

Law enforcement and national security

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Comparative Analysis of Community Trust in Policing Strategies Under Martial Law in Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine

Darius Dzikas

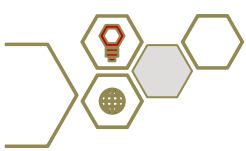
PhD Candidate, Daugavpils University, Latvia,

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3293-4577>

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Abstract. The study is devoted to a comparative analysis of the level of public trust in the police under martial law in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania. In times of crisis, especially in times of war, law enforcement agencies perform not only the function of a security guarantor but also play a key role in shaping the relationship between the state and society. The purpose of the study is to identify the factors that influence the level of trust in law enforcement agencies in wartime and compare the strategies and approaches used in the analysed countries to strengthen it. Particular attention is paid to assessing the effectiveness of police reforms, the transparency of their activities and the level of interaction with citizens in wartime.

A set of methodological approaches was used to achieve this goal, including analysis of regulatory documents, comparative studies of political and legal systems, and sociological surveys that reflect public opinion on police strategies and methods in wartime. The comparative analysis of Ukraine, Latvia, and Lithuania allows us to assess not only the effectiveness of different approaches to public security but also to



identify universal trends that can be adapted to increase the level of trust in the police in each country studied.

The study results show that the level of trust in the police in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania largely depends on the historical context, social and psychological climate and the effectiveness of the reforms. In Ukraine, trust in law enforcement agencies in wartime is declining due to several factors, including shortcomings in police performance, lack of transparency in its work, and poor interaction with citizens. At the same time, the situation in Latvia and Lithuania is more stable due to more effective approaches to law enforcement management and active integration of the police into civic initiatives. Despite the differences in strategies, all three countries face common challenges related to using modern technologies to increase law enforcement transparency and strengthen public control.

The study's findings confirm the need to focus on increasing the transparency of law enforcement agencies, enhancing police cooperation with the public, and improving reforms aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of law enforcement. Key recommendations include introducing digital technologies to enhance public oversight, developing effective communication strategies between the police and the public, and ensuring the stable functioning of mechanisms for public oversight of law enforcement during the war.

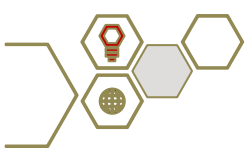
Keywords: trust in the police, war, law enforcement agencies, transparency of police activities, police reforms.

Порівняльний аналіз довіри громадськості до стратегій забезпечення правопорядку в умовах воєнного стану в Латвії, Литві та Україні

Даріус Дзікас

аспірант, Даугавпілський університет, Латвія

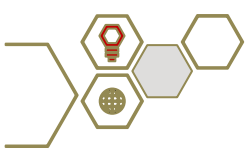
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Анотація. Дослідження присвячене порівняльному аналізу рівня довіри громадян до поліції в умовах воєнного стану в Україні, Латвії та Литві. У кризові періоди, особливо під час війни, правоохоронні органи виконують не лише функцію гаранта безпеки, а й відіграють ключову роль у формуванні взаємин між державою та суспільством. Метою дослідження є визначення факторів, що впливають на рівень довіри до правоохоронних органів у воєнний час, а також порівняння стратегій і підходів, які застосовуються в аналізованих країнах для її зміцнення. Особливу увагу зосереджено на оцінці ефективності поліцейських реформ, прозорості їхньої діяльності та рівня взаємодії з громадянами в умовах війни.

Для досягнення поставленої мети використано комплекс методологічних підходів, зокрема аналіз нормативно-правових документів, порівняльне дослідження політичних і правових систем, а також соціологічні опитування, що відображають громадську думку щодо стратегій і методів роботи поліції у воєнний час. Порівняльний аналіз України, Латвії та Литви дозволяє не лише оцінити ефективність різних підходів до забезпечення громадської безпеки, а й визначити універсальні тенденції, що можуть бути адаптовані для підвищення рівня довіри до поліції в кожній із досліджуваних країн.

Результати дослідження свідчать, що рівень довіри до поліції в Україні, Латвії та Литві значною мірою залежить від історичного контексту, соціально-психологічного клімату та ефективності проведених реформ. В Україні довіра до правоохоронних органів у воєнний час знижується через низку чинників, серед яких недоліки в діяльності поліції, недостатня прозорість її роботи та слабка взаємодія з громадянами. Водночас у Латвії та Литві ситуація є стабільнішою, що пояснюється ефективнішими підходами до управління правоохоронними органами та активною інтеграцією поліції в громадські ініціативи. Незважаючи на відмінності у стратегіях, усі три країни стикаються зі спільними викликами, пов'язаними із застосуванням сучасних технологій для підвищення прозорості правоохоронної діяльності та посилення громадського контролю.



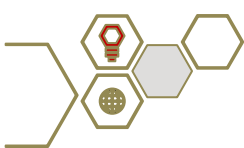
Висновки дослідження підтверджують необхідність зосередження на підвищенні рівня прозорості роботи правоохоронних органів, активізації співпраці поліції з громадськістю та вдосконаленні реформ, спрямованих на посилення ефективності правоохоронної діяльності. Основні рекомендації включають запровадження цифрових технологій для посилення громадського контролю, розробку ефективних стратегій комунікації між поліцією та населенням, а також забезпечення стабільного функціонування механізмів громадського нагляду за діяльністю правоохоронних органів у період війни.

Ключові слова: довіра до поліції, війна, правоохоронні органи, прозорість діяльності поліції, реформи поліції.

Statement of the problem. In today's context of global instability and growing security threats caused by military operations, the issue of the level of public trust in law enforcement agencies is of particular relevance. In martial law, the police perform critical functions to ensure public order, protect the rights and freedoms of citizens, prevent crime and counteract sabotage. At the same time, there is a problem of accountability of law enforcement agencies, preservation of democratic standards of activity and observance of human rights in the context of war.

Ukraine, Latvia, and Lithuania have different historical and political contexts, but they face similar challenges in law enforcement. Ukraine is in the midst of a large-scale war, which has led to dramatic changes in the functioning of law enforcement agencies, the mobilisation of their resources and the need to adapt to new realities. Latvia and Lithuania, as member states of the European Union and NATO, are also forced to strengthen their security policies due to the growing external threats in the region. In all three countries, public trust in the police is an important factor in ensuring law and order, civilian security and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

An analysis of the level of trust in law enforcement agencies in these countries allows us to identify common patterns and adaptation mechanisms of the police to martial law and assess the impact of legal reforms on public trust. An important aspect



is the study of law enforcement accountability as a key tool for ensuring democratic principles in times of war.

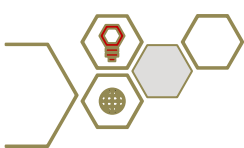
The relevance of this study is stipulated by the need to develop recommendations for improving the effectiveness of law enforcement in wartime and ensuring interaction between the police and the public. The study's results may be useful for law enforcement agencies, public authorities, international organisations, and the expert community in dealing with public safety and the rule of law in times of war.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Previous studies offer a wide range of approaches to police reform, interaction between law enforcement agencies and the public, accountability, and the use of modern technologies in policing. These aspects play a crucial role in understanding the current dynamics of policing in countries at war or in crisis.

E. Skyba and K. Tkachenko [1] offer a philosophical analysis of police interaction with citizens, emphasising the importance of building trust between society and law enforcement agencies. This issue is of particular importance under martial law when public resilience and effective cooperation with the police are critical. The researchers emphasise the need for a new approach to law enforcement based on the active involvement of citizens in law enforcement.

The role of administrative sanctions in the functioning of the National Police of Ukraine is analysed by V. O. Ivantsov and D. A. Zinchenko [2], studying the impact of legal regulation and punitive measures on the level of public trust and legitimacy of law enforcement agencies. This issue is particularly relevant in times of heightened social tension, such as during martial law.

Modern information technologies play a key role in countering disinformation campaigns, which is especially relevant in the context of information warfare. This issue is explored in detail in the work of L. Jakubcova, K. Holubova, and H. Dubravova [3], which analyses the use of technology by law enforcement agencies in three countries to strengthen public trust and prevent manipulation in the media space.



Aspects of police accountability and transparency that directly affect the level of public trust are considered in the study by T. R. Kochel and W. G. Skogan [4]. The conclusions drawn from the natural experiment can be adapted to martial law conditions when the stability of society largely depends on the level of public trust in law enforcement agencies.

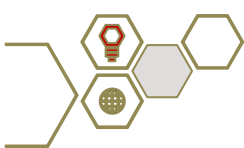
The issue of civic engagement during crisis situations in the Baltic States is reflected in a comparative study by V. R. Giedraitytė Smaliukienė and T. Vedlūga [5]. The analysis, which covers Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, demonstrates the link between citizen engagement and building trust in the police. This makes it possible to compare the challenges faced by the Baltic states with those in Ukraine in the context of war.

An assessment of the administrative and legal framework for the activities of the patrol police in Ukraine was carried out in the study by D. S. Dronik and O. M. Murdova [6]. This analysis allows us to understand how the law enforcement system adapts to the challenges of martial law, as well as what difficulties arise in the process of ensuring law and order in wartime.

Long-term patterns of public trust in the police in the Baltic States were analysed in a study by M. Beilmann, L. Lilleoja, and A. Realo [7]. The authors confirm that a high level of trust is a critical factor in the legitimacy of the police, especially in times of crisis. The findings can be used to study the impact of war on citizens' attitudes towards law enforcement agencies.

The study of civil service reforms in Latvia with a focus on the transformation of the police is presented in I. Reinholde [8]. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical aspects of police reforms, which can be used to assess Ukraine's current efforts to reform law enforcement agencies.

Aspects of public oversight of police activities crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability are examined in the study S. A. Myroniuk, R. V. Myroniuk [9]. The paper analyses citizens' perception of Western Europe and Ukraine regarding the effectiveness of police activities, which is especially relevant in times of national crisis.



The effectiveness of administrative management in the National Police was studied by A. Kubaienko [10], who proposes an evaluation system that can be applied in martial law. The presented approach allows to assess the impact of managerial decisions and organisational structures on public trust in law enforcement agencies in crisis conditions.

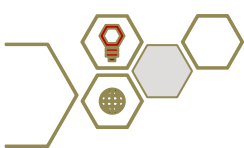
The legal basis of law enforcement in Ukraine is discussed in the study by M. Kovaliv [11]. The author emphasises the importance of adherence to the rule of law in police activities, especially in martial law, when legal supervision and protection of citizens' rights are critical.

Methods of combating organised crime with due regard for human rights are analysed in Y. Khobbi, I. Storozhuk, I. Svoboda, S. Kuzmenko, A. Tymchyshyn [12]. The researchers highlight the issues of police reform and finding a balance between security and civil liberties, which is relevant for Ukraine and other countries in the region in wartime.

Thus, the presented scientific papers allows for a comprehensive assessment of the key factors influencing public trust in the police under martial law. The research confirms the importance of such aspects as transparency, accountability, use of modern technologies, public involvement and improvement of legal regulation. The conclusions of these studies are important for developing effective law enforcement strategies that will help maintain or restore trust in the police in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania.

Identification of unresolved parts of the overall problem. Studying the level of trust in the police under martial law in Ukraine, Latvia, and Lithuania is a complex and multifaceted task that requires a comprehensive approach. An analysis of existing research makes it possible to identify aspects that remain insufficiently researched or require additional analysis.

Despite many studies on law enforcement reform, most focus on theoretical aspects or comparison of police models in peacetime. At the same time, there is a lack of research that assesses the impact of police reforms on the level of public trust in



martial law when the functional tasks of law enforcement agencies are significantly changed and complicated.

In addition, existing studies mainly examine trust in the police in individual countries without thoroughly comparing strategies and practices of law enforcement in crises. Mechanisms for adapting the successful experience of one country to another, taking into account each country's specific social and political context, remain insufficiently developed.

The potential contribution of this study is a comprehensive analysis of these aspects to develop effective recommendations that will help maintain and restore trust in the police in Ukraine during the war.

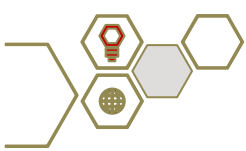
Formulation of research objectives (task statement)

The article aims to compare the level of public trust in law enforcement agencies in Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine under martial law or an increased military threat. The study aims to identify the factors that influence the formation of trust in the police and assess the effectiveness of law enforcement adaptation mechanisms and legal reforms to ensure public security and stability.

Objectives of the article:

1. The main theoretical approaches to public trust in the police must be considered, and their role in crises and military operations must be determined.
2. To investigate the mechanisms of adaptation of law enforcement agencies to wartime conditions and assess their impact on the level of trust in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania.
3. To conduct a comparative analysis of public trust in the police in Ukraine and the Baltic States to identify commonalities and key differences in approaches to law enforcement.

Summary of the main research material. Trust in law enforcement agencies is a key factor in the stability of society, as it determines the level of cooperation between citizens and the police, their willingness to comply with the law and seek help in crisis situations. In the scientific literature, trust in the police is seen as a complex

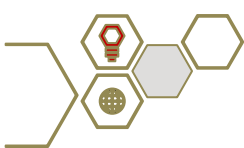


social phenomenon that depends on a number of factors, including the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, their accountability, transparency, respect for human rights and absence of corruption. Theoretical approaches to understanding trust include cognitive, affective and behavioural components that reflect the rational assessment of police actions, emotional perception and appropriate behavioural response of citizens.

During martial law, the police perform extended functions that go beyond standard law enforcement. In addition to preventing crime, they are involved in counter-sabotage activities, regulating the movement of the population, ensuring public safety and supporting the activities of other law enforcement agencies. At the same time, there is a growing risk of human rights violations, excessive use of force and a reduced level of accountability, which can negatively affect public trust. An important aspect is the social legitimacy of the police, which depends on the perception of its activities as fair, proportionate and focused on civilian interests. In wartime, this legitimacy can be either enhanced through effective protection of the population or undermined by authoritarian or corrupt practices [5].

International experience shows that in countries that have experienced military conflicts or other crisis situations, legal reforms, public oversight and transparency mechanisms play an important role in building trust in the police. For example, in post-conflict states such as Bosnia and Herzegovina or Iraq, significant efforts have been made to reform law enforcement, strengthen the role of independent oversight bodies and integrate communities into decision-making processes. In the Baltic states, which once experienced a difficult transition period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the high level of trust in the police was largely the result of systemic European integration, the introduction of accountability standards and professional training in accordance with the rule of law.

Organisations such as the UN, the OSCE and the European Union recommend that in times of crisis, police and society should implement communication strategies, create independent mechanisms for investigating violations by law enforcement, improve police training and actively involve citizens in the process of ensuring public

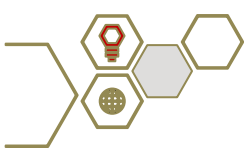


order. In particular, the practice of community policing has proven to be effective in building trust between the police and the public, especially in times of social tension and instability [7].

In the context of Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania, the experience of reforming law enforcement agencies and their adaptation to martial law or the threat of conflict requires a deeper analysis. In Ukraine, an active process of transformation of the National Police is underway, in particular in the context of a large-scale war, which has led to new challenges and changes in the management structure, functional tasks and accountability mechanisms. At the same time, in Latvia and Lithuania, amid growing regional threats, the police are strengthening their cooperation with military structures and international partners, which requires an assessment of the effectiveness of such changes in the context of public trust [2].

The adaptation of law enforcement agencies to the conditions of armed conflict is one of the key factors that determines the effectiveness of their activities and the level of public trust. The war creates new challenges for law enforcement, including the need to respond quickly to an unstable situation, maintain law and order in the face of rising social tensions, combat war-related crime, and work closely with military structures and international partners. The impact of these changes on public trust in the police depends on a number of factors, including the effectiveness of security measures, respect for human rights, openness of law enforcement agencies and their ability to adapt quickly to new threats.

One of the biggest challenges for the police in times of war is maintaining public order in areas that have been subjected to hostilities or temporarily occupied. In Ukraine, the police are faced with the need to perform new functions, including evacuating the population, combating looting, investigating war crimes, controlling the movement of people and preventing sabotage threats. In such circumstances, the police often operate in a complex and dangerous situation, which requires not only a high level of professionalism but also the ability to make quick decisions in a crisis. Of particular importance is the work to restore law and order in the liberated territories,

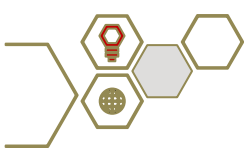


where the police are involved in recording crimes, demining and coordinating humanitarian aid.

An important element of the adaptation of the law enforcement system is the reform of approaches to the management and organisation of police work. Ukraine has strengthened cooperation between the National Police, the National Guard and other law enforcement agencies to ensure effective coordination during martial law. New technologies have been introduced, including the use of drones for patrolling and monitoring the situation in real-time, as well as digital platforms for the rapid collection of information about potential threats [6]. In addition, civic initiatives are being actively engaged to support law enforcement activities, which helps to build trust between the police and society.

In Lithuania and Latvia, which are not at war, law enforcement agencies have also taken adaptive measures in response to the military threat from Russia and Belarus. The main changes have been in strengthening border controls, combating disinformation, enhancing cybersecurity and monitoring the activities of potentially dangerous groups. The police are actively cooperating with NATO military and intelligence services to strengthen defence capabilities and prevent possible threats. Additional measures have also been implemented in these countries to enhance public safety, including expanding video surveillance, improving rapid response mechanisms and expanding the legal framework to effectively combat potential sabotage groups.

The adaptation of the police to the conditions of war and security threats has a direct impact on the level of public trust. In Ukraine, where the police play an important role in providing security during the hostilities, the level of trust in the police has generally increased, especially in the de-occupied territories. At the same time, there are factors that can reduce trust, such as abuse of power, corruption and lack of effectiveness in investigating crimes. Communication between the police and citizens is an important aspect: transparency in the activities of law enforcement agencies, openness to cooperation, and prompt response to citizens' appeals have a significant impact on public perception of the police.

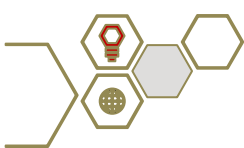


In Lithuania and Latvia, trust in the police is traditionally higher than in Ukraine due to the stability of institutions and a high level of legal culture. However, increased police measures in response to security challenges also create risks associated with possible restrictions on civil liberties. Therefore, in these countries, it is important to balance security with the preservation of democratic principles, which is achieved through effective public control over police activities and openness of the law enforcement system.

Thus, adapting law enforcement agencies to the conditions of war and security threats is a complex process that requires rapid response to challenges, effective cooperation with other law enforcement agencies and international partners, and the introduction of new technologies and communication strategies. The level of public trust in the police largely depends on how effectively law enforcement agencies perform their functions, ensure the safety of citizens and adhere to democratic principles. The experience of Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia in this area can be useful for shaping modern law enforcement policy in the face of new challenges and threats.

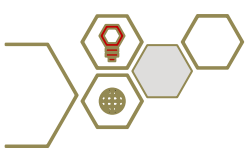
The level of public trust in the police in Latvia remains consistently high, which is largely due to the effective work of law enforcement agencies, openness to society and the implementation of European standards in the field of public security. Trust is built through transparency in police work, the active use of communication platforms to engage with the public, and the high level of professional training of law enforcement officers. Particular attention is paid to preventive activities, which include patrolling problem areas, educational work and close cooperation with local communities.

Latvia's approach to crisis management is based on comprehensive strategies that provide for rapid response to threats, effective coordination between the police and other security agencies, and the introduction of the latest technologies in the field of public security. In the context of growing regional security risks, special attention is paid to combating disinformation, strengthening border control, and preventing sabotage and cyber threats [8]. The police actively cooperate with international



partners, including the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and Interpol, which contribute to strengthening security in the country. The main legislative acts regulating police activities in Latvia include the Law on Police [13], which defines the main functions and powers of law enforcement officers, as well as the reform of the law enforcement system aimed at raising professional standards and adapting to European requirements. In 2019, an update to the Police Law was adopted, which strengthened control over law enforcement and introduced new public accountability mechanisms.

In Lithuania, law enforcement agencies are guided by the “community policing” model, which involves close cooperation with local communities and the involvement of the population in solving public order issues [1]. The police hold regular meetings with citizens, analyse local problems and adapt their activities to the needs of the population. One of the key principles is to ensure transparency of law enforcement activities, which is implemented through open reports, availability of information on police work and prompt response to citizens' appeals. Special attention is paid to information security, as trust in law enforcement agencies largely depends on the perception of their work in the information space. Lithuania actively fights against disinformation and manipulation that can influence public opinion about the effectiveness of the police. Modern technologies are used to monitor the information field, and cooperation with the media and NGOs is aimed at raising public awareness of security issues. An important tool is digital platforms that allow for prompt reporting of threats and receiving feedback from the public. The reform of the law enforcement system in Lithuania, including the Law on Police [14], is aimed at raising service standards and improving the effectiveness of crisis response. In 2016, a large-scale police reform was introduced, which included optimisation of staffing, raising salaries of law enforcement officers and introduction of modern technologies in police work. Integration with European structures such as Europol and Eurojust also plays a significant role. Special attention is paid to information security, as trust in law enforcement agencies largely depends on the perception of their work in the



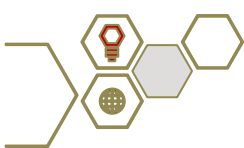
information space. Lithuania actively fights disinformation and manipulation that can influence public opinion about the effectiveness of the police. Modern technologies are used to monitor the information field, and cooperation with the media and NGOs is aimed at raising public awareness of security issues. An important tool is digital platforms that allow for prompt reporting of threats and receiving feedback from the public [3].

The functioning of the police in wartime was a serious challenge for the law enforcement system of Ukraine, which required rapid adaptation to the new conditions. The main tasks of the police during the war are to ensure public order, counter war crimes, coordinate the evacuation of the population, and combat looting and sabotage threats. Work with the de-occupied territories plays a significant role, including documenting war crimes, restoring security mechanisms and cooperating with international human rights organisations.

Despite the growing role of the police in ensuring security, public confidence in law enforcement remains mixed. On the one hand, a significant proportion of the population highly appreciates the work of the police during the war, especially in the frontline and liberated territories. On the other hand, challenges related to corruption, abuse of power and lack of effectiveness in investigating certain crimes have a negative impact on public perception of the police.

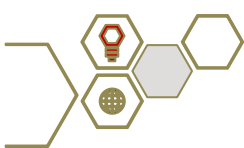
The main legislative act regulating police activities in Ukraine is the Law of Ukraine “On the National Police” [15], which provides for the modernisation of the law enforcement system, ensuring respect for human rights and effective crime fighting. In 2021, the law was amended to strengthen control over the police and expand its functions in the context of martial law. Additionally, reforms under the Law on Prevention of Corruption and the implementation of European standards in law enforcement are aimed at increasing trust in the police.

One of the key ways to improve trust is to increase the transparency of police activities and introduce mechanisms of public control. The use of modern technology, including video recording of offences, digital systems for managing citizen complaints



and enhanced communication through social media, helps to improve interaction between the police and society. Reforming the law enforcement system to raise the standards of police work, improve the working conditions of law enforcement officers and make them more accountable to society remains an important factor.

The assessment of the effectiveness of reforms in the context of the war demonstrates significant progress in the security sector, but a number of challenges remain that need to be addressed. It is necessary to strengthen control over police activities further, improve mechanisms for protecting citizens' rights, and introduce new methods of ensuring law and order in times of war. The topic of strengthening police accountability and the protection of citizens' rights in wartime, especially through a comparative analysis of Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia, highlights several important aspects. First, transparency and accountability of law enforcement agencies play a central role in ensuring that police act within the law, especially in times of war when the potential for abuse of power is heightened. Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia have introduced various mechanisms to ensure that police actions are closely monitored and that there is a clear process for holding police officers accountable [9]. These mechanisms include independent oversight bodies, public access to police records and actions, and public reports on law enforcement activities. However, the effectiveness of these measures varies depending on the legal framework, political climate and strength of civil society in each country [4]. When it comes to protecting the rights of citizens in wartime, the situation becomes particularly complex. While wartime may restrict certain civil liberties in the name of national security, ensuring these restrictions are not excessive is crucial. In Ukraine, especially given the ongoing conflict, balancing security interests with the protection of human rights has become a priority [10]. The legal measures taken to address such issues are constantly evolving, as the need to maintain public safety and the rule of law is paramount. In Lithuania and Latvia, the protection of citizens' rights during crises is enshrined in legislation. However, strong democratic traditions and the active involvement of international human rights organisations and local oversight bodies mitigate wartime challenges.

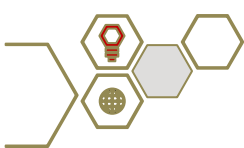


A comparison of the level of trust in the police in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania reveals the key factors influencing the relationship between law enforcement agencies and citizens. All three countries share a common thread regarding the need for police reform. However, their historical, political and social contexts differ significantly, directly affecting the level of trust in law enforcement agencies. Ukraine, in particular, is going through a difficult period of reforms due to the war and political difficulties. At the same time, Latvia and Lithuania have already completed the main stages of police reform and continue to work on increasing public trust (Table 1).

Table 1

Comparative analysis of the level of trust in the police in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania

Criterion	Ukraine	Latvia	Lithuania
Level of trust in the police	Low, especially due to corruption and abuse	Moderately high, stable in recent years	High, especially after police reform
Key issues affecting trust	Corruption, abuse of power, lack of effective control	Past cases of abuse, but significant progress in reforms	Transition from the Soviet legacy to European standards
Reforms in the police	Reforms since 2015, partial success in fighting corruption	Deep police reform since 2000s, European standards	Significant police reform in the 2000s, adaptation to European integration requirements
Independent control bodies	OMBUDSMAN, NABU, Prosecutors, but there are questions about their effectiveness	Independent institutions and constant monitoring by the EU	Independent regulatory authorities, good cooperation with international organisations
Institutional support for citizens	Low trust in human rights organisations	High level of support from NGOs and	Strong institutional support for human and civil rights

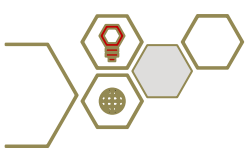


	due to historical problems	human rights organisations	
Impact of war/conflict	War has a negative impact on trust in the police	No external conflicts, but few challenges in terms of corruption	No major conflicts, but problems with corruption in the past
Interaction with the public	Just the initial steps in establishing cooperation with the community	High level of interaction and communication with the community	Well-developed interaction, human rights education programmes for citizens
Common features	Need for further reforms, fight against corruption	Finding and improving interaction with citizens, support from the EU	Reforms focused on European standards
Differences	War, economic difficulties, corruption remain obstacles to trust	Stability, integration into the EU, absence of military threats	Highly trusted due to successful reforms and European orientation

Source: author's own development

An analysis of the level of trust in the police in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania shows that each country has its own specific challenges and opportunities for improvement. In Ukraine, the biggest obstacles are war and corruption, which reduce the effectiveness of reforms and affect the public perception of the police. Latvia and Lithuania have more stable results due to deep reforms and active support from European institutions, although these countries are not without problems, such as isolated cases of abuse and corruption. Overall, police effectiveness and trust in these countries depend on continued efforts to reform and improve oversight and transparency of law enforcement.

Conclusions. The main conclusions from the analysis of the level of trust in the police in Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania show the importance of a comprehensive approach to reforming law enforcement agencies. In all three countries, trust in the

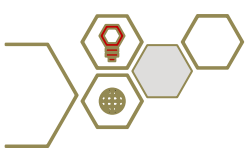


police is shaped by various factors, including historical experience, corruption, effectiveness of reforms and interaction with citizens. In Ukraine, the level of trust remains low, mainly due to lingering problems of corruption, abuse of power and lack of effective oversight. The war in the east of the country further exacerbates this problem, although police reforms launched in 2015 have contributed to positive changes. Latvia and Lithuania have demonstrated strong results in law enforcement due to successful reforms and integration into the European legal system, which has positively impacted public trust in the police.

Several key aspects should be addressed to increase trust in the police in Ukraine. First, the fight against corruption in law enforcement agencies should continue through the introduction of transparent control mechanisms and independent monitoring. Secondly, an important step would be to strengthen police interaction with citizens and increase public awareness of the functioning of law enforcement agencies through openness and accessibility of information. Ukraine should also focus on developing training programmes for police officers, orienting them towards European work standards, including respect for human rights and professionalism.

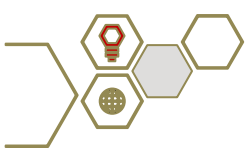
In Latvia and Lithuania, where the level of trust is higher, there is also potential for improvement. Recommendations for these countries are to improve monitoring mechanisms further, increase the accountability of police agencies to the public, and ensure greater accessibility to human rights institutions for citizens. These steps will help to maintain a high level of trust and strengthen the effectiveness of the police even in times of social and economic challenges.

In general, the key elements for increasing trust in the police in all three countries are transparency of law enforcement agencies, ensuring high standards of ethics and professionalism among police officers, and active cooperation with the public through open communication channels.



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