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## The impact of the legal norm under Article 134.3 of the Homeland Defence Act on the personnel potential resulting from the involvement of people with disabilities on thing of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland

### Original article


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### Abstract

**Objectives:** To identify assumptions of the legal norms, in the context of the impact of the involvement of people with disabilities for the implementation of the tasks and objectives of the Polish Armed Forces on the examples from the United States, Canada, and Israel.

**Methods:** Systematic review of the literature and websites on the possible inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Armed Forces.

**Results:** The analysis determined the significance of the legal norm Article 134.3 of the Act on the impact of the involvement of persons with disabilities for the implementation of tasks by the Polish Armed Forces.

**Conclusions:** In previous regulations related to military service, people with disabilities were not able to be on duty neither actively function within the national security system, remaining, outside the system. One of the revolutionary changes connected with implementation of the Article 134.3 of the Homeland Defence Act is the admission of people with disabilities to the military service. The article contains suggestions for the Polish Armed Forces on how to involve persons with disabilities in the effective implementation of their goals and tasks. The highly qualified, competent, and knowledgeable personnel will be engaged, e.g. in the IT area especially since a new component has been created within the Polish Armed Forces: Cyberspace Defence Forces (DK-WOC).

An effective increase in the level of awareness, competence, and knowledge in the field of military service by persons with disabilities may be of key importance for shaping the state security system and provide support to the Polish Armed Forces.

## Introduction

It should be noted that the number of people with disabilities around the world is high and constantly growing. These people function in all parts of the world and in different social classes. However, both causes and effects of disability vary in different parts of the world. These differences are due to different socioeconomic conditions and regulations that countries take to ensure the well-being of their citizens. The current policy on people with disabilities is the result of the development of the last 200 years. In many respects, it reflects the general living conditions and socioeconomic policies of the area. However, there are also many circumstances specific to the living conditions of people with disabilities. Ignorance, neglect, prejudice, and fear are social factors that throughout the history have isolated such people. Due to these factors, people with disabilities could not have fully participated in society. Over the years, disability policies have evolved from elementary care in charitable institutions to education and rehabilitation of individuals, making the environment more inclusive of people with disabilities.

In most Western countries, legislation on people with disabilities advocates full and effective social inclusion and participation (Officer, Groce, et al., 2009). Despite the policy that advocates the inclusion of people with disabilities in the everyday life in society, these people are usually excluded from military service. Social inclusion is a comprehensive concept that refers to full engagement with social institutions, including education, employment, recreation, and civic participation (White, et al., 2010). This is of great importance for the well-being of such people, as it increases their sense of belonging and enables them to become members of society. Social inclusion has been shown to improve quality of life (Johnson, et al. 2012), self-esteem, self-confidence, mental health (Forrester-Jones, et al. ,2006), independence, and decision-making ability.

With the entry into force of the Act of 11 March 2022 on the Homeland Defence Act (Ustawa o obronie ojczyzny, 2022), hereinafter referred to as the UoO, under Article 134.3 of that Act the Minister of National Defence is obliged to issue a regulation in which he must specify which services may be performed by persons with disabilities. The justification of the act states that "persons with disabilities, e.g., in positions related to cybersecurity, were allowed to serve in selected specialities, personal groups (...)" (Druk Sejmowy 2052, 2022). Such a change should be accepted as generally justified from a legal point of view. At the same time, it is necessary to analyse in more detail the impact of people with disabilities on the condition of the Armed Forces.

The article was written mainly on the basis of Polish and foreign legal regulations, as well as scientific publications and information contained on websites specialising in the issue.

### 1. Outline of the interpretation of Article 134 of the UoO <sup>1</sup>

This forces us to examine Article 134.3 of the UoO, taking into account the whole provision (Rozporządzenie Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 2002)<sup>2</sup> Thus:

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<sup>1</sup> Ustawa o Obronie Ojczyzny (the Homeland Defence Act).

<sup>2</sup> Regulation of the Prime Minister.

- paragraph 1 of the Article refers to the division of soldiers in military service into corps, successively privates, noncommissioned officers and, finally, officers;
- paragraph 2 introduces personal corps for privates, non-commissioned officers, and officers. In addition, it states that the personal corps is divided into personal groups, in which there is a division into military specialties.

The above paragraphs shape the construction of the Polish Armed Forces. However, due to their general nature, the legislator decided that the Minister of National Defence will be responsible for creating and repealing the personal corps and determining their division into personal groups and military specialties. To do so, in accordance with the requirements of Article 92.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1997), the legislator has established a provision authorising the Minister of National Defence to issue an appropriate regulation. Therefore, the basic purpose of Article 134.3 of the UoO is to specify the provisions of the Act. Moreover, the legislator added the sentence "(...) in which the service may be performed by people with disabilities (...)". Therefore, the service of persons with disabilities is, on the one hand, something new that has not been practised so far, and on the other hand, it was introduced "by the way". This method raises many doubts about the service rendered by persons with disabilities. First, 'service' is a term associated with a special legal relationship of an administrative law (Trybunał Konstytucyjny, 1998)<sup>3</sup>, that links a soldier to the State as an employer. If the legislator uses the term "service (...) disabled persons". This indicates that a soldier may be a person who is not fully able or healthy. According to Article 26(c) of the Act of 21 November 1967 on the General Duty to Defend the Republic of Poland (Ustawa o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1967), persons with disabilities with a severe degree of disability or a moderate degree of disability could not be subjected to medical examinations by doctors of the Military Medical Boards. On the other hand, under Article 31.5 of that law, such persons were not subject to drafting. Article 142.3.1 of the Act on General Defence Obligation of the Republic of Poland exempted such persons from the obligation to serve in civil defence. On the other hand, Article 175.4.6 of that Act prohibited the drafting and organisational allocations of persons with severe and moderate disabilities. On the basis of these regulations, the possibility of service of people who have been excluded so far, not only from the obligation of military service but also from the duty to defend their country, is a significant step forward. Second, a lot of controversy and misunderstanding may be caused by the term "persons with disabilities" used in Art. 134.3 of the Act. The concept of disability is covered by the legal definition in Article 2.10 of the Act of 27 August 1997 on the Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled People (Ustawa o rehabilitacji zawodowej i społecznej oraz zatrudnianiu osób niepełnosprawnych, 1997). In this Act, the term "disability" means "... a permanent or temporary inability to fulfil social roles due to permanent or prolonged impairment of the body's fitness, in particular resulting in incapacity for work. The UoO uses the term "disability" or talks about the degree of disability in the above sense practically every time. For example, Article 54.5 of the Act, states that the obligation to register in the event of drafting and during the war is not subject to persons "classified as severely disabled or moderately disabled within

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<sup>3</sup> Constitutional Court.

the meaning of the Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons (...)"'. The exception is the discussed fragment of Art. 134.3 of the Act, which refers to people with disabilities, and not to a disabled person classified as one of the three degrees of disability. Therefore, it is not known whether a disabled person, the degree of whose disability has been determined on the basis of the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons, and a person with disability, are the same person. When studying the legal text, one should keep in mind that the legislator (Zieliński, 2017, pp. 43-59), it should be stated that the legislator deliberately used a different term than that resulting from the Law on Occupational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities. This forces us to change the way of analysing the term "persons with disabilities" and to try to find its meaning.

Disability as the failure to achieve full physical or mental fitness as a result of congenital developmental features or irreversible damage to certain parts of the body or disorders of their proper functioning (Zieliński, 2017, pp. 43-59). If we accept such an understanding of the analysed term, the intention of the legislator behind the discussed provision becomes completely incomprehensible. The legislator orders the Minister of National Defence to include in the regulation official positions that may be held by persons with disabilities. It is about disability understood as a limitation/illness of a given person. For example, if the Minister of National Defence were to indicate in the Regulation of the Minister of National Defence of 13 June 2022 on personal corps, personal groups, and military specialities, 1 point 7 of this regulation states that a personal corps of cryptology and cybersecurity of soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland is being created. Paragraph 2 of the Regulation, on the other hand, refers to an annex entitled Division of personal corps into personal groups and military specialities. This regulation is laconic and contains literally two pages. If the Minister of National Defence were to indicate in it personal groups and military specialities in which service can be performed by people with disabilities, he would have to create a list of diseases and dysfunctions of the body for each position and each group. This would mean that the main part of the regulation would be very concise, while the marginal element, i.e., the regulation extending access to military service, would become extremely extensive. Additionally, there would be immediate comments about why someone with one illness in one position is denied access to the position and others are not. The legislator, wishing to include persons with disabilities in military service, opened Pandora's box and exposed the Minister of National Defence to arbitrary setting of criteria for access to service. It seems that a more optimal solution would be to develop a separate legal act, as is the case in, for example, the United States or Israel. For this reason, it is worth taking a closer look at the legislation in these countries.

## **2. Legal Regulations Regarding the Employment of Soldiers with Disabilities in the United States**

The main piece of legislation in the United States concerning persons with disabilities is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (or ADA). The ADA is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in their daily activities. This document provides comprehensive protection of civil rights for people with disabilities, in areas related to employment, services, public facilities, transport, and telecommunications, and the

opportunity to participate in local and state government programmes (U.S Department of Labor, 2023).

DoD Instruction 6130.03, Vol. 1, Medical standards for military service: appointment, enlistment, or induction. This manual consists of two volumes, each of which contains a different purpose. Establishes rules, assigns responsibilities, and sets out medical procedures and standards for appointment, recruitment, or entry into the Military Service.

The Standards of Medical Fitness Regulation, Army Regulation 40-501, governs health standards for recruitment, entry, and appointment, including officer retrieval programmes and health standards. This document covers medical standards and aviation policies, medical fitness standards for diving, Special Forces, Airborne Forces, unmanned aircraft operators, and some military professional specialities and officer assignments such as civil affairs, psychological operations, and service in the navy.

### **3. Types of Disabilities Disqualifying for the United States Armed Forces**

Disability is a reason for exemption from military service. The U.S. Army requires that conscripted personnel be ready for "active service." This means that a person has to be physically, emotionally and mentally ready to serve at all times – according to military standards. According to Army Regulation 40-501, Medical Services – Standards of Medical Fitness, it should be ensured that persons called up for military service have the required medical qualifications, i.e. (Department of the Army Washington, 2023), i.e. it is necessary to verify whether a person with a disability who aspires to be included in the ranks of the United States Armed Forces:

- does not suffer from infectious diseases that are likely to endanger the health of other personnel;
- does not have medical conditions or physical defects which may require undue loss of time for necessary treatment or hospitalisation, or is likely to result in separation from the Service due to incapacity for work;
- from a medical point of view, has the ability to successfully complete the required training;
- is medically adapted to the military environment without the need for geographical restrictions;
- from a medical point of view, has the ability to perform its duties without aggravating existing physical defects or medical conditions.

The purpose of introducing the definition of operational readiness is the development of combat forces without the need to provide special facilities for people with disabilities that could lead to a threat or malfunction of the unit. In this regard, the military lists conditions and handicaps that are disqualifying:

- physical disability - includes issues related to the functioning of body systems and physical deformities, such as: blindness or poor vision, deafness, all dysfunctions that do not allow for proper wearing of military uniform or military equipment

- (restriction of movement, HIV or AIDS, diabetes, rheumatological conditions, migraine headaches or head injuries, chronic insomnia);
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD);
  - autism, including Asperger's syndrome;
  - psychosis - ongoing or past disorders with psychotic characteristics, such as schizophrenic disorders, delusional disorders, bipolar disorder, or other unspecified psychoses;
  - depression – a history of depressive disorders, including but not limited to major depression, dystonic disorders and cyclothymic disorders requiring outpatient care for more than 12 months by a doctor or other mental health professional;
  - mood disorders;
  - adaptation disorder – history of a single adaptation disorder in the last 3 months or recurrent episodes of adaptation disorder;
  - suicidal behaviour - suicidal behaviour (including gestures or attempts), self-harm or injury used as a way of coping with life and emotions;
  - PTSD or OCD – a history of posttraumatic stress disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

#### **4. Americans with disabilities in the Air Force**

When we think of a person serving in the Air Force, we can imagine someone either short or tall, male or female, but we cannot imagine a person with a physical disability. However, in my opinion, Americans with physical disabilities are an untapped resource that can contribute to the mission of the 21st century Air Force.

The importance of physical ability has diminished due to changes in the nature of modern warfare. Conflicts in this century were carried out over longer distances using ranged weapons, unmanned aerial vehicles, and cyber operations. In fact, many key roles in the Air Force have little to do with physicality. There is employment in research and design, intelligence, cyber operations, military education, strategic planning, supply chain management, medicine, and more.

The Air Force rarely participated in assaults. However, for those who perform operations in such an area, there are certain physical standards. People engaged in them are primarily field pilots of specialised professions, such as combat control, rescue, and special tactics. Supporting new abilities, such as the operation of drones and cyber warfare, requires an increased workforce. Secretary of the Air Force, Heather Wilson, has proposed a growth strategy titled "The Airmen We Need," detailing a plan to increase the final force by 40,000 airmen - an increase of 24 percent — over the next seven years (War on the rock, 2023).

The U.S. Air Force is one of the most modern and dynamic organisations and constantly strives to improve its members. In recent years, to accommodate more inclusive forces, there have been changes in the way the United States Air Force approaches physical testing standards. As a result of these changes, physical training standards have evolved from a "one size fits all" approach to a more hands-on implementation that involves multiple job positions with different fitness requirements. As with physics test standards, senior leaders have pledged to work with

stakeholders both inside and outside the military to change attitudes toward education. In doing so, however, the US Air Force needs to remodel its approach to become more inclusive with respect to service members with different cognitive abilities. In particular, no attempt has been made to analyse how the organisation can be more adapted to service members, e.g., with learning disabilities (LDs) or how LDs affect the Professional Military Education (PME) of service members. At the same time, I must note that the term LD is defined as "a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and learn new skills (... ) with limited ability to cope independently (... ) with a lasting impact on development (Russel, Bryant and House et al., 2017).

In the civil sector, the primary source for people with disabilities in the United States is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Unlike the aforementioned sector, the US Air Force is not bound by ADA regulations, but is required to comply with certain provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 "to [require] federal agencies to make their technology and electronic and information technology available to persons with disabilities" (Air Force Instruction 33-393, 2019). Specifically, as explained in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, agencies "must provide employees with disabilities with access to information that is comparable to that available to others, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the department or agency." Similarly, to comply with the intent of the Rehabilitation Act, the US Air Force published Air Force Instruction (AFI) 33-393, *Electronic and Information Technology Accessible to Individuals with Disabilities*, in April 2013. The purpose of the AIF is to provide individuals with disabilities "with the opportunity to maximize their contribution to the success of the U.S. Air Force mission by maximizing the accessibility of electronic and IT equipment." Although the US Air Force is required to make its technology available to people with disabilities, it is currently not required to provide reasonable facilities to qualified persons with disabilities who are employees or job applicants (Air Force Instruction 33-393, 2019).

## **5. Qualification standards**

Other federal agencies do not reject candidates with physical disabilities. Officers, agents, analysts, or managers with disabilities support the missions of the FBI, CIA, the State Department or the Department of Homeland Security every day. The situation, however, looks a bit different in the military context. The US Air Force imposes qualification standards that must be met if a person does not pose an "imminent risk to the health or safety of others in the workplace" (US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2023). Specifically, these standards are clearly stated in the Department of Defence Manual (DoDI) 6130.03, Volume 1, Medical Standards for Appointment. Enlistment or Induction into the Military Services According to the manual, disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder m.in, dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, or anxiety disorders disqualify a person from joining the army.

People who have been diagnosed with LD while on military duty under an employment contract are encouraged to talk to the command team about their new diagnosis. Potential threats and barriers to their current Air Force Speciality Code (AFSC) specialization are assessed along with recommended adjustments that can be made (but are not required). The

purpose of this procedure is to check whether a given person is fit for further service. If they are unfit for service, they will be administratively removed from the service or may be transferred to another post (revised AFSC classification) which is more adapted to his cognitive abilities.

The general standards of requirements vary depending on specialized tasks such as special operations or fitness tests. Some of these requirements include swimming tests (Navy personnel) or cardiovascular assessments. In addition, for some military specialties, it is required that the health of soldiers be assessed on the basis of The Military Medical PULHES Grading System. It is a system that assesses individual physical performance, strength and range of motion of the upper and lower limbs, vision and hearing, and mental stability. These measurements create an indicator that qualifies or disqualifies a military member to work in the appropriate area/specialization. An example would be the computer programming area with built-in PULHES index which detects "defects or impairments" of the upper or lower limbs, that may prevent "hand-to-hand combat". It should be emphasized that among the approximately 230 professional specialties of the Air Force, as many as 139 meet the minimum standard of PULHES (War on the rock, 2023).

A movement to keep people with disabilities within the circle of soldiers in active military service has arisen in the United States. Air Force regulations now allow people with acquired disability to continue serving with a "limited" status if they possess certain unique skills useful in further service (even if it means a change of specialization). Acquiring highly qualified personnel from various backgrounds is a priority for the army. "Persons with disabilities have so much potential, just like other people. We have talent, and we come with so much experience of growing and navigating life with different challenges" Bowers-Brimmer said (U.S. Army, Army News Service, 2023). The Army offers a wide variety of jobs, benefits and competitive salaries for civilian employees at locations around the world. Persons with disabilities can be hired to federal positions non-competitively through a process called Schedule A (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2023). Potential employees may also apply through the traditional or competitive process.

Air Force has been and will continue to be the backbone of national cyber capabilities, space capabilities, drone warfare and nuclear capabilities. It is also important that leaders recruit and train Americans with disabilities who can further strengthen the unit.

## **6. The Canadian Armed Forces**

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are also an excellent example of effective adaptation of people with disabilities for use in the military environment. People with disabilities are directed to military professions that are adapted to their aptitudes. It is assessed whether they can meet the minimum operating standards despite having a degree of disability. If the standards are met, the accessibility facilities are granted, provided that the fact does not cause difficulties for CAF. All persons who meet minimum operational standards receive military career counselors during recruitment, training and education. Advisors ensure that both the operational needs of CAFs and of individuals are met. Some customisations, approved by the CAF, include the use of assistive and communication facilities, rescheduling and support services.



The recruiting of people with disabilities (Defense Administrative Order and Directive DAOD) (implemented Regulation) promotes an inclusive work environment. Such employees are given the right jobs to succeed. This helps to reduce failures in training and education. (Government of Canada, 2023). From the above, it can be seen that the proposed facilities for service members are aimed at guiding CAF candidates not only through initial recruitment and job placement, but also at continuously increasing the ability of a member with a disability to perform tasks at the highest level during active service in a given official position.

## **7. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF)**

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is an integral part of everyday life in Israeli society. Military service is compulsory for all citizens over the age of 18 (including women). Exceptions are persons disqualified on physical or psychological grounds, getting married, pregnant and women who abide religious restrictions (Security Service Act, 1986). Until recently, people with intellectual disabilities (IDs) were also dismissed from service on the basis of their medical profile, which, undoubtedly, led to social exclusion.

In Israel, a person who has not been drafted into the army is an outsider of society. Persons with disabilities also want to be drafted into the military to serve their country. They want to feel equal, even when they cannot perform all functions.

The project "The Equal in Uniform" (EiU) was created in 2007 thanks to the cooperation of three entities: the IDF, the National Association for the Habilitation of Children and Adults with Intellectual Disabilities and the Division for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. This project aims to create opportunities for persons with disabilities, in particular with ID, to enlist and complete regular military service, thereby increasing self-esteem.

To be eligible, a person must meet the following criteria:

- mild to moderate degree of ability;
- absence of serious difficulties in behavior;
- ability to travel independently;
- independence in self-care;
- basic interpersonal communication skills.

As part of the project, selected people first undergo a specialized six-month military training program. The course provides basic knowledge of the army, including: understanding of the term "military", the hierarchy of military ranks, rules as how to salute officers and follow daily schedules. In addition, participants of the project learn how to act in different situations, acquire problem-solving skills and practice their reactions to potential dilemmas and challenges that they may encounter while serving. They also undergo training sessions in social and sexual skills to raise their awareness of possible risks. The highlight of the training is a week in which they live in a simulation camp to experience military life. Afterwards, they spend six to twelve months as volunteers in a program that prepares them for joining the army. The status of a volunteers means that they are not yet formally recruited, but perform duties of a soldier, and are supported by a guide from the EiU project. Finally, participants who meet the medical and

psychiatric service criteria are drafted to the IDF and, as in the volunteer phase, are provided with constant supervision and mediation by military non-commissioned officers and EiU personnel. EiU soldiers have the same rights and obligations as other active soldiers, receive the same remuneration as able-bodied soldiers and play a significant role in all logistical and combat support positions, including: storage units, transport, personnel administration, military equipment, secretarial tasks, etc. It must be noted, however, that the soldiers with disabilities do not live in the military base. They perform their duties during the day and return to their homes in the afternoon. EiU soldiers are discharged after a year or two.

By participating in the project, people with disabilities can feel that they are equal members of their military unit and the society.

### **8. Recommendation on the involvement of persons with disabilities to implement the objectives and tasks of the Polish Armed Forces more effectively**

Would accepting persons with disabilities to serve in the Polish Armed Forces mean accepting low standards of physical fitness? I believe it would not". You can compare an athlete who often has a better resting heart rate, basal metabolic rate and VO2 max (oxygen ceiling) than the average Air Force soldier. Like Air Force recruits, disabled athletes have a broad spectrum of fitness and physique. Using resources such as the VO2 max test to measure the health of airmen, instead of proxy indicators, such as long-distance running or strength training, could open doors for persons with disabilities.

Should basic training be less rigorous? I think it should not. With proper adaptation, obstacle courses can be overcome effortlessly by people with disabilities. Is the training camp intended to teach, for example, rope climbing or crawling in the mud? Or is it rather a lesson in building teamwork, perseverance and mental toughness? Climbing is not the only way to achieve these goals.

Many remote places are less hostile now than in the past. The accessible world is constantly evolving. If a soldier cannot be sent to Afghanistan, they can certainly move in a wheelchair on roads or sidewalks in Turkey or South Korea, where the military base is located in more accessible locations.

In this day and age, many roles in the armed forces have little to do with physicality. Most of the tasks can be performed using drones, ranged weapons, unmanned aerial vehicles or cyber operations. Moreover, disabled soldiers could play a key role in helping those who go to the farthest outposts (provide support facilities). As a military psychologist or physiotherapy technician, they can provide essential support to those who return from more dangerous tasks.

The Polish Armed Forces should adapt to the provisions of the Homeland Defence Act (Article 134.3), according to which people with disabilities must be able to enjoy human rights, especially in the field of employment. Employment laws and regulations shall not discriminate against persons with disabilities and shall not create obstacles to their employment.

Proposed programs and actions to be applied by the Polish Armed Forces:

- if a member of the service is not fit to perform strictly military service, they could be assigned to work, e.g. administrative, or transferred to another unit that is more adapted to his cognitive abilities. e.g. in the cyber domain or general in the IT sector. Working in such sectors would definitely enable the development path for persons with disabilities, especially since a new component has been created in the Armed Forces: DK-WOC (Cyberspace Defense Forces);
- adapt workplaces and premises to be accessible to people with different types of disabilities;
- facilitating access to new technologies, devices, tools and equipment for persons with disabilities, in order to enable them to find employment and be able to work;
- providing appropriate training and ongoing support to persons with disabilities (e.g. sign language interpreter);
- The Polish Armed Forces should also initiate and support public campaigns aimed at overcoming negative attitudes and prejudices regarding the involvement of persons with disabilities in the structures of the Armed Forces.

### **Conclusions**

The aim of this publication was to identify the assumptions of the legal norm from Article 134.3 of the Act on the Defense of the Homeland, in the context of the impact of the involvement of persons with disabilities for the implementation of the tasks and objectives of the Polish Armed Forces.

In previous legal regulations related to active military service and active functioning within the broadly understood national security system, persons with disabilities were not able to serve – remaining de facto outside the system. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in military service can significantly increase the effectiveness of achieving goals and tasks by involving highly qualified, competent and knowledgeable personnel. Effective increase in the level of awareness, competence and knowledge among the society may be of key importance for shaping the state security system and support the functioning of the Polish Armed Forces.

The article presents Article 134.3 of the Act on UoO, which introduces one of the revolutionary changes in the approach to military service, namely, the admission to service of people with disabilities. Employing such people in the army in, for instance, the currently developing IT field, will definitely enable the self-development of the persons with disabilities. The above-mentioned areas require high competence, knowledge and experience, and not the level of mobility, which, either way, will in no way affect the quality of performed tasks.

In addition, the article presents the functioning of the United States Armed Forces (Air Force), the Israel Defense Forces and the Canadian Armed Forces in the context of employment, training and facilities for persons with disabilities.

In the last part, proposals and recommendations for the Polish Armed Forces were presented.

The authors are convinced that the presented problem requires further research. The obtained results and observations can be used as an introduction to research on how to effectively implement the system in Poland. Said system is aimed at engaging persons with

disabilities for the benefit of the Polish Armed Forces. Taking into account the change in the nature of warfare in modern times (greater use of modern technologies, including IT), it is reasonable to include persons with disabilities in the structures of the army. The comparison and analysis of the experience and implemented solutions in the above-mentioned area in the United States, Israel and Canada should be taken into account.

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