety and protection of life	Negotiation began to be treated as a legitimate operational tool, not an improvised "soft option." The mission framing supported de-escalation as a core pathway to safety, made prevention of harm a measurable outcome, and encouraged commanders to plan for negotiated resolutions rather than relying on rapid force as the default
Early creation of dedicated negotiation structures in the 1990s and the gradual professional separation of the negotiation function	Establishing formal sections and named roles helped move negotiation from individual talent to organisational capacity. It enabled continuity, accountability, and internal knowledge transfer, so expertise no longer disappeared when a single experienced officer left. It also improved coordination with tactical units by clarifying who speaks, who decides, and how information flows
International learning and the shift from ad hoc training to structured preparation	Exposure to foreign training models accelerated adoption of standardised methods, scenario training, and competency based selection. The system gained shared terminology, repeatable techniques, and more predictable performance under stress. It also strengthened the idea that negotiation is a trainable discipline requiring practice, supervision, and periodic evaluation, not only personal charisma
Formal regulation and later updates to orders and procedures defining when negotiations are used and how teams operate	Clear rules stabilised the system and reduced reliance on informal habits. Regulations strengthened requirements for specialist training, team based work, and commander oversight. Later updates expanded the catalogue of situations where negotiation is relevant, which increased operational readiness in incidents such as suicide threats, hostage scenarios, or public blockades, while reinforcing safety and accountability

Source: formed by the author

The second stage can be described as the transition from isolated practices to a system of training and rules, approximately from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. The Polish police directly links the development of training to international experience; in 1994, police officers were sent to the United States for negotiation training, and upon their return, the creation of a system for training negotiators was initiated, which started in 1996. At the same time, this period showed that without clear norms and procedures, even the best training does not guarantee stability, since due to the lack of regulation, by 2000, according to the data provided, only 10 negotiators remained. This decline became a signal that negotiations should not be the enthusiasm of individual

specialists, but an element of the system, with defined roles, requirements and responsibilities. The third stage is associated with the normative consolidation of negotiations and the construction of a network management model, when negotiations became part of the standard architecture of police actions in a crisis.

In 2002, an administrative act of the Chief Police Commander on the forms and methods of conducting police negotiations was adopted. It defined negotiations as communication between the person who caused the crisis situation and a police negotiator with the aim of resolving the situation, and it was also recorded that only a police officer who had undergone special training organized by the Chief Police Command could be a negotiator. The document detailed the command logic, negotiations were to be conducted by a negotiating team, defined the roles of the team leader, coordinator, negotiators and consultant, and the decision to start and end negotiations remained with the head of the police operation, which separated the communication function from the command function. In parallel, according to materials from the Polish police, after 2000, positions of coordinators responsible for negotiators appeared in each voivodeship, and the system began to rely on a combination of full-time and part-time negotiators.

The fourth stage is the changes of 2010, which can be described as an update of the standards and their more precise alignment with the logic of crisis management, in particular taking into account terrorist risks, suicide attempts and hostage situations. In 2018, a new administrative decision of the Chief Police Commander on police negotiations was issued, which defines the situations in which negotiations can be held, the subjects, the rules of operation and methods of conducting negotiations, and at the same time provides an expanded list of situations that directly includes suicide instructions, threats of illegal use of weapons or dangerous means, the capture and detention of hostages, the likelihood or occurrence of a terrorist event, as well as the occupation or blockade of objects and routes of communication. The content of such formulations is important because it shows that negotiations in Poland are officially positioned as a tool for a wide range of critical events, and not only as an element of anti-terrorist scenarios. A separate line of change has been the evolution of ethics and professional culture of negotiations. Modern materials from the Polish police emphasize that negotiators should not substitute for command, they act as a powerless tool in the hands of the leader, and also adhere to the principle that they should not lie and should not make promises without a real possibility of fulfillment. Such an emphasis on honesty and roles is not only a moral norm, but also a practical requirement, since trust in a crisis is often the only resource that keeps a person from taking an impulsive step. It is important that the same source also describes the elements of the aftermath, discussion of the actions taken and the possibility of

psychological support for negotiators after traumatic events, which indicates a gradual transition from a heroic model of endurance to a professional model of resilience and supervisory culture.

Thus, after 1990, Poland underwent a transition from isolated negotiation practices to a system with a legal basis, specialized structures, a network of provincial coordination, defined training requirements and increasingly clear ethical guidelines. It is symbolic that as of 2022, the Polish police reported hundreds of negotiators and the presence of provincial negotiation groups, as well as a negotiation section in the counter-terrorism unit, i.e. negotiations became not a periphery, but a stable element of security.

The professionalization of police negotiations in Poland after 1990 began with broader institutional changes that transformed the law enforcement system from an instrument of political control into a service focused on protecting citizens and upholding democratic rules. On April 6, 1990, the Police Act was adopted, which laid down new principles for the functioning of the formation, defined its tasks and emphasized the service nature of its activities, i.e. the protection of people's lives, health and property as a key priority. This transition meant that in crisis incidents, it was not forceful methods per se that became increasingly important, but risk management and harm minimization. In this logic, negotiations gradually became a separate professional competence, as they allowed reducing the likelihood of human casualties and avoiding escalation where the use of force could have unpredictable consequences. An additional factor was the formation of a new culture of accountability and legality, since in a democratic model the police must not only achieve a result, but also do it in a way that society recognizes the legitimacy of their actions. That is why negotiations in Polish practice began to be perceived as a way to implement the principle of the priority of life and safety, as well as a tool for building trust, when the state demonstrates that it seeks to resolve the crisis peacefully before resorting to coercion. Ethics has become a separate pillar of professionalism, because negotiations always operate on the border between psychological influence and the protection of human rights, which is why they require a clear moral and service framework. In the Polish police, an important step was the issuance by the Chief Police Commander of Order No. 805 of 31 December 2003, which approved the principles of professional ethics of a police officer. These principles function as a basic moral standard for all service roles, including negotiators, and emphasize the obligation to act in a way that strengthens public trust in the police, especially in situations that are not described in detail in the law. For a negotiator, this has a very specific meaning. He must maintain respect for the dignity of a person, even if this person is an offender, refrain from humiliation, demonstration of superiority or provocation, not substitute the goal of saving life for the goal of a quick force effect, and at the same time not make promises

that the state is unable to fulfill. He is also obliged to work honestly with information, not to create unnecessary risk for hostages or bystanders, to maintain professional confidentiality within the framework of official rules and to act in a team so that each step is coordinated with tactics and legal grounds. The Polish discussion on ethics further emphasizes the continued relevance of these principles, in particular, on the 20th anniversary of their introduction, attention was drawn to the fact that the document remains valid and practically significant. In short, the evolution of negotiations in Poland after 1990 is a path from the creation of a new democratic police to the construction of a specialized negotiation service, where standards are set by legal documents and training programs, skills are practiced in complex simulations, and ethical frameworks are not an add-on, but the basis of the profession, because they define the line between legitimate influence and abuse of power.

After 1990, the professionalization of police negotiations in Poland became part of a broader democratic transformation, within which the police were to perform the tasks of a service to society, and not an instrument of coercion for the sake of political expediency. The Police Act of 6 April 1990 defined the police as an armed and uniformed formation serving society, and directly emphasized the priority of protecting people's lives and health, as well as protecting property from unlawful encroachments. This logic became the natural foundation of negotiations as a separate competence, because negotiations allow reducing the likelihood of death or injury, buying time for risk assessment and finding solutions, and transferring a crisis from the plane of force to the plane of controlled communication. For Poland, which was rapidly changing its institutions in the 1990s, this was especially important, since public trust in the state is formed not only by the result, but also by the way it acts. In critical incidents, when there are hostages, a suicide threat, weapons, explosive materials or mass panic, any mistake becomes public and has consequences for the legitimacy of the police. Therefore, negotiations gradually ceased to be an improvisation of individual officers and became a specialized function that requires procedures, training, quality control and ethical boundaries so that each step remains legal, proportionate and understandable to society. The organizational start of negotiations in Poland after 1990 has clear historical milestones that well show how the profession is formed. The official police publication describes that in 1992 the first full-time negotiation section was created within the structure of the anti-terrorist unit of the Metropolitan Police Command, and that the impetus was the experience gained in the United States of America. In 1994, it was decided that each province should have three negotiators, and a group of police officers also went to the United States of America to learn the practice and pass it on to others. At the same time, the same material directly shows the classic problem of early professionalization, when trained people are there, but the system that keeps,

supports and develops them does not yet exist. Many employees refused this role due to the lack of clear rules and the lack of regular training. That is why an important point was March 26, 2002, when the regulatory act of the Chief Police Commander on the forms and methods of conducting police negotiations was issued, which determined in which situations negotiations can be held, who is authorized to implement them, and how this process is organized. This was a transition from enthusiasm and borrowing experience to regulatory standardization, which makes the practice reproducible and responsibility clear.

The further evolution of standards is best illustrated by the transition from the 2002 regulation to the more modern 2018 framework regulation, which details not only the negotiations themselves, but also the system for their deployment on a national scale. In December 2018, a regulatory act of the Chief of Police on police negotiations was adopted, which entered into force in 2019 and directly repealed the 2002 act. A publication from the professional environment of the Polish police explains that this regulation is intended to ensure the efficient and professional organization of negotiation teams and to define the principles for launching negotiation teams within the framework of police actions. It also lists typical situations that are considered negotiation, including the threat of suicide, the threat of illegal use of weapons or dangerous objects or materials, hostage-taking, the likelihood of a terrorist event, as well as the occupation or blockade of facilities and transport routes. The important content of this standard is not only in the list, but in the management logic, because negotiations are described as a team activity, where it is necessary to determine the order of involvement, subordination, information flows, documentation and coordination. This brings negotiations closer to the crisis management model, in which the first patrol on the scene must understand when and how to call negotiators, commanders must know the limits of their powers, and communication with the criminal itself is not separated from the tactical plan that ensures the safety of hostages, passers-by and police officers. The development of training after 1990 shows that a negotiator in Poland is becoming not just a communicator, but a specialist in controlled interaction in high stress, who works according to the program and regularly maintains skills. The decision of the Chief Police Commander of March 9, 2020 approved the training program for a specialized course for police negotiators and determined that the course would be implemented by the Police Academy in Szczytno and the Police Training Center in Legionowo, and also canceled the previous program from 2007. The very fact of replacing the program shows that the training is not a one-time event, it is updated for real practice, for changing threats and for new requirements for documentation, legality and interaction with other units. In parallel, the official police publication describes a model in which the absolute majority of negotiators serve in non-standard teams in the voivodeship commandants and in the Metropolitan Police Commandant's

Office, and a small group of full-time negotiators work in the central counter-terrorism structure and also conduct training and exercises for the regions, including training workshops for advanced training. Such a system makes the profession widespread, but at the same time maintains a central center of expertise that can provide uniform standards, common training scenarios, and the same level of training in different parts of the country.

Conclusions

The professionalism of police negotiations in the modern sense should be considered as a crisis management tool that complements other police actions and reinforces the priority of saving lives. Negotiations in police activities have a special character, because they take place in conditions of high risk, high stress, time shortage and incomplete information. In this area, effectiveness is determined not by the force of pressure, but by the ability to reduce tension, stabilize contact, slow down escalation and create a safe space for decisions. That is why negotiations are not just communication, but a professional de-escalation technology that requires discipline, precision of formulations, intonation control, emotional stability and a clear focus on minimizing harm. The key conclusion regarding the essence of police negotiations is that they always exist within a legal and organizational framework. The negotiator does not act autonomously, but as part of a command system, where communication actions must be coordinated with the decisions of the operation leader, the level of risk, resources and procedural requirements. A particular difficulty lies in the need to simultaneously maintain humanity and security control, not to humiliate, but also not to lose boundaries, not to make empty promises, but to maintain contact. Trust in this context is practical in nature, it is predictability, consistency and the feeling that a person is heard, and not a demonstration of friendship or complete agreement.

An analysis of the changes in Poland after 1990 shows a transition from isolated practices to a system with organizational structures, training, defined roles and regulatory regulation. The creation of the first negotiation sections in the early 1990s, the subsequent formation of the training system, as well as the adoption of administrative acts that determined who could be a negotiator and how the negotiating team was organized, became the foundation for the stability and scaling of this function. As a result, negotiations ceased to be a matter for a narrow circle of enthusiasts and were included in the institutional architecture of crisis response, with provincial coordination and a combination of full-time and part-time specialists. Maintaining honesty to the extent possible, refusing promises without fulfillment, a clear division of roles between the negotiator and the command, as well as attention to the psychological stability of specialists through incident analysis and support after difficult events, build trust and effectiveness in the long term. As a result, police

negotiations in Poland after 1990 have gone through a process of institutionalization and professionalization, which allows us to consider them as an important component of modern public security, where human life, legal responsibility and respect for dignity are practical criteria for the quality of work.

The ethical side of the professionalization of negotiations in Poland after 1990 is not a decorative addition, but a protective mechanism against the abuse of psychological influence, which is always possible in crisis communication. The basic document that applies to the entire police force is the principles of professional ethics of a police officer, approved by the regulatory act of the Chief Police Commander of December 31, 2003. This document emphasizes the duty of a police officer to build public trust in the police and to be guided by ethical principles even in situations not regulated by law, which is especially important for a negotiator, because each crisis has unique circumstances. The ethical framework for negotiations means refusing humiliation, provocations, promises that the state cannot fulfill, and at the same time the duty to act in a way that saves lives without creating additional risks for hostages or bystanders. Professionalization also has a European component, as the central counter-terrorism unit of the Polish police works in cooperation with European special units through the network of special intervention units of the European Union countries, known as ATLAS, which is written about by both Europol and official materials of the Polish police in English. Such cooperation means joint training, exchange of practices and coordination of approaches, which also affect negotiations, because modern incidents often combine terrorist risk, social media, crisis psychology and the need for rapid interagency coordination. Added to this is a new technological layer, where the spread of manipulative content can increase panic or provoke violence, so it is increasingly important for negotiators to understand how the information environment works, including content produced by artificial intelligence technologies, and how to maintain humanity and legitimacy in situations where society is watching negotiations almost in real time.

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