

THE COURSE AND CONDITIONS OF THE PROCESS OF SELECTING POLICE OFFICER CANDIDATES

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to show the course of the process of selecting candidates for police officers, along with the indication of the conditions of this process and the possible reasons for the current difficulties in obtaining the desired number of candidates for service in the Police forces. The main research problem took the form of a question: How does the process of selecting candidates for service in the Police proceed and what are the conditions of selection – reasons for difficulties in obtaining candidates for officers meeting specific competence requirements?

Design/methodology/approach: This article has been prepared on the basis of the analysis of legal acts regulating the process of selecting candidates for officers, data presented by the Central Statistical Office, the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union of Police Officers, information provided on the websites of the Central Police Headquarters, Voivodeship Departments and press articles published on regional and nationwide web portals.

Findings: The results of the conducted studies allowed to identify the process of recruiting candidates for service as well as the conditions of selection - reasons for difficulties in obtaining candidates for officers meeting specific competence requirements. The process of recruiting candidates for service, consisting of different stages of the recruitment process, has been constructed in such a way that it is possible to verify both the physical and mental predispositions of future officers. Such a procedure allows eliminating those candidates who have competence gaps regarding the established competency profile of the police officer.

Originality/value: The results of the conducting studies allowed the author to identify the reasons for difficulties in obtaining candidates for officers.

Keywords: selection process, candidates, police officers.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Acquiring employees with the required competency profile for the organisation is one of the key personnel processes in each establishment. The effectiveness of the process determines the further personal activity and the efficiency of the functioning of, among others, public

institutions, which also include Poland's police forces. Taking into account the scope of responsibilities and tasks performed by police officers, the criteria for selecting candidates for officers should be selected adequately to the specificity of the future service, at the same time allowing rejection of those candidates who, both mentally and physically, do not have the predisposition to perform service. The course of the process itself depends on a number of factors, including factors important both from the point of view of future officers (e.g. the amount of future salary, pension rights, working conditions), as well as by the society demanding professionalism, impeccable moral and ethical attitude, which makes the whole process a difficult undertaking. This is confirmed, for example, by statistics on the current number of vacancies in the Police throughout Poland and information on the number of officers leaving the Police service every year.

Bearing the above in mind, the aim of this article is to show the course of the process of selecting candidates for Police officers, the conditions and difficulties that are currently associated with the search for candidates for service. The main research problem took the form of a question: *How does the process of selecting candidates for service in the Police proceed and what are the conditions of selection – reasons for difficulties in obtaining candidates for officers meeting specific competence requirements?*

This article has been prepared on the basis of the analysis of legal acts regulating the process of selecting candidates for officers, data presented by the Central Statistical Office, the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union of Police Officers, information provided on the websites of the Central Police Headquarters, Voivodeship Departments and press articles published on regional and nationwide web portals.

2. Legal basis and course of the process of selecting candidates for service in the Police

The process of selecting candidates for service in the Police is carried out mainly in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 6 April 1990 *on the Police* (consolidated text Journal of Laws 2017, item 2067, as amended) and the Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 18 April 2012 *on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service in the Police* (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 432, as amended¹). Additionally, the provisions conditioning the selection of candidates for officers were included in the Act of 28 November 2014 *on medical commissions subordinate to the minister in charge*

¹ Amendment in 2013 – Ordinance of the Minister of the Internal Affairs of 17 December 2013 *amending the Regulation on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service the Police* (Journal of Laws 2013, item 1663) and 2017 – Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of 10 February 2017 *amending the Regulation on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service in the Police* (Journal of Laws 2017, item 479).

of internal affairs (consolidated text Journal of Laws 2014, item 1822, as amended), Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 19 December 2014 *on the list of diseases and disabilities, together with the categories of ability to serve in the Police, Border Guard, State Fire Brigade and Government Protection Bureau* (Journal of Laws of 24 December 2014, item 1898), decision no. 46 of the Police Commander in Chief of 9 March 2017 *on the establishment of a central register for the selection of candidates for service in the Police*, and in the Act of 5 August 2010 *on the protection of classified information* (consolidated text Journal of Laws 2018, item 412).

Pursuant to Article 25 section 1 of the Police Act: *Service in the Police may be performed by a Polish citizen of good repute who has not been convicted by a final court judgement for a fiscal offence or crime, who enjoys full public rights, has at least secondary or secondary industry education and physical and mental capacity to serve in armed formations, subject to a specific professional discipline, to which she or he is prepared to submit, and who guarantees secrecy in accordance with the requirements set out in the regulations on the protection of classified information.* In the indicated paragraph, the legislator has included basic requirements for candidates for officers that may be defined as minimum basic criteria to be met, being at the same time only the basis for further selection of candidates for officers.

The selection procedure is detailed out in the Ordinance of 2012, which regulates the following aspects:

- the scope and manner of publishing information on planned recruitment procedures,
- the procedure and manner of conducting the recruitment procedure and its termination,
- specimens of the documents required to be submitted by candidates,
- thematic scope of the knowledge test, how to conduct tests verifying the mental and physical fitness of candidates for officers,
- the way in which candidates are assessed and their preferences in terms of their level of education or skills,
- the arrangements for the candidate's reintegration into the selection procedure,
- the range of information to be made public with regard to the results of the qualification procedure (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 432, as amended).

Each recruitment process begins with the determination of the demand for candidates for work. The body competent for both management and recruitment proceedings is the Police Commander in Chief or the Voivodeship (Capital) Police Commander in Chief. The planned dates of admissions to the Police and the minimum number of persons to be admitted in a given calendar year are set by the Police Commander in Chief (the dates of admissions are set at least once a year). Such information is made public by publishing it on the Central Police Headquarters website and the Central Police Headquarters Public Information Bulletin (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 432, as amended, §6, section 1). In 2018, it is planned to admit 5869 officers to the ranks of the Police (<http://praca.policja.pl/>, 11.07.2018). The Police Commander

in Chief also defines the limits of admissions in individual voivodeships. For example, in Łódź Voivodeship, in 2018, it is planned to accept 100 officers on 2 July, 120 on 4 September, 30 on 7 November and 100 on 27 December² and in 2018, in Lower Silesia Voivodeship the limit of admissions was set at the level of 463 candidates (Table 1).

Table 1.

Admission limits in Lower Silesia in 2018

Date	Admission limits
20 March 2018	42 persons
29 March 2018	10 persons
21 May 2018	15 persons
02 July 2018	100 persons
24 September 2018	130 persons
27 December 2018	166 persons

Source: http://www.dolnoslaska.policja.gov.pl/pl/praca_in_police/service_in_police/service_in_police, 08.08.2018.

Placing information on admission limits begins the process of recruitment to the Police, because, on this basis, information is placed on the Central Police Headquarters website and on the websites of individual voivodeship, powiat, city and district departments in the tab "Working for the Police (Praca w Policji)". Recruitment announcements also appear in individual departments and are transferred to labour offices in order to reach a wider group of potential candidates for officers.

In accordance with Article 7 of the Regulation, the qualification procedure may be conducted by:

- The Police Commander in Chief in relation to candidates for members of the aviation personnel with aviation privileges in a given field of expertise and in relation to officers dismissed from service before the lapse of 3 years from their dismissal, if they acquired basic professional qualifications in the course of their service;
- the Voivodeship (Capital) Commander in Chief of the Police in relation to candidates applying for admission in the voivodeship department or in units within the territory of a given voivodeship (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 432, as amended, §7).

The vacancy notice for police service must contain all the elements specified in the Ordinance and is shown in Figure 1.

² Based on the current analysis of fluctuations in police personnel, the Police Commander in Chief has the possibility to modify the dates of admissions to service.

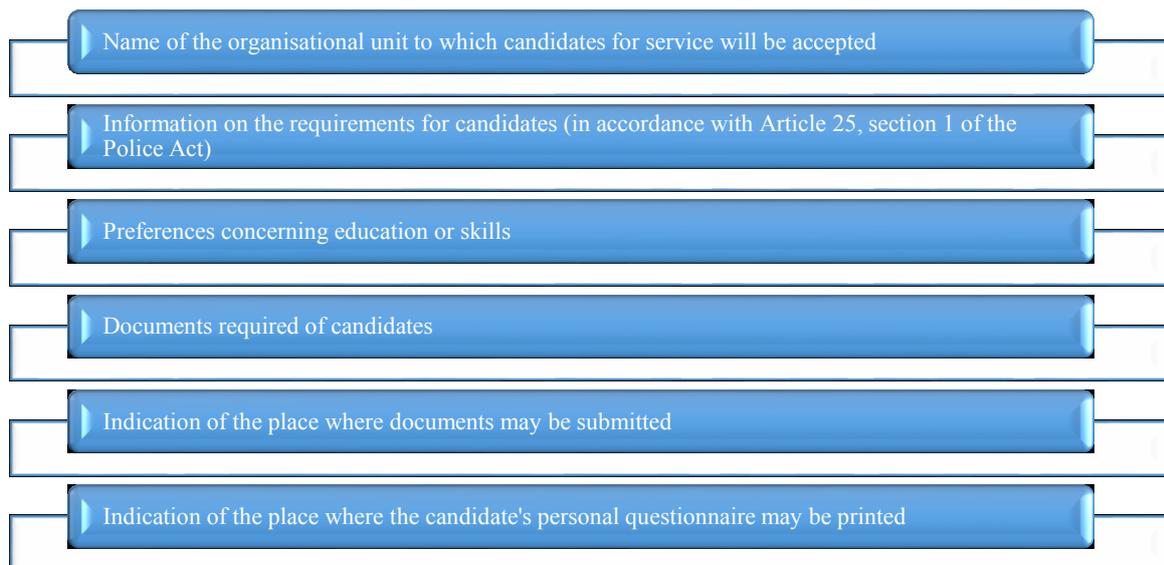


Figure 1. *Elements of the recruitment notice for service in the Police.* Source: prepared on the basis of §6 section 2 of the Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 18 April 2012 *on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service in the Police* (Journal of Laws, item 432, as amended).

According to the information provided in Appendix 2 to the Ordinance, the following persons will be preferred to join the ranks of the Police:

- with higher education background (master's degree or equivalent) with a field of study useful for service in the Police: law, economics, administration, national security or internal security; (a candidate receives 8 points),
- with higher education (master's degree or equivalent) in a field other than mentioned above; (a candidate receives 6 points),
- higher education (bachelor's degree, engineer); (a candidate receives 4 points),
- with secondary education (completion of a general secondary school or technical school in a classroom where subjects related to the functioning of the police were taught, for which curricula were developed in the school included in the school curriculum set) (<http://www.policja.waw.pl/pl/praca-w-policji/nabor-2018/47>, Informacja-o-naborze.html, 12.07.2018) (a candidate receives 4 points).

Whereas, the preferences in terms of education include:

- possession of the title of rescuer or medical rescuer,
- possession of qualifications as a martial arts instructor, sports shooting, water rescue, diving and motorboat sports,
- a lifeguard certificate, a certificate in diving or underwater work and a certificate to drive a motor boat,
- holding 'A' or 'C' category driving licence (<http://www.policja.waw.pl/pl/praca-w-policji/nabor-2018/47>, Informacja-o-naborze.html, 12.07.2018).

Candidates applying for admission to service during the recruitment procedure in the Police are required to submit the following documents:

- applications for admission to service addressed to a locally competent Voivodeship Police Commander in Chief,
- a personal questionnaire,
- photocopies of documents confirming education and professional qualifications,
- photocopies of certificates of employment or service,
- photocopies of a military service book and identity card,
- statement of consent to the processing of personal data and information clause,
- and photocopies of other required documents resulting from separate regulations (http://www.dolnoslaska.policja.gov.pl/pl/praca_w_policji/sluzba_w_policji/sluzba_w_policji, 08.08.2018).

Additionally, each candidate is obliged to submit a Personal Security Questionnaire during the qualification procedure (place and date of submission of the questionnaire is indicated during the procedure).

According to the Ordinance, the superior responsible for the selection procedure may decide to temporarily suspend the reception of documents from candidates, but this decision must be published on the relevant websites and the period for which the reception of documents from candidates is suspended.

Further steps in the selection procedure will involve assigning an identification number to a candidate³, checking that the documents submitted are complete and verifying the accuracy of the information contained in the documents by examining the records, registers and available files⁴. Concealing the truth or providing false data shall be tantamount to abandoning further proceedings. The identification number given to the candidate shall be used in the subsequent procedure, including the announcement of the results of the completed recruitment procedure, which, in accordance with the Ordinance, shall be made public on the website and in the Public Information Bulletin⁵.

The further two stages of the qualification procedure are conducted in Police schools in Katowice, Piła, Szczytno, Słupsk and Legionowo. The Candidate receives the information at which school and on what day the qualification procedure will be carried out. The first check

³ Identification number – ID CRDK. CRDK-II – Centralny Rejestr Doboru Kandydatów (Central Candidate Selection Register) II is a subsystem of the Police Service Support System. Its purpose is to ensure efficient performance of tasks during the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for employment in the Police. The CRDK-II was established on the basis of Decision No. 46 of the Police Commander in Chief of 9 March 2017 *on the establishment of a central register for the selection of candidates for service in the Police* (Journal of Laws KGP of 16 March 2017, item 15).

⁴ Police information systems, the National Criminal Register and the Common Electronic System of Population Registration.

⁵ An example of ranking lists can be found on the Lublin Voivodeship Police Department (KWP) website: <http://www.lubelska.policja.gov.pl/lub/praca-w-policji/listy-rankingowe/13286,Listy-rankingowe.html>, 17.07.2018.

includes a knowledge test. The test consists of 40 questions concerning the functioning of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities and public safety. The questions are closed questions with disjunctive cafeteria (one correct answer). Questions for the test are developed by the Police Academy in Szczytno with the use of questions put forward by other schools. Candidates can consult the sample database at <https://www.wspol.edu.pl/g/dobor-do-policji>. Candidates can score 40 points in the test. The test is a ranking test, which means that there is no set limit of points necessary to pass it (the test is also not fully treated as a stage of strict selection procedure, due to the lack of a threshold for its passability).

The next stage of the qualification procedure, carried out on the same day, is the physical fitness test. Contrary to the knowledge test, this test is a selection test, which means that a person who does not complete the obstacle course within 1 minute 41 seconds, and therefore does not obtain at least 43 out of 60 points, does not proceed to further selection stages. Detailed information on the scope and conduct of the physical fitness test and the evaluation of its results is contained in Appendix 2 of the Ordinance *on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service in the Police*. The amendment to the Ordinance of 2012 was introduced, among others, on 30 December 2013 and concerned, among other things, the modification of the number of points awarded in the qualification procedure (instead of 40 points, 60 points that could be obtained during the physical fitness test were introduced). Failure to score 43 points in the test is tantamount to the end of the procedure. Only after 6 months can a candidate re-submit a complete set of documents and attempt to pass the test again.

Obtaining 43 points from the physical fitness test is the basis for participation in the further part of the recruitment procedure, including a psychological test. As in the case of the physical fitness test, the candidate can obtain a maximum of 60 points. During the test, the candidate's intellectual aptitude, social behaviour, stability and attitude at work are verified (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 432, as amended, §29.1). The test is carried out with the use of a computer, and the MultiSelect psychological examination is carried out e.g. in the Department of Psychologists located in the Department of Police Prevention in Katowice.

On the basis of the obtained results of the test, an interview is then conducted concerning the candidate's experience, predispositions for service and attitudes. The interview ends with a summary of both the results of the survey and the discussion. On the basis of the summary (test results) the psychologist prepares a psychological assessment. A positive assessment is tantamount to obtaining a positive result and moving on to the next stage. However, not every candidate is assessed positively. The validity of the psychological test covers a period of one year, which means that a candidate who has not passed the test can only re-take it after this period of time.

The next step in the selection process is an interview, the duration of which is set at no more than 30 minutes. The interview is conducted in front of a team of two to four people. The team consists of a representative of the organisational unit for the selection of candidates for the

service, as well as a policeman of the preventive service. The team is appointed by the superior in charge of the recruitment procedure (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1898, §12, section 4).

During the interview, both competence and personality criteria are verified, including: ability to communicate effectively, motivation to serve in the Police, social basis for people and the ability to present oneself. The Ordinance, in §31 section 1, indicates the number of points that can be obtained for meeting a given criterion. In total, a candidate at this stage of the qualification procedure may obtain 60 points. The results of the interview are assessed individually by each of the members of the team on the sheet constituting Appendix No. 5 to the Ordinance on the recruitment procedure in the Police. Individual assessment is the basis for determining the final assessment, which is drawn up on the summary evaluation sheet of a candidate for service (the elements of the sheet are specified in Appendix No. 6 to the Regulation). The final grade is the arithmetic mean of the partial grades, calculated assuming the accuracy of two decimal places (§33, section 1). A positive result in an interview is at least 36 points.

The interview does not end the recruitment procedure. The final stage of the interview is a specialist medical examination of candidates. The examinations are carried out in accordance with the Act of 28 November 2014 *on medical commissions subordinate to the minister in charge of internal affairs* (consolidated text Journal of Laws, item 481, as amended) by district medical commissions, which verify the health condition of candidates for officers within the scope specified in the Ordinance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 19 December 2014 *on the list of diseases and disabilities, together with the categories of ability to serve in the Police, Border Guard, State Fire Brigade and Government Protection Bureau* (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1898). The test ends with the candidate being included in one of the two categories of ability to serve:

- category Z "fit", which means that the candidate's state of health does not raise any objections or that the diseases or deficiencies identified do not constitute an obstacle to performing service,
- category N "unfit", which means that the diseases or handicaps found prevent her or him from performing duties (consolidated text Journal of Laws of 2014, item 481, as amended, article 5, section 1).

The decision of the District Medical Commission may be appealed against within 14 days from the date of receipt of the decision. The appeal is directed to the Central Medical Commission through the district commission that issued the ruling.

The final stage of the selection procedure is to draw up a list of candidates on the basis of the points obtained by them. Approval of the list of candidates ends the recruitment procedure.

In conclusion, during the entire recruitment procedure a candidate for a Police officer may obtain a maximum of 220 points (Figure 2). The points for education and preferred skills are also added to this scoring⁶.

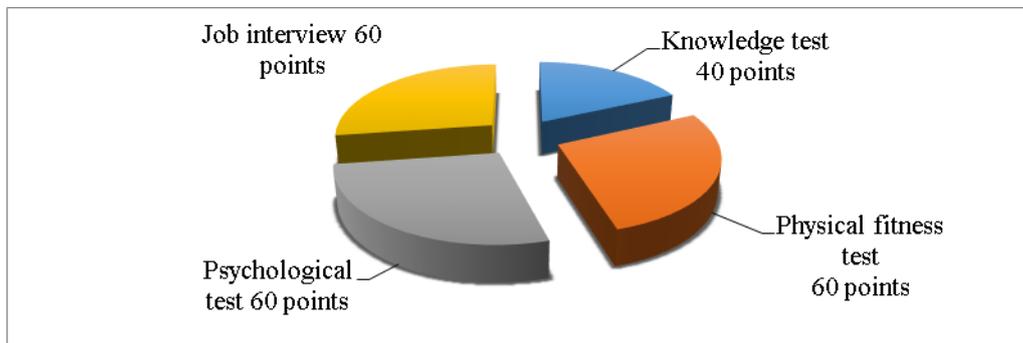


Figure 2. Scope of points awarded in the recruitment process to the Police⁷. Source: prepared based on the Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 18 April 2012 *on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service in the Police* (Journal of Laws, item 432, as amended).

Ranking lists published on the websites of the departments and in the Public Information Bulletins contain only the identification number of the candidate for the service (from the Central Candidate Selection Register CRDK) and the total number of points obtained by the candidate⁸. Placing a candidate on the ranking list is not tantamount to his admission to the service. In the course of each procedure, admission limits are set, which means that a candidate who has not been admitted to the service due to the limit may be admitted at a later date, without having to go through the selection procedure again. The only reservation is the expiry of the period of validity of psychological examinations and interviews. In both cases, the results of the selection procedure shall be valid for one year from the time of the examination or interview.

In conclusion, the process of selecting candidates for officers consists of a number of stages of the recruitment procedure, starting from the announcement of information about the conducted recruitment, and ending with the publication of ranking lists, which, in accordance with Article 25, section 6 of the Act of 6 April 1990 *on the Police*, constitute public information. Individual stages of the selection process cause greater or lesser difficulties for candidates, which unequivocally proves that not every candidate has sufficient psychological predispositions and physical for service in the Police.

⁶ Points on account of education and preferred skills are awarded only once within a given category - §37 section 2 of the Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs of 18 April 2012 2 on the recruitment procedure in relation to candidates applying for admission to service in the Police (Journal of Laws, item 432, as amended).

⁷ Points awarded for education and preferred skills not included.

⁸ The candidate agrees to the processing of personal data by filling in part B of the candidate's personal questionnaire for service in the Police, confirming it with his/her own signature.

3. Results of the recruitment procedure for the Police – analysis of data

The results of the recruitment procedure to the Police are given on the websites of particular departments and in the Public Information Bulletins. Table 2 presents the exemplary results of the recruitment procedure – ranking lists in Lublin Voivodeship, together with an indication of the number of candidates who successfully completed the recruitment process, the number of points obtained and admission limits. The data cover the years 2015-2018.

Table 2.

Results of the recruitment procedure for the Police in Lublin Voivodeship in 2015-2018⁹

Date of closure of the proceedings	Number of candidates on the list	Admission limits	Candidate's points bracket	Minimum number of points in relation to the limit of vacancies
2015.03.17	47	40	204-186	188
2015.06.16	23	10	202-185	193
2015.09.21	28	14	203-180	191
2015.12.17	41	30	201-186	188
2016.02.23	108	98	207-171	173
2016.03.24	32	17	201-171	177
2016.05.17	63	31	201-170	179
2016.10.26	89	32	199-170	185
2016.12.14	79	49	198-170	178
2017.02.14	34	15	206-170	179
2017.05.23 ¹⁰	37	25	194-170	175
2017.08.02	47	10	203-170	187
2017.10.17	49	24	195-170	177
2017.12.21	122	111	195-131	149
2018.03.09	47	25	195-131	159
2018.04.06	29	15	195-131	158
2018.06.18	69	35	195-131	164

Source: own elaboration based on ranking lists of candidates for the Police published on the website <http://www.lubelska.policja.gov.pl/lub/praca-w-policji/listy-rankingowe/13286,Listy-rankingowe.html>, 07.08.2018.

From 2015 to June 2018, 944 people were placed on the ranking lists, with the admissions limit set at 581 candidates. Candidates who successfully completed the recruitment procedure for the Police placed on the list received from 131 to 207 points. The number of points obtained by the candidates who fit within the list limitations differentiated in the recent years, the values in Lublin Voivodeship varied from 149 to 193 points (fig. 3).

⁹ Last data from June 2018 (as at 07.08.2018).

¹⁰ On the website of the Voivodeship Department in Lublin, the planned date of acceptance and not the completion of the qualification procedure is given.

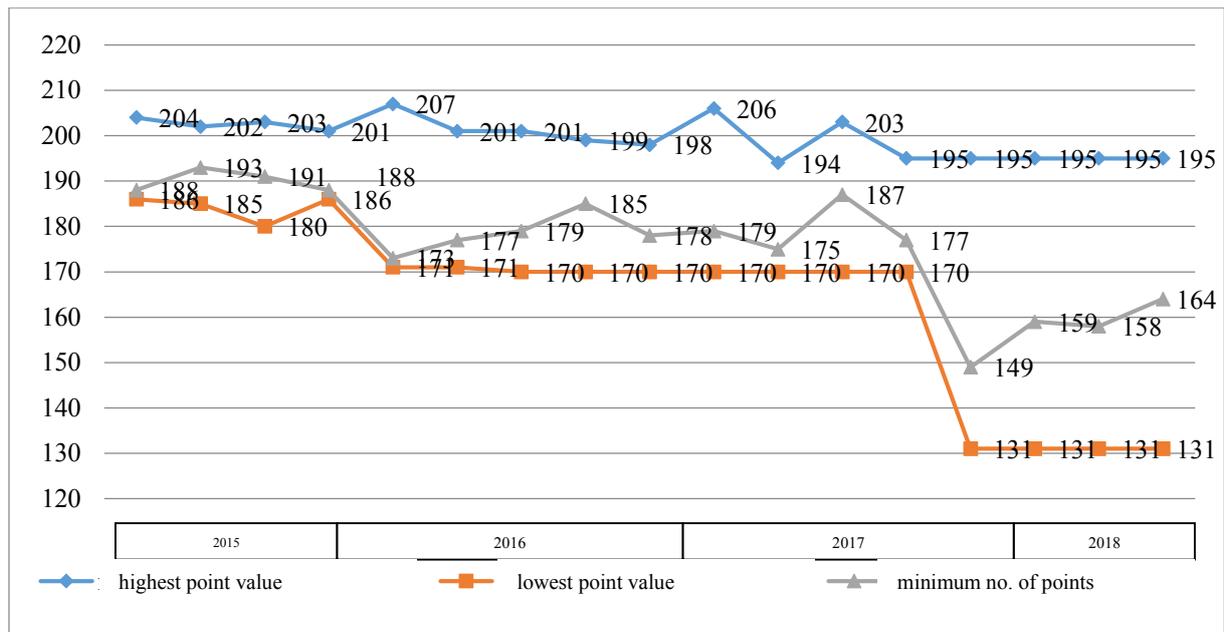


Figure 3. Number of points obtained by candidates for officers in the years 2015-2018, together with the point limit for admission to service in a given procedure. Source: own elaboration based on ranking lists of candidates for the Police published on the website <http://www.lubelska.policja.gov.pl/lub/praca-w-policji/listy-rankingowe/13286,Listy-rankingowe.html>, 07.08.2018.

Upon analysing figure 3, it can be seen that from the end of 2017, in Lublin Voivodeship, candidates who received less than 170 points in the recruitment procedure were accepted to service. The difference between the highest point limit for admission to service and the lowest in 2015-2018 was 38 points, and candidates may obtain 40 points in the knowledge test. The decrease in the number of points obtained in the recruitment procedure can be explained, among other things, by the difficulty of recruiting candidates for service in the Police, i.e. persons with a specific competence profile.

4. Difficulties in selecting candidates for service in the Police

As at 1 January 2018, the Polish Police services employed 98737 officers, with 103309 full-time police officers. The number of vacancies at the beginning of January was 4621. In 2017, 4151 officers were recruited and 5364 policemen were dismissed. Data concerning admissions and dismissals from service in the first quarter of 2018 are presented in Table 3, with a division into garrisons (Voivodeship and Capital Departments and police schools from Police Academy in Szczytno).

Table 3.

Information on admissions/releases from service and vacancies in the Police in the first quarter of 2018

Garrison (Voivodeship Police Department [KWP]/Capital City Police Department [KSP])	In service in the first quarter of 2018*	Dismissal from service in the first quarter of 2018	Vacancy as of 1 April 2018
Lower Silesia (KWP in Wrocław)	55	163	557
Kuyavian-Pomeranian (KWP in Bydgoszcz)	21	83	180
Lublin (KWP in Lublin)	25	77	128
Lubusz (KWP in Gorzów Wielkopolski)	14	51	199
Łódź (WKP in Łódź)	23	119	503
Lesser Poland (KWP in Kraków)	81	128	366
Mazovian (KWP in Radom)	35	74	232
Opole (KWP in Opole)	33	77	105
Sub-Carpathian (KWP in Rzeszów)	26	71	72
Podlasie (KWP in Białystok)	61	70	196
Pomeranian (KWP in Gdańsk)	37	97	336
Silesia (KWP in Katowice)	20	212	487
Holy Cross (KWP in Kielce)	30	47	61
Warmian-Masurian (KWP in Olsztyn)	20	39	150
Greater Poland (KWP in Poznań)	16	125	455
West Pomeranian (KWP in Szczecin)	53	82	378
Capital City Police Department	73	108	855
Total KWP/KSP	623	1623	5260
police schools with the Police Academy in Szczytno	-	14	69
Total	623	1637	5329

* In accordance with Article 25, section 4 of the Police Act (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 153, item 259, as amended) the recruitment procedure for service in the Police is managed and conducted by the Police Commander in Chief or the Voivodeship (Capital) Police Commander in Chief, so that no recruitment procedure is conducted in the police training units.

Source: <http://nszpzp.wroclaw.pl/index.php/2018/06/16/znowu-nas-mniej-6283-wakaty-na-1-czerwca-dolnoslaskie-108/>, 12.07.2018.

The analysis of the data presented in Table 3. shows that the largest number of vacancies in the Police was recorded in the first quarter in the Capital City Police Department – 855 and in the Lower Silesia garrison – 577. On the other hand, the least vacant positions were registered as in the Holy Cross garrison – 61 and Sub-Carpathian garrison – 72. In the first quarter of 2018, 623 persons were recruited to service, at the same time 1637 officers were dismissed, which resulted in the total number of vacant positions in the Police amounting to 5329. However, this is not the largest number of vacancies in the last 10 years, as shown in figure 4.

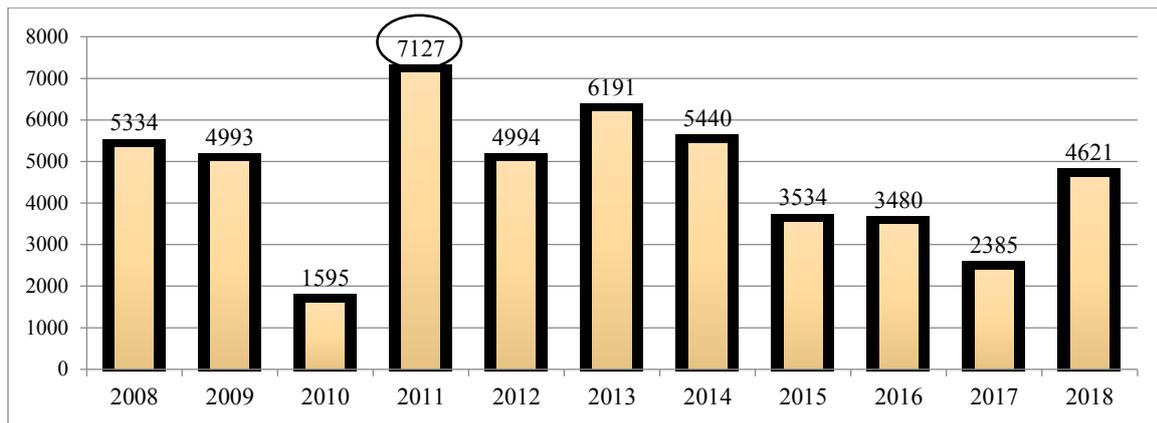


Figure 4. *Vacancies in the Police in 2008-2018.* Source: compilation based on <http://www.info.policja.pl/inf/organizacja/stan-zatrudnienia/120032,Stan-zat-zatronienia-na-dzien-1-st-January-2018-year.html>, 08.08.2018.

The highest number of vacancies in the Polish Police during the last 10 years was recorded in 2011. At that time there were 7127 officers in the Police. A better situation occurred in the following years, with the lowest number of vacancies recorded in 2010 – 1595 and 2017 – 2385.

For a long time now, the media have been informing about the difficulties in recruiting candidates for service in the Police, the whole situation is also fuelled by protests of police officers related to claims for an increase in remuneration, which additionally stimulates discussion about the attractiveness of service in the Police. Examples of headlines of articles dealing with the situation in the Polish Police are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Headings of articles about the situation in the Polish Police

Source	Heading
www.tvp.info	<i>W Polsce brakuje policjantów (Not enough Police officers in Poland). Problemem system rekrutacji (Recruitment system is a problem)</i>
http://www.dziennikzachodni.pl	<i>Wakaty w policji 2018 (Vacancies in the Police as of 2018). W całym kraju brakuje 5 tysięcy 260 policjantów (Poland short of 5260 policemen)</i>
http://nszpzp.wroclaw.pl	<i>Takiej liczby wakatów jeszcze w Policji nie było! (Police records an all time high in vacancies!)</i>
http://wyborcza.pl	<i>Problem policji (Problem of the Police). Doświadczeni funkcjonariusze odchodzą, nowych jak na lekarstwo (Experienced officers leave, the new ones reluctant to join)</i>
http://www.pomorska.pl	<i>Nikt nie chce pracować w policji na Dolnym Śląsku (Nobody wants to work in Lower Silesia Police) "Niskie pensje, wielkie wymagania (Low salaries, high expectations"</i>

Source: compilation based on the given websites.

Difficulty in selecting candidates for service in the Police may be conditioned by many factors. One of the basic factors rarely discussed by the media in the context of a shortage of officers is the fact that the unemployment rate in Poland has fallen. According to the data from the Central Statistical Office, in June, the registered unemployment rate in Poland amounted to 5.9%, which, in comparison to previous years (CSO data since 1990), is the lowest value. Comparing the unemployment rate in a given voivodeship with the number of vacancies in particular garrisons, it can be noticed that in the case of Lower Silesia Voivodeship, Silesia

Voivodeship and the capital city of Warsaw, the low level of unemployment may have a significant impact on the difficulty in attracting candidates for officers (figure 5).

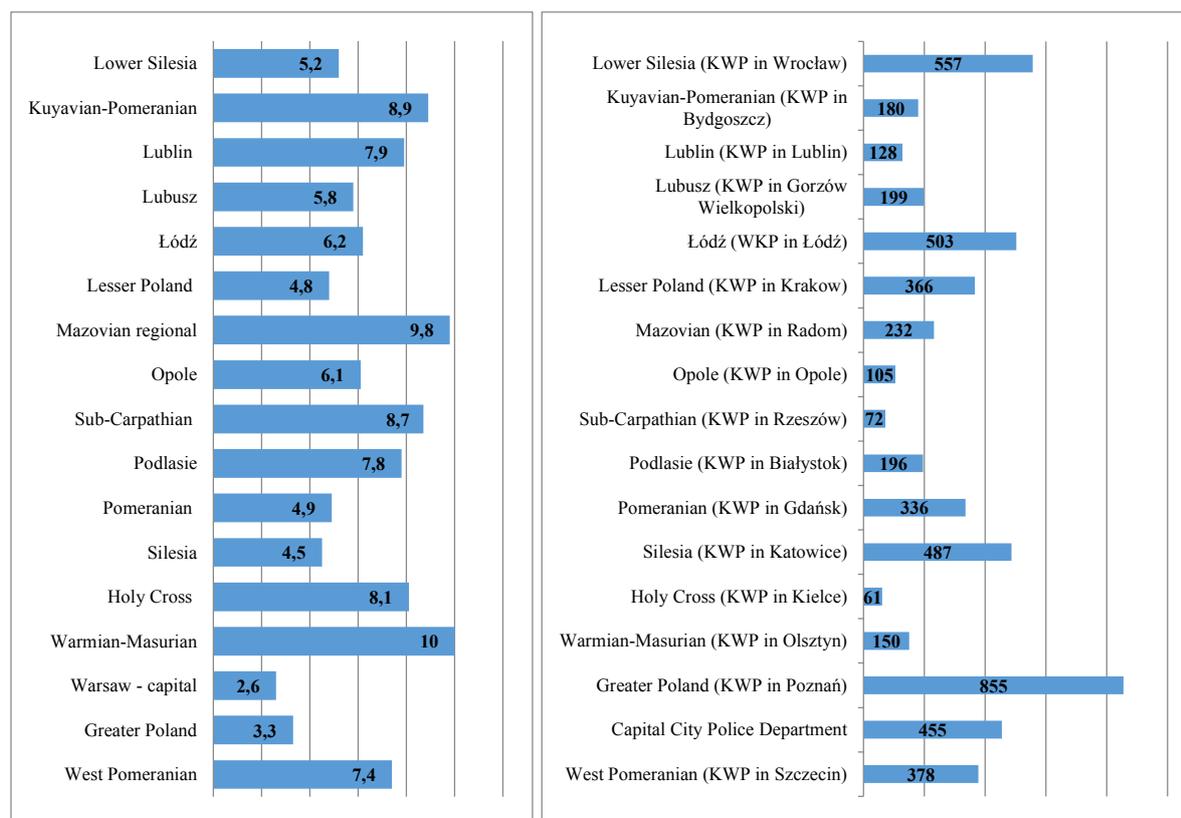


Figure 5. Registered unemployment rate as at the end of June 2018 and the number of vacancies in the Police as of the end of the first quarter of 2018. Source: <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/bezrobocie-rejestrowane/bezrobotni-zarejestrowani-i-stopa-bezrobocia-stan-w-koncu-czerwca-2018-r-,2,71.html>, 09.08.2018 and <http://nszpzp.wroclaw.pl/index.php/2018/06/16/znovu-nas-mniej-6283-wakaty-na-1-czerwca-dolnoslaskie-108/>, 12.07.2018.

The lowest unemployment rate recorded in Warsaw oscillating at the level of 2.6% is mainly related to the situation on the labour market in the capital city. An important factor is the amount of remuneration that can be obtained in Warsaw. According to Sedlak&Sedlak's report "Remuneration in Warsaw in 2017", the median remuneration amounted to PLN 5645 gross, with 25% of the respondents earning more than 8516 and 25% less than PLN 4000 (Jurczak, 09.08.2018). Comparing the median of remuneration to the salary received by officers during the basic course, the difference is significant. According to the information provided on the website of the Central Police Headquarters *A student (1st ranking group), i.e. an officer who attends a stationary basic training, earns an average of PLN 1939 net per month – he or she is provided with accommodation and meals for the duration of the course. After completion of the training, the student is appointed a policeman of 2nd ranking group, and his or her earnings increase on average by over PLN 890 to PLN 2,830* (Zarobki Policjantów 2017 r., 09.08.2018). The amount of the offered remuneration, despite receiving the so-called capital city bonus, is not attractive in the capital city, which is additionally related to the mode of work of officers, which is of a shift nature, as well as the need to perform service during holidays and at night,

which is not additionally paid, contrary to the situation of e.g. an employee employed in a private company on a contract of employment.

Considering the situation in Lower Silesia and Silesia Voivodeships, the attractiveness of the German labour market is an important factor that may have an impact on the difficulties in obtaining candidates for the police. Poles who speak German can apply for a job in the German Police. For example, to become an officer at the Brandenburg one needs to graduate from the Police Academy in Oranienburg (2.5 years of vocational training or 3 years of studies) (AMB, 09.08.2018). In the course of their studies, students receive a monthly salary of EUR 1200, which is about PLN 5110, i.e. twice as much as the rate offered to the students in Poland. Qualification tests for the German police include an intelligence test, a dictation test, a German language test, a sports test and a medical examination.

The difficult personnel situation in the Police is not only related to the lack of volunteers, but also to the level of competence requirements for future officers. According to the statements of the Secretary of State in the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Jarosław Zieliński, during the meeting of the Committee on Administration and Interior of 5 June 2018: *In 2014, we had an average of 7.7 candidates per one seat in the Police, in 2015 – 7.52, in 2016, which was a good year of admissions to the Police – 4.43 and in 2017 – 4,1. And there were years when this rate of the number of applicants per one place was even higher* (Record of the meeting..., 09.08.2018). However, not all persons willing to serve in the Police undergo a positive qualification procedure. Candidates for service in the Police are particularly afraid of a psychological test, which for many years has been a significant difficulty for candidates. This is confirmed by the words of J. Zieliński: *I will only mention that among the reasons for the negative results of the qualification procedure, the psychological test was one of the main ones. For example, in 2014, only 28.86% of those taking part in the qualification procedure passed a psychological test, in 2015 – 30.14%, 2016 – 31.36%, in 2017 – 34,32%. After changing the test, which was quite widely criticised, in 2018, in the first five months of this year, until 31 May, 52.88% of those taking part in the qualification procedure achieved a positive result* (Record of the meeting..., 09.08.2018). The reliability of the remaining stages of the qualification procedure (physical fitness test and medical examinations) is presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Passability of individual stages of the recruitment process to the Police

Stage of proceedings	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Physical fitness test	74%	80%	78.5%	78.5%	75.85%
Medical commissions	77%	82%	86%	85%	84.79%

Source: Study based on the record of the meeting of the Committee on Administration and Home Affairs No. 156 of 05.06.2018. Retrieved from <http://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm8.nsf/biuletyn.xsp?documentId=2FA0ED6E133AE2D5C12582AC004A23C9>, 09.08.2018.

Another factor influencing the difficulty in recruiting candidates for service in the Police is the working atmosphere itself, which is shaped both by private officers, as well as their superiors. Both on the websites of police officers' trade unions, as well as in local newspapers and Internet portals, reports on the pathology of the police, including the so-called "situation around mobbing", are published (Rzadkiwicz, Obszerny, Kuźmiuk, 10.08.2018) or about behaviors that meet the prerequisites of mobbing (example <http://www.podlasie24.pl/garwolin/region/byly-naczelnik-dobrowolnie-poddal-sie-karze-2508b.html>, 10.08.2018). This is not conducive to building the image of the Police as a good employer, despite all the actions taken to encourage potential candidates to serve. Advertising spots, billboards or advertisements in the local press, often placed by the candidates themselves are confronted with a more reliable source of information – with the opinions of officers themselves published on Internet forums, in newspapers or in private conversations. The so-called mirror image in confrontation with the real image makes it possible to see those aspects of the service which may significantly discourage people from taking up employment in the Police, which are also difficult conditions of service related to emotional tension resulting from organisational changes, contact with criminal and pathological environment, everyday risk to life and health, which is confirmed by statistics: *every day there are on average 5-6 active assaults on an officer. This number has been growing slightly over the last few years. Last year, there were 2122 cases of active assaults on a policeman. (...) The largest number of incidents (1677) ended only with an attempt by the aggressor and the officers were leaving without injury, but there were also more than 450 cases when the attack resulted in slight (448) or severe (7) bodily injury. The most active assaults on a policeman took place in garrisons: 304 in the capital city, 261 in Greater Poland and 260 in Łódź, the least in Lesser Poland and Opolskie Voivodeships. Compared to the years 2015 and 2016, these numbers slightly (by 1.4%), but still, increased* (Sitek, 10.08.2018). An additional factor hindering the service is the multitude of duties, the need to take responsibility for one's own actions, which are burdened with legal, criminal and disciplinary consequences (in 2017, 2269 proceedings were instituted, out of which 2106 were finally concluded, a total of 788 disciplinary penalties were imposed on 772 people (Szewioła, 14.08.2018)), which translates into family relations and mental health of officers. Stress in the service may be additionally exacerbated by the lack of appreciation of an officer's work, both by superiors and the greater society.

To sum up, there are many factors influencing the difficulties related to obtaining valuable candidates for service in the Police. Financial issues, working conditions and atmosphere, or difficulties related to the recruitment process itself are only selected aspects that determine the current number of vacancies in the Polish Police.

5. Summary

In conclusion, service in the Polish Police is a job that requires dedication, devotion and passion. The process of recruiting candidates for service, consisting of different stages of the recruitment process, has been constructed in such a way that it is possible to verify both the physical and mental predispositions of future officers. Such a procedure allows eliminating those candidates who have competence gaps regarding the established competency profile of the police officer.

Any activities aimed at attracting candidates for service will not be fully effective if the mirror image of the Police differs from the real image. Obtaining candidates for service alone should not be an end in itself. From the point of view of personnel policy, a more important issue is the proper location of an officer in the police structures, i.e. selection of a position in which he/she will be able to use his/her competences. An additional key aspect is to ensure decent working and living conditions for police officers, which is not possible without considering the work atmosphere and thus the mental health of officers.

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