

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CIVIL ASSOCIATIONS IN PROMOTING HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR DEFENCE TASKS

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## Introduction

It is generally known that realisation of defensive tasks by the community requires co-operation with public institutions, mainly the army and the police as well as voluntary associations whose defensive service is defined by status. In Poland, if we consider statutory goals, namely the range of activity and members' age, we can differentiate the following groups of such associations:

1. Youth associations (5 main organisations gathering about 470 000 members),
2. Paramilitary associations (15 organisations gathering over 2 million members)
3. Associations of ex regular soldiers and reserve soldiers (10 organisations, 59 members and 5 combatant organisations - over 600 000 members),
4. Environmental, regional, creative etc. associations (this group includes the Military Section of the Polish Scientific Physical Education Association and several foundations acting for specified environments).

The aim of our paper on the one hand is general characterisation of the association activity in promoting health and physical activity among polish citizens (but of course in defence preparation context) on the other hand- approaching creative and practice functions of the Military Section of the Polish Scientific Physical Education Association.

## General Characteristics of the Activity of the Above Mentioned Association

The activity of the majority of associations - particularly youth and paramilitary associations - is strictly practical as they deal with preliminary preparation of young people for defensive tasks and for the tasks realised by the structures of Territorial and Civil Defence (protection of civil population in case of life threatening, disasters and natural calamities).

Promoting sports connected with defence (runs for orienting, shooting, parachuting and other aviation sports) as well as forms of survival activities ( climbing, hunting, self-defence activities, swimming, scuba diving, etc.) is a very important field of activity of these associations. Training in the above mentioned disciplines is carried out all over the country. We organise competition in most of those disciplines. Yearly regional and national championships in defensive sports are crowning achievements of the post-defensive educational activity of these associations. Special steeplechase tracks, combined with shooting and first aid as well as general life-saving are of particular interest and prestige among youth.

The importance of the activity of Voluntary Ambulance Service was proved during the days of flood, which affected the southern and western part of Poland. There is a lot of merit in the activity of the members of Mountain Voluntary Ambulance Service - in life saving and Voluntary Fire Brigade - in life and property saving.

Apart from acquiring specific defensive skills and their practical application, the associations mainly deal with the development of post-defensive consciousness of our community. It is realised by environmental lectures, training, presentations, editorial activity, co-operation with mass media etc.

#### Activity of the Military Section of the Polish Scientific Physical Education Association

As a matter of fact, the Military Section of the Polish Scientific Physical Education Association is the only independent scientific association in Poland, dealing with the application of physical education means and sport in defensive education of individuals and the community. The section was formed in January 1995 and now has 34 active members. It is located at Polish Air Force Institute of Aviation Medicine in Warsaw. It is headed by the Board consisting of 6 persons. The Section consists of:

- 22 Polish Army officers including 3 professors (MD, Ph.D.) and 5 doctors (different specialities);
- 4 reserve officers including 1 professor (MD, Ph.D.) and 1 doctor (Ph.D.);
- 2 prison service officers;
- 6 civil persons including 1 professor (Ph.D.) and 1 doctor (Ph.D.).

The organisation is interdisciplinary in character, although it mainly associates the specialists in sport and physical education. The rest of specialists, namely physicians and specialists in psychology, pedagogy, sociology as well as lawyers and journalists have a common goal: widespreading the newest theoretical and practical achievements among militaries and in other units of Public Service (police, border guard, prison service, etc.) in the field of sport in general, the exchange of experiences and promotion of systemic solutions concerning health education, physical rehabilitation and sports medicine.

Considering the environment included in the Section's activity, we are planning to realise the three main tasks:

- synthesis of experience of the army, police, fire brigade, prison service and other national service units in the application of physical education and sport for defensive preparation of soldiers and officers;
- widespreading original views and research results concerning the opportunity to utilise scientific achievements in physical education and sport, as well as practical aspects of physical education and fight in defensive preparation of men.
- starting complementary research and implementation activity of social subjects, responsible for defensive preparation of citizens.

The so far most important achievements of the Section are:

1. Organising 2 domestic scientific conferences on:

- The Role of Physical Education in Defensive Education of the Community (Warsaw, May 24 1996);

1. - Directed Defensive Preparation -Application of Military Experience in Psychophysical Training of Defensive Formation Officers (Kalisz, Centre of Prison Service Training, September 3-5 1997). [The Conference was combined with panel group meetings, during which the new tests serving the evaluation of defensive training were presented together with „dynamic shooting”, the activity of anti-terrorist police team, and simulated conflict in prison -as the methods of training the officers in solving problems of extreme difficulty].

2. Publishing 2 volumes of own papers:

- Vol. I - Collective paper „The Role of Physical Education in Defensive Education of the Community”(1996);

- Vol. II - monograph - R.M. Kalina „, Combat Sports and Self-Defence Training in Defensive Education of Youth”(1997).

Furthermore, a lot of Section members either organised conferences and scientific symposia in the past or still organise them. The subject matter of these conferences and symposia concerns promoting health and physical activity, and defensive education. One example of this is a series of conferences on the association of physical education with social communication in the context of defensive preparation (using other words - optimal functioning in defensive fight), organised by Tadeusz Kościuszko Officers Training School in Wrocław.

The research projects are also worth noticing. These include:

-utilising judo and other fights in psychophysical training of military pilots;

- survival training of military pilots and youth;

- physiological aspects of utilising ballistic covers;

- application of safe fall and collision avoiding training in physical rehabilitation and kinesioprohylaxis.

Finally, the role of Section members in CISM? research activity should be stressed;

-participation in organising the symposium in Warsaw (Poland) on March 20-24 1995 and presentation of papers;

- presentation of papers during the symposium in Pretoria (Republic of South Africa), March 16-23 1996;

- presentation of a paper during the symposium in Warendorf (Germany) on September 22-28 1996;

- presentation of a paper during the present symposium in Varna in hospitable Bulgaria.

Numerous proposals to present our papers during domestic conferences on promoting health and physical activity, mental and somatic safety of individuals, defensive education and measurement of its effects are the evidence of Section's growing authority. Inviting us to participate in interdisciplinary studies, expertise and reviews of theoretical or experimental papers are of equal importance. The publications of Section's members are helpful to civil associations whose activity is post-defence oriented.

## Conclusion

The so far activity confirms the purposefulness of organising the independent association of researchers and practitioners in Poland, interested in studying the problems of physical activity in the context of individual and social defensive tasks, since civil academies of physical education prepare specialists, mainly to serve the system of general education - and thus - making children and youth fit. They also train specialists for the needs of sport. However, there are no faculties dealing with the problem of physical education in the context of defensive preparation - particularly - the preparation of soldiers, policemen and other officers of defensive formations. There is no military or inter departmental institution in Poland, dealing with research, educational and editorial activity of this kind. The Section can act as such an institution.

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