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## The use of information and disinformation in the cooperation of Polish law enforcement agencies with the media - contemporary problems and future perspectives

### *Abstract*

*This article is an attempt to present how information and disinformation are used in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media. The cooperation was characterized by analyzing it from the point of view of the media, law enforcement agencies and recipients, i.e. the public. The benefits and threats of the information and disinformation flow were indicated. As a perspective of the future, it is noted that social media and their cooperation and use by law enforcement agencies play an important role in the procedure. The article also deals with important issues such as investigative journalism or SOCMINT. Some of the presented contents has been illustrated, for better understanding, by examples from everyday life practice on the subject have been illustrated.*

**Keywords:** media, „fourth power”, information, disinformation, law enforcement, press spokesman, investigative journalism, social media, SOCMINT.

### **Admission**

Mass media are defined as the „fourth power” which is situated in a democratic state alongside the legislative, executive and judiciary powers. The name „fourth power” results from the enormous role played by television, radio and the press in society, namely shaping public opinion, thus having a great causative power. In the Democratic Republic of Poland, the operation of free mass media is regulated by law. Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic

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of Poland says: „The Republic of Poland shall ensure freedom of the press and other media of social communication”<sup>1</sup>. Pursuant to the above article, the constitutionally guaranteed freedom is to transfer information through the tools of the so-called „fourth power”. Moreover, Article 54 of the Polish Constitution guarantees that „everyone is guaranteed the freedom to express their views and obtain and disseminate information”<sup>2</sup>. On the basis of the above mentioned legal conditions, the mass media have a *raison d’être* in a democratic state.

The mass media, under the law granted to them, interfere in all spheres of human life in search of topics that would be of interest to the public. One of such topics is undoubtedly the criminal law sphere. Oscillating around criminal cases, there is a lot of information disclosed by the media to the public. Criminal cases are the domain of law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies are understood as all institutions that deal with detecting crimes and prosecuting perpetrators of crimes by conducting investigations. In the Republic of Poland, the following types of services are distinguished as law enforcement agencies: Police, Military Police, Central Anticorruption Bureau, Internal Security Agency, Military Counterintelligence Service, Border Guards, Customs and Treasury Service, Marshal’s Guard, State Protection Service.

Due to their nature, many cases conducted by Polish law enforcement authorities remain in the public interest. On the basis of the above mentioned, there is cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media, which is discussed detailedly in this article

### **Mutual benefits or the basis of conflicts**

It is impossible to determine the actual potential of the mass media that is sometimes used by law enforcement agencies. It is known that the mass media have a huge impact on social life thanks to the transmission of information, disclosure of facts, and taking up important and interesting topics in the public perception. Law enforcement authorities use the given potential in the course of their cases. Information often appear in the media to assist with ongoing criminal investigations. For example, when witnesses of an event are sought, such information appear in the media along with the contact number to which one should report it. Due to the fact that the case gains media attention, this fact is used by law enforcement agencies in the process of collecting evidence and verifying the truth. Mass media, in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, have played a very important role at that time.

The participation of the media in the work of law enforcement agencies is concentrated in the area of two basic levels. The first one is the area of investigative work, using own information channels and working methods, or on the level of information handling. The second level are working methods of media participation in the work of law enforcement agencies will become the subject of further considerations. The media participate in the transmission of information to a wide audience. In relations with law enforcement authorities, the information provided relate to cases that are interesting in the media. It should be noted, however, that in the information chaos, next to the true information, consistent with the actual state, a number of erroneous, false information appear that do not reflect the real

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 78, item 483).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

facts. These types of messages are known as disinformation. The word disinformation is a neologism, which in the dictionary of the Polish language is defined as „misleading someone by providing misleading or false information”<sup>3</sup>. In the communication of law enforcement agencies with the media, misleading, erroneous information often appear, which penetrate the public knowledge through the media.

Information and disinformation are used alternately in cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the media. When processing information and disinformation, important decisions are made and reality is created. Data, distorted and falsified information have the same driving force as true information<sup>4</sup>.

Several different situations are distinguished, showing the handling of information and disinformation in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media. This situation should be considered from the point of view of the mass media, law enforcement agencies and recipients of information, i.e. the public.

When characterizing the cooperation of the media with law enforcement agencies in terms of information transfer and disinformation, first of all it is necessary to present the essence of the mass media. The PWN encyclopedia indicates that the mass media, which are also called mass communication media, are: „devices and institutions through which content is sent to a very large and diverse audience; press, radio, television, also film (cinema), books, music recordings,”<sup>5</sup> etc. The decisive distinguishing feature of the mass media is their huge range and the fact that the content is public, that is, it has a wide range of recipients of the information provided. Their task is to transmit information. In democratic countries, the functioning of the mass media is anchored in law, where „freedom of speech and media is a fundamental human right, broadly understood in the field of social rights”<sup>6</sup>. Freedom of speech is guaranteed by Article 54 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, which says: “Everyone is guaranteed the freedom to express their views and to obtain and disseminate information. Preventive censorship of the mass media and licensing of the press are prohibited.”<sup>7</sup> In addition, in the Press Law Act, defining the rights and obligations of journalists, publishers, editors, etc. it is written that their task is „to serve society and the state”<sup>8</sup>.

It is important to note that through the transmission of information, the mass media have the power to create the world through their enormous influence on public opinion - a wide audience. In the context of cooperation with law enforcement agencies, the mass media play a huge causative role oscillating around the legal and forensic issues. The mass media are hungry for information as this is the essence of their activities. If there are interesting cases conducted by law enforcement agencies, they remain the interest of the mass media and thus the public. The practice of everyday life indicates a number of criminal proceedings of this type that have become high-profile media issues.

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<sup>3</sup> I quote from: PWN Online Dictionary of the Polish Language [in:] <https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/dezinformacja.html> (visited: 05/09/2021)

<sup>4</sup> See R. Kupiecki, T. Chłoń et al., Platform for counteracting disinformation - building social resilience. Research and education, Elipsa Publishing House, Warsaw 2021, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/srodki-masowego-przekazu;3984263.html> (visited: 06/09/2021)

<sup>6</sup> K. Lorenc media freedom and safety state, [in] „Krakow International Study”, XIII, 2016 No. 4, pp. 141.

<sup>7</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 78, item 483)

<sup>8</sup> See Art. 10, Act of January 26, 1984 Press Law (Journal of Laws of 1984, No. 5, item 24)

While pointing to the media's interest in criminal proceedings, it is worth citing a few examples. In 2004, Tomasz Komenda was convicted of the brutal rape of a minor, where the victim died. The man was sentenced to 25 years in prison. Then, in 2018, the Komenda was found not guilty of the alleged criminal act. The man left the Correctional Facility and received compensation from the State Treasury for the mistake and difficult time spent in the Correctional Facility. The case received widespread media coverage. Everyone closely watched the fate of the man in the context of the past, i.e. rape, crime, imprisonment, and in the context of actions taken and cases before the Court acquitting the man, as well as his future plans and expectations. It turned out to be so interesting that a full-length film was made based on the fate of the innocent convict, which became a blockbuster movie, entitled „25 years of innocence - The case of Tomek Komenda”.

Another interesting case conducted by law enforcement agencies was the case of Jarosław Sokołowski (pseudonym Masa), who was arrested in 1999 in connection with criminal activity. He was a gangster occupying a high position in the Pruszków gang. Since 2000, he has been a crown witness and a media person, as he appeared in many TV programs, gave interviews, and published books about his life and criminal career. Jarosław Sokołowski, despite cooperation with law enforcement agencies, has also undertaken close cooperation with the mass media by providing them with information describing the criminal world, which is of particular interest to the public. Mass occurred incl. in the following TV programs and series: 2004 - „Alphabet of the mafia” and „Alphabet of the mafia. The decade of mafia Warsaw, 2009 - Now us!” - guest of the program on the so-called „gambling scandal”, 2012 - „Crimes that shocked Poland” and „On the First Plan”, 2013 - Intervention program, 2013 - „Gangster Code” (episode 5), 2014 - guest of the program „Dzień Dobry TVN” and the program „State in the State”, 2016 - guest and co-creator of the program „Mafia is not only Pruszków”. What's Moreover, Jaroslaw Sokolowski is the protagonist of a series of interviews made by the journalist and writer Artur Górski, where the backstage of the Polish mafia is presented, and it was also published in a book. The example of Jarosław Sokołowski shows how enormous the driving force in the mass media actually is. Thanks to the mass media, Masa „turned into a celebrity with whom acquaintance became a reason to be proud”<sup>9</sup>. On the one hand, the mass media created a celebrity out of the gangster, and on the other hand, they obtained a lot of information from the reality of the criminal world, which was revealed to the public. Jarosław Sokołowski cooperates with law enforcement agencies as a crown witness from the mafia world, and on the other hand, he also cooperates with the mass media as a celebrity who has socially interesting content to convey. The mass of information is handled by it in exchange for fame, protection from the criminals it plunges, and in exchange for minimizing its punishment. The important role of information transfer and cooperation is visible here. It should be noted that the mass media should be careful in publishing certain information in order not to disturb the proceedings conducted by law enforcement agencies and not to expose the crown witness to the revenge of criminals, who is protected by the judiciary under

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<sup>9</sup> A. Górski, Polish crown witness number one, breaks the silence! Mass about women of the Polish mafia. Jarosław Sokołowski „Masa” in conversation with Artur Górski, Wydawnictwo Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw 2014, p. 8.

the Act on the Crown Witness<sup>10</sup>. The famous Polish criminologist Dr. Zbigniew Rau points out that „the knowledge of the crown witnesses is primarily to reveal evidence of crimes”<sup>11</sup>.

Law enforcement agencies operate primarily with information and it would seem that disinformation do not exist there. Meanwhile, when considering the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media, it is pointed out that on a given level, next to information, disinformation freely occur, intertwining with each other. In the course of conducted proceedings, law enforcement agencies provide the media with such information, whether it is in line with the actual state of affairs or falsified, so that it has a positive impact on the course of the cases. The persons employed as the Press Spokesperson (head of the entire Press Team), have been appointed to contact the media in law enforcement institutions. This unit is responsible for contact with the mass media by giving interviews, responding to correspondence from the press and other types of media. Moreover, the duties of the Press Team also include servicing the body’s profiles on social networks<sup>12</sup>. „Press spokespersons are responsible for implementing the information policy (...) They must first of all publicly present the activities of their formation and organize public contacts with the participation of play via the mass media”<sup>13</sup>. Correct communication between law enforcement agencies, mass media and the public, i.e. a wide group of recipients of the information provided, is very important in this area.

As far as the recipients of the information are concerned, it is worth paying attention to the fact that the public opinion in a democratic state has the right to reliable and honest information. The transmission of this information rests with the mass media. It should be noted that the public opinion is very often unable to separate reliable information from disinformation messages. Sometimes the media are trusted too indiscriminately, as they can mislead in creating reality through the transmission of information not always consistent with the actual state.

An important element in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media is the fact that the mass media, as having a huge impact on creating reality through the way of communication, also affect the public perception of the police as an institution and a police officer as an employee of that institution. The type of message seems to be important here, and not the information itself, especially in situations where we are dealing with the presentation of irregularities in the work of police officers or law enforcement agencies. The researcher of this phenomenon - Monika Źak, from the University of Silesia, points out that the messages communicated assessing the work of the police or law enforcement agencies are very often marked with a huge emotional charge, which causes negative feelings in the recipient. It is not the message itself that is important, but the way it is communicated, i.e. the expressed opinions, evaluations, emotions, which can be found, for example, in the titles of articles such as: „A punitive mistake of policemen in Łódź”. There is a disciplinary

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<sup>10</sup> Act of June 25, 1997 on the crown witness (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 114, item 738).

<sup>11</sup> Criminal riddles. Knowing and Understanding Man, ed. M. Teler, G i J Publishing House, Warsaw 2011, p. 100.

<sup>12</sup> I quote for: <https://policja.pl/pol/kontakt/rzecznik/734,Zespol-Prasowy-Komendy-Glownej-Policji.html> (visited: 09/09/2021).

<sup>13</sup> D. Krawczyk, Organization and scope of media relations activities of press officers of police units, [in:] „Studia Politicae Universitatis Silesiensis”, vol. 22/2018, p. 81.

procedure or Polish Ministry to the United Nations: „cases of abuse of force by the police are abused”.<sup>14</sup> The consequences of transmitting information containing emotions, assessments, interpretations may affect the feeling of reduced trust in public institutions. Moreover, it also largely destabilizes the work of law enforcement agencies.

SWI of information and misinformation in regard to the reality of media and legal and forensic reality, it seems that the media have more opportunities to operate erroneous news, whether such where it mixes truth with lies. Law enforcement agencies rely to a greater extent on dry facts as evidence in the case. The mass media often interpret facts, evaluate and draw conclusions, which leads to a distortion of reality. The media transmit information, give it an appropriate meaning, and create the world, values and social moods. They should act honestly, according to the truth that relates to the real world. Meanwhile, in a world where sensation counts, „bad news” are a much more valuable source of income, because they are more interesting in the public opinion. Dry facts often recede to the background of disinformation news with greater social interest. In the cooperation of the media with law enforcement agencies, the mass media should be particularly careful, because by passing information to the public, they have a huge impact on the creation of the world, and thus on people’s lives. An interesting media issue worth citing here as an example is the case of a boy named Michałek, who was brutally murdered by his mother’s cohabitant. In the course of the case, the man announced the person who had ordered the murder was the boy’s mother. The woman was charged and sentenced. She was cruelly treated by the mass media and by public opinion, where it was announced that she was a child-killer, a degenerate mother and a cruel person. The boy’s mother was sent to a correctional facility, but in the course of the appeal court proceedings she was found not guilty. This case shows the strong impact of the mass media on human life, where even before the final judgment was issued, the public, after media reports, found the woman guilty and was severely assessed by the society, despite the fact that she was ultimately found innocent.

Mutual benefits resulting from the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the mass media lie in the fact that the mass media deal with an interesting topic in the media, and on the other hand, the controlled transmission of information to the media may have a positive response in criminal proceedings. However, the basis of the conflict is the area of media activities where too many untrue information appear that disrupt the investigation or, when true information flow out to the public, such that negatively affect the course of the investigation. Journalists also act as investigators conducting their own investigations alongside law enforcement. Conflicts can also arise on this level. At this point, attention should be paid to the function of a journalist as an investigator who, on his own, using various methods, tries to solve various criminal cases. It should be noted that investigative journalism is a type of journalism that involves disclosing information that is important to the public, and at the same time difficult to access for researchers. They are practiced by journalists describing and explaining the cases that should most often be investigated by bodies appointed for this purpose (prosecutor’s office, police, courts)”. Investigative journalists conduct investigations independently of law enforcement agencies, often in cases that are also of interest to law enforcement agencies. An example of such a case is the so-called „Rywin

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<sup>14</sup> I quote after: M. Żak, Media image of the world. The role of the media in shaping the image of the police, [in:] „Media i Społeczeństwo”, No. 8/2018, p. 120.

scandal”, a corruption scandal reported it to the police that gained media publicity regarding the practice of giving and accepting bribes, offered by businessman Lew Rywin to politician Adam Michnik in 2002. After the publication of materials regarding bribes in the press, a parliamentary investigative commission was established to explain the allegations of bribery made in the mass media. „Undoubtedly, in many cases, journalists, and not investigative bodies, manage to collect evidence in a specific case, identify the perpetrator of a crime and find out about the circumstances of his perpetration.” The transfer of information and cooperation of the mass media and law enforcement agencies in this area is particularly important, because thanks to that fact, a number of cases have been brought to light and those guilty of illegal activities would be punished. Unfortunately, conflicts often arise on this level, as the persons conducting the investigation on their own before notifying the law enforcement authorities about the findings, collected evidence, etc. usually they inform the public first by publishing their material. However, according to the law, law enforcement authorities should be notified first, which is Article 304 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which says: „Everyone, having learned about the commission of an offense prosecuted ‘ex officio’, have a social obligation to notify the prosecutor or the police about it”. The practice of everyday life shows that journalists very often first publish sensational information, and only later it goes to law enforcement agencies. Investigative journalism may pose a serious threat to mishandling information because investigative journalists use. The more so because investigative journalists use non-standard methods, e.g. using provocation.<sup>15</sup>

The importance of information and disinformation in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies and the mass media is revealed by the so-called eavesdropping scandal . In June 2014, the press published transcripts of conversations that were illegally registered in several Warsaw restaurants owned by Robert Sowa. Famous politicians and entrepreneurs were overheard and recorded using voice recording devices. The information obtained as a result of these interviews became particularly valuable and reached the public opinion through the media. Criminal proceedings were initiated against persons who made illegal recordings, which resulted in a final conviction. The case of the so-called eavesdropping scandal shows how the mass media publicize a certain topic, and then the law enforcement agencies deal with it, where the case is finally brought to court and a sentence is passed. The wiretapping scandal is an example of illegal manipulation of information to which you are not entitled. Information is a good that is treated as a protected good.

At the level of cooperation between the media and law enforcement agencies, it is also worth paying attention to situations in which law enforcement agencies are at the stage of collecting evidence in a case and use the cooperation with the media to do so. Namely, very often in the media there are information that, thanks to reaching a wider audience, will improve the work of law enforcement agencies. For example, the mass media convey information to a wide audience that witnesses of an event or persons suspected of committing a crime are being sought. When such information become public, they give a chance that someone will report to the law enforcement authorities with the willingness to help, because they have knowledge in a given case. Sometimes outsiders have important information about the committed crime, but are unaware of it. Such an exemplary situation occurred in 1985 in the case of the murder of nine-year-old girl Sabine in Germany. While an eyewitness to a street

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<sup>15</sup> See W. Małek, *Dziennikarstwo śledcze jako działanie na granicy prawa – analiza wybranych przepisów w kontekście pracy reporterskiej*, [w:] „Com.press”, 2(3), 2019, s. 81.

child abduction event reported to the police when he found out from the media about the case, he associated himself with being an eyewitness participant in the abduction of the girl. If it were not for the role of the mass media, this man would not have known that he were an eyewitness to the crime, and law enforcement agencies would have significantly impeded the performance of their activities<sup>16</sup>.

Similarly, also in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media, disinformation messages that appear for a specific purpose are consciously conveyed to the public for reception. Through the media, law enforcement agencies disclose untrue information to the public, e.g. information that the person who committed the crime has already been arrested, whether a number of evidence has been collected and the charges will be briefly presented, etc. The purpose of transmitting disinformation is important, and it can basically be two-fold. On the one hand, disinformation may be an attempt to reassure the public by showing that law enforcement authorities are in control of a given situation. On the other hand, the disclosure of disinformation may affect a number of events that will occur when a given message is received by the public. For example, a person who has committed a given crime and has not yet been detained, learns from the media that the evidence indicate who committed the crime and that the person will be detained shortly, he or she may report and surrender himself/herself in order to receive a lower penalty, because voluntary reporting is an important mitigating circumstance.

## Future prospects

When analyzing the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the media in the context of information transmission and disinformation in the future, it seems that attention should be paid first of all to traditional media, such as television, radio, press, but also to social media and their impact on recipients and the power of creating reality. There is enormous potential in social media, which, still underestimated, are becoming an increasingly important tool of social communication, and at the same time a very rich source of information and disinformation. In the era of the Internet and globalization, social media are becoming a very important mean of transmitting information and, at the same time, disinformation, which is often perceived as real.

According to Paweł Waszkiewicz, habilitated doctor from the Department of Criminalistics at the Faculty of Law of the University of Warsaw and editor of a well-known book dealing with the issues of cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the mass media<sup>17</sup>, as early as 2012, three basic levels of cooperation were distinguished, namely: information policy, investigative work and the use of evidence from social media. Along with the dynamic development of this type of media in 2012, a new concept also appears - SOCMINT ( *Social Media Intelligence* ), which means „the use of intelligence or

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<sup>16</sup> See The disinformation effect. The case of Sabine Hammerich, [in:] Criminology and criminology - the latest reports, ed. M. Maciąg, K. Maciąg, Scientific Publishing House „Tygiel”, Lublin 2019, pp. 40-41.

<sup>17</sup> See Social media in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, ed. P. Waszkiewicz, INP PAN Publishing House, Warsaw 2021.

investigative data from social media”<sup>18</sup>. This procedure takes place in two ways. First, by searching by natural persons for information posted on social networks. Secondly, the law enforcement agencies seek of administrators’ portals (community) with the order to provide certain information as possible evidence in the case, which is in accordance with the law.

Information published on social media are sometimes of interest to investigative authorities. For example, videos that are published on the YouTube channel or materials posted on the social networking site Facebook sometimes contain content that are qualified under the initiation of proceedings by the law enforcement agencies.

Literature indicates that social media is „Internet and mobile technologies, enabling contact between users through the exchange of information, opinions and knowledge”<sup>19</sup>. The most popular social media platforms that are a valuable source of information are: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, Snapchat, YouTube, etc. People employed in law enforcement do not only use social media to view interesting content, but also set up their own accounts, profiles and websites related to professional activities in order to communicate with the public in this way. In this context, at the same time social media become a tool for dialogue between law enforcement agencies and the public, where important information are provided, but also opinions are exchanged through various online forums. For example, the Polish Police has a profile on the Facebook social network, which serves as a source of marketing, image enhancement and one of the ways to contact the public<sup>20</sup>. On September 11, 2021, the Polish Police profile on the Facebook social network has had over 395,000 followers. This profile has been active since May 2010.

People think that while using the Internet they are relatively anonymous, and therefore they are able to provide more information via instant messaging or public forums than in the real world. This anonymity, however, is only apparent, as the administrators of individual websites have access to the data of persons using their services, which, as mentioned above, may be disclosed to law enforcement authorities during the ongoing investigation.

Messages in the form of entries, recordings, reports contained on the above-mentioned social platforms are a very valuable source of information, which are increasingly used. In today’s world full of digitization, the Internet is at the basis of the development of communication, and at the same time the cooperation of social media with law enforcement authorities. The use of social media in cooperation with law enforcement authorities guarantee instant collection of information in the form of photos, recordings, content, and also enables faster analysis of the collected evidence. The practice of everyday life indicates many cases where law enforcement agencies use social media in their activities of crime prevention or searching for persons responsible for committing crimes. An example of such an action is the case of Magdalena Kralka , who was wanted for managing an organized criminal group (namely pseudo-football gang of Krakow), drug trafficking and money laundering . On the Internet, and on the social networking site Facebook, there were messages from law enforcement agencies about the search for Magdalena Kralka. In addition to official

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> P. Kargul, A. Jędrzejczak, The use of social media in the work of law enforcement agencies - introductory issues regarding research on the phenomenon, [in:] „ Social media in law enforcement cooperation” edited by P. Waszkiewicz, INP PAN Publishing House, Warsaw 2021 , p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/PolicjaPL> (visited: 09/11/2021).

announcements, there were also messages in a joking form. The case of Magdalena Kralka gained media attention and there were a number of posts on the Internet about the lady. Internet users called Kralka „the most beautiful gangster”, and then a fan club on Facebook was established, which called for Kralka to be cleared of all charges. The profile has had about a thousand fans<sup>21</sup>. Debates raged on social media, on the one hand, looking for a woman as head of a gang of rich achievements of criminal acts. On the other hand, the same woman has become popular because of her beauty. Finally, the woman was brought from abroad to Poland, where criminal proceedings have been pending against her.

Information obtained from online sources are particularly valuable, the more so as it seems that social media have enormous possibilities in terms of collecting data, information, etc. However, alongside information on the Internet, there are a number of untrue messages, driven by public opinion to sensationalize. Disinformation in social media pose serious threats as they create unnecessary chaos in the work of law enforcement agencies. Due to the fact that it is sometimes a problem to distinguish information from disinformation messages appearing on the Internet, the admissibility of evidence obtained via social media in criminal proceedings is also a huge problem. The more so as the courts often pay attention to the fact that it is very easy to manipulate with the information appearing on the Internet. Strictly speaking, in the case of evidence obtained from using social media, the most important issue is its credibility, because it would seem to determine its admissibility.

## Summary

Future challenges in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the mass media oscillate around situations related primarily to the functioning of social media as a modern way of communication, where their enormous potential and usefulness have been discovered. The media allow you to quickly reach the witnesses of the incident, as well as their perpetrators. The disinformation messages have a huge impact on the behavior of the society and the perpetrators of the event, who are still at large. Along with the development of information technology in societies, cyberspace is gaining importance in all areas of human life, and in the perspective of future activities, it is precisely at this level that the possibilities of even better cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the mass media, as well as the possibility of detecting and reducing the percentage of crime, should be sought. Disinformation messages should also be reduced and the power of social media should be harnessed even more when obtaining information, but also when identifying the threats of crime, preventing and combatting criminal acts. It is necessary to raise public awareness of the dangers of information and disinformation, and to develop safe behaviors in the information space. The messages appearing on the Internet are used not only by law enforcement agencies, but also by persons committing crimes, therefore such education seems to be particularly justified.

In the future, it seems that it would be worth investing in the cooperation of law enforcement agencies with the mass media using social media, especially valuable in today's world. It is worth introducing more attractive content in terms of communication, which will also affect the better implementation of statutory obligations of law enforcement agencies

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<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/Magdalena-Kralka-Fanclub-114405756592099> (visited: 10/09/2021).

and the improvement of their image in the perception of the public, as well as building public trust. It is also necessary to conduct training among employees of public authorities in order that they can move freely in cyberspace, using it as a work tool, a source of information. It is noted that „the advancing technologization allows us to assume that there will be changes in the world of social media, even for conservative people with a conservative approach to communication.” Meanwhile, the IT development of society shows that the Internet and all the activities undertaken in it will be more and more actively ahead of traditional forms of communication.

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Sažetak

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**Korištenje informacija i dezinformacija u suradnji poljskih agencija za provođenje zakona s medijima - suvremeni problemi i buduće perspektive**

Ovaj članak pokušava predstaviti kako se informacije i dezinformacije koriste u suradnji poljskih agencija za provođenje zakona s medijima. Suradnju karakterizira analiza s gledišta medija, tijela za provođenja zakona i primatelja, to jest javnosti. Upućuje se na koristi i prijetnje tijekom informacija i dezinformacija. Primjećuje se kako društveni mediji, njihova suradnja i korištenje od strane agencija za provođenje zakona - imaju važnu ulogu u postupku pri pogledu na budućnost. U ovome se članku također govori i o važnoj problematici poput istraživačkog novinarstva (u daljnjem tekstu: „SOCMINT”). Dijelovi predstavljenog sadržaja prikazani su primjerima iz svakodnevnih prakse u svrhu boljeg razumijevanja problematike.

**Ključne riječi:** mediji, ‘četvrta snaga’, informacija, dezinformacija, provođenje zakona, izaslanik medija, istraživačko novinarstvo, društveni mediji, „SOCMINT”.