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**Vladimir Chumak** –

*candidate of juridical sciences,*

*lead researcher of the Department of research work organization,*

*Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs*

*(27, prosp. L. Landau, Kharkiv, Ukraine)*

## **Administrative and Legal Framework of Anti-Terrorist Police Units of the Baltic States (on the Case of Estonia and Latvia)**

*У статті досліджено особливості діяльності антитерористичних поліцейських підрозділів Естонії та Латвії. Проаналізовано функції та завдання антитерористичних поліцейських підрозділів Естонії та Латвії. Обґрунтовано доцільність використання досвіду антитерористичних поліцейських підрозділів Естонії та Латвії в Україні.*

**Ключові слова:** поліція, підрозділ, діяльність, тероризм, досвід, Естонія, Латвія.

*В статье исследованы особенности деятельности антитеррористических полицейских подразделений Эстонии и Латвии. Проанализированы функции и задачи антитеррористических полицейских подразделений Эстонии и Латвии. Обоснована целесообразность использования опыта антитеррористических полицейских подразделений Эстонии и Латвии в Украине.*

**Ключевые слова:** полиция, подразделение, деятельность, терроризм, опыт, Эстония, Латвия.

*The article deals with the features of the activities of counterterrorist police units in Estonia and Latvia. Functions and tasks of counterterrorist police units of Estonia and Latvia are analyzed. It is marked that the fight against terrorism is one of the priorities of international cooperation of the states and caused by the necessity of interaction of different countries on this important issue. It is indicated that according to difficult situation and ongoing anti-terror operation in Ukraine the positive experience of anti-terrorist police units in Estonia (K-COMMANDO) and Latvia (OMEGA) has to be studied and implemented in the activities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the National Police to improve the activities and further development of the system of internal affairs bodies of Ukraine. Necessity to use the experience of counterterrorist police units in Estonia and Latvia in Ukraine is proved.*

**Keywords:** police, unit, activity, terrorism, experience, Estonia, Latvia.

**Issue.** Conduct of widespread and complicated anti-terror operation in Ukraine, which has not been seen in modern Europe yet, challenged dedication, professionalism and endurance of not only officials of the security bodies of Ukraine, which competence includes the fight against terrorism, but has become a real challenge for all the law enforcement system of independent Ukraine.

Only strict implementation of the legislation of Ukraine, with the strict observance of fundamental human rights, separates us from the chaos and lawlessness which armed terrorist groups in certain regions of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts of Ukraine intend to impose on the civilized society [1, p. 51].

Organization of the modern law enforcement agencies' activities in Ukraine needs the study of the best foreign practices of the relevant departments.

It is predefined first of all by the fact that the law enforcement agencies of developed countries in Europe have already experienced a hard process of formation and development in accordance with the guidelines of international documents which provide the inviolability of human rights and freedoms, the service role of the police in the society and the principle of its permanent cooperation with public institutions [2, p. 11].

The study deals with the counterterrorist police units of Estonia and Latvia due to the geographical proximity of these countries, similarity of problems to be solved and the necessity to deepen cooperation in combating terrorism.

Therefore, the study of the experience of the counterterrorist police units in these countries becomes especially urgent and important to us.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Research of foreign police units was made in the writings of A. Bandurka, S. Brateli, Yu. Bytiak, K. Belskyi, A. Hubanov, S. Husarov, D. Kalaianov, R. Kaliuzhnyi, V. Kolpakov, Ya. Kondratiev, S. Konstantinov, M. Kornienko, S. Komziuk, L. Kvasha, V. Olefir, K. Levchenko, M. Loshitskyi, R. Melnyk, O. Nehodchenko, O. Perederii, A. Pronevych, E. Sobol, A. Sinyavska, M. Tuchak, V. Chernei, H. Yarmaki, O. Yarmysh and others. However, almost all these studies dealt primarily with countries of the Western and Central Europe (UK, Germany, Poland, France), without taking into account the experience of other countries, including Estonia and Latvia. In addition, Estonia and Latvia have successfully operating counter-terrorist police units that have been effectively carrying out law enforcement functions and making a feasible contribution to the fight against organized criminal and terrorist structures. We believe that the analysis of the counterterrorist police units in foreign countries is necessary, what again predetermines scientific novelty of this work.

The **purpose** of the article is to research the features of counterterrorist police units in Estonia and Latvia.

**The main body.** To protect the Member States of the European Union from organized criminal and terrorist structures and to improve cooperation in fighting against terrorism between the countries, and to implement agreed measures to guarantee a high level of security the international organization ATLAS has been established.

The purpose of this organization is cooperation, mutual support, and assistance in combating terrorism and improving skills, knowledge and experience of combating terrorism among law enforcement agencies of the Member States of the European Union.

Atlas network participants are the following:  
- ARAS (Lithuania); - ASVILA (Romania); - AKS (Denmark); - BOA (Poland); - DELTA (Norway); - DSI (Netherlands); - DSU (Belgium); - EAO (Cyprus); - EKAM (Greece); - EKO COBRA (Austria); - ERU (Ireland); - GIGN (France); - GIS (Italy); - GEO (Spain); - GOE (Portugal); - GSG 9 (Germany); - KARHU (Finland); - K-COMMANDO (Estonia); - LYNX (Slovakia); - NI (Sweden); - NOCS (Italy); - OMEGA (Latvia); - RAID (France); - RED PANTHER (Slovenia); - CO19 (Great Britain); - SEK BWL (Germany); - SAG (Malta); -

SIAS (Romania); - SUCT (Bulgaria); - TESZ (Hungary); - UEI (Spain); - URNA (Czech Republic); - USP (Luxembourg) [3].

Following the accession of Estonia and Latvia to the European Union counter-terrorist police units in Estonia (K-COMMANDO) and Latvia (OMEGA) were accepted to the International Organization ATLAS and represent Estonia and Latvia as members of the European Union.

Attention of different criminal structures or even terrorist organizations in the Baltic region is growing. There is a constant struggle for spheres of influence. To prevent such threats Estonia and Latvia have established counter-terrorism police unit K-COMMANDO (Estonia) and OMEGA (Latvia).

Counter-terrorist police unit K-COMMANDO Estonia was established in 1991 to decide specific problems in the fight against organized criminal and terrorist structures.

The main task of unit K-COMMANDO Estonia is the fight against terrorism.

The headquarters of counter-terrorist police unit K-COMMANDO of Estonia is situated in the capital of Estonia, Tallinn.

In Estonia, the K-COMMANDO is known for its high professionalism and high reputation on combating terrorism.

To become an employee it is necessary to pass severe testing and be approved by all current members of the team. Then, after reaching the agreement, the candidate is accepted to the unit.

The number of members is secret to this day and nowadays there are no losses among the employees of the unit.

The unit operates under the command of the Central Criminal Police (Keskkriminaalpolitsei).

Counter-terrorist police unit in Latvia OMEGA was founded in 1992 to solve specific problems in the fight against organized criminal and terrorist structures. Counter-terrorist police unit of Latvia OMEGA cooperates with many other units fighting against terrorism in Europe.

The unit of Latvia OMEGA is a special unit of Criminal Police of Latvia.

The main task of unit OMEGA is combating terrorism.

The duties of OMEGA unit include combating terrorism, detention of dangerous special criminals, restoring public order in situations when Alfa special forces cannot be handled, bomb disposal and the fight against drug trafficking.

Units K-COMMANDO (Estonia) and OMEGA (Latvia) are provided with modern arms and equipment for the successful fulfillment of tasks.

The professionalism of the staff of units is reviewed more than once a year in real operations.

Employees of the units gain more experience from taking part in various study trainings, organized by the United States and other leading countries.

In terms of reforming the system of Ukrainian internal affairs bodies it is urgent to study foreign practices. The analysis of conceptual approaches to the organization of foreign police services not only contribute to the objective determination of the ways of optimization of the law enforcement system in Ukraine, but also to implementation of the most effective organizational forms in practice of management of internal affairs bodies[6, p. 2].

**Conclusions.** In summary, we emphasize that the fight against terrorism is a priority issue of international cooperation between the states and it is caused by the necessity of interaction between different countries in this important sphere. Entry to the EU is determined by the strategic goal of Ukrainian foreign policy, aimed at strengthening the capacity to ensure the implementation of European international agreements on counteraction to crime.

Taking into account the transnational nature of terrorism and its close links with other threats to security, such as organized crime, human trafficking,

illicit arms trafficking, it is necessary to strengthen the interaction between all subjects of the world community in combating them.

Thus, international experience shows that many European countries have opted for the formation of special units and secret services, equipped with modern equipment, weapons and transport in fight against terrorism.

The Baltic States, namely Estonia and Latvia, are no exception, they have also created special units to combat organized criminal and terrorist structures that effectively operate in this sphere.

Based on the above it can be said that in a difficult situation and during an ongoing of anti-terror operation in Ukraine the positive experience of counter-terrorist police units in Estonia (K-COMMANDO) and Latvia (OMEGA) deserves its further study and implementation into activities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the National Police to improve the activities and further development of the system of Ukrainian internal affairs bodies.

We consider the experience of counter-terrorist police units in other European countries is perspective for further studies.

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