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## **Reflections Based on Archival Sources on the Role and Importance of the State Border in the Awareness of the Society of the Second Republic of Poland**

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## ABSTRACT

*The presented article raises the issue of evaluating awareness among Polish society about the role and importance of the state border in the security system of the Second Republic of Poland in the context of the lessons learned from the partitions period. Discussing the problem of the protection of the Polish border by border services, he points to the typical problems faced by the newly established countries in Europe at that time, i.e. with delineating and marking the border in the field, the course of which line in the field soullessly divided arable fields, houses and industrial plants. It is also a problem of broken relations between families living in a given area for centuries, which were suddenly separated by a "new" borderline. The article presents the basic definitions of the concept of the state border that appeared at the turn of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century in the public space. The article also includes information on the length of the borders of the Second Republic of Poland and the size of individual sections of the border with its then neighbours. While discussing the issue of the state border, it is also presented in accordance with the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 23 December 1927 on state borders, the division of the border into zones and the rules of staying in these zones for Polish citizens and foreigners*

**KEY WORDS:** *state border, state border function, internal security, borderline, border strip, smuggling, border zone, social awareness, border crossing rules.*

## INTRODUCTION

State borders are one of the four attributes, after territory, population and national identity, which allow a given state to be considered an entity in the international arena in the light of international law. Bloody wars have been waged for generations over their course and shape, costing many lives. In political history, the great of this world concluded, through arduous political negotiations, peace agreements, which guaranteed the inviolability of state borders established and then violated. Analyzing the political situation in Europe over the last century, it should be stated that the political map of Europe has changed many times. Such turning points in the modern history of Europe, which changed the political map of the old continent, were the events related to the end of the First World War in November 1918, the Second World War in May 1945, and the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The consequence of these events was the fact that new countries appeared on the map of Europe /e.g. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Moldova, Lithuania, Latvia, the Republic of Poland and Hungary, and some other countries /e.g.: Czechoslovakia, Germany, Romania, the Republic of Poland and Hungary/ as

a result of political decisions taken over the last century radically changed their territorial shape, and thus the course of state borders.

Borders in the 20th century are primarily a regime related to the stay of people in the border zone, as well as specific rules for crossing it. Therefore, the following questions arise at this point:

- what is the meaning of the concept of state border for an ordinary citizen?
- is the regime in the border area friendly to its citizens?
- what role does the borderline play in the security system of the Second Republic of Poland?

This is important because the concept of the border can be considered in historical, geographical and legal terms. From the historical point of view, the term border has been understood and perceived in various ways, it has changed along with the development of humanity. During the formation of states, this concept was understood as a boundary line separating the territory of a state from its neighbours. Over time, when political and economic differences between neighbouring countries appeared, the concept of a border strip appeared, and with the emergence of modern states, the concept of a borderline appeared in international law. The development of societies that took place over the centuries contributed to the fact that the concept of a border referring to a specific area of territory, as economic contacts developed, that natural borders lost their importance in favour of border lines running in the field, becoming at the same time lines delineating state borders.

In the history of modern Poland, the state border had various meanings throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. It was treated differently by successive generations of Poles fighting for the independence of the Polish state during the partitions. On the one hand, the non-existent border of the Republic of Poland was synonymous with a lost state<sup>1</sup>, and on the other hand, in the case of partitioned borders, it was a hated symbol that divided the nation. During this period, the border of the partitions was a border that was generally not recognized and whose border regime was systematically broken. In the Polish literature of that period, there are many accounts of illegal crossing of border cordons by people who, through illegal emigration /so-called economic / saw a chance to improve their living conditions, as well as accounts of people who, escaping the persecution of the security apparatus of the partitioning powers, saved their lives. Examples of this were the events that took place on the borders of the partitioning countries and its immediate hinterland

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<sup>1</sup> At the end of the existence of the First Polish Republic in the eighteenth century, thanks to its neighbours Russia, Prussia and Austria, the then Polish state as a result of the cession of part of its territory which was the result of a lost war and under the threat of subsequent military interventions as a result of three successive partitions that took place in 1772, 1793 and 1795 disappeared from the political map of Europe for 123 years.

during the national uprisings in 1831 and 1863<sup>2</sup>, which took place in the territory of the Russian partition. At that time, the border cordon existing between the partitioning powers effectively cut off the Polish insurgents from foreign aid, which had an impact on the course and, consequently, the collapse of the uprisings. This contributed to the fact that the then borders became alien, and hostile in the consciousness of the Polish society, threatening the national interest. This situation was soon to change.

The outbreak of the First World War led to the collapse of the partitioning powers, and thus to the crossing of the existing borders in Central Europe. The "Great War" created favourable conditions for the regaining of independence of several countries, including Poland. The events that followed the First World War contributed, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, to the redrawing of state borders.

It would seem that the emergence in November 1918 (after 123 years of non-existence) of the reborn Republic of Poland, a state recognized by the international community with international borders marked out and confirmed by treaties, would change the attitude of the general public to the issue of state borders. Nothing could be more wrong. On the one hand, Polish society was proud of the fact that the reborn Second Republic of Poland guards the internal security of the state, ensuring the integrity of Poland's territory and the inviolability of state borders. On the other hand, the newly created borders (which are often forgotten today) have become, especially for the inhabitants of the Polish borderland, the cause of their curse.

The resulting border line<sup>3</sup> uncompromisingly divided arable fields, houses, industrial plants, and above all, it made it difficult for families living on both sides of the border to contact each other.










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<sup>2</sup> In this case, we are talking about two national uprisings: the November one, which lasted in the years 1830-1831, and the January one, which lasted in the years 1863-1864, and they were directed against one of the three invaders of the Russian Empire. The scope of the uprising covered the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth occupied as a result of annexation by Russia. The fears of the uprising were bloodily suppressed by the invader. The defeat of the insurgents contributed to repressions against the Polish society, to mass deportations /deportations of its participants to Siberia/ and to the emigration of the society beyond the borders of the Russian Empire, the so-called Great Emigration. The result of both uprisings was also the decline of the economic importance of these lands and the liquidation of national identity, and thus the tightening of the policy of Russification of Polish society in all its areas. Центральний Державний Історичний Архів у Львові (hereinafter CDIA in Lviv), *Collection of Files of the Lesser Poland District Border Guard Inspectorate, Lectures on the history of Poland*, ref. act no. 204/2/2132, sheets 18 - 29,

<sup>3</sup> In the interwar period, the total length of the external borders of the Second Polish Republic, after they were marked out and finally recognized by the international community, was 5,529 km. This put Poland in fifth place in terms of the length of borders among European countries. Among the countries existing at that time, Italy with external borders of 9,862 km, Sweden - 7,624 km, Germany - 8,080 km and Norway - 59,970 km had a longer borderline than Poland. In the interwar period, the borders of the Second Polish Republic were divided as follows: sea border 140 km, with Germany 1911 km, Free City



**Długość poszczególnych odcinków granicy Polski przed 1 kwietnia 1939 roku z:**

 Czeszechosłowacją - 964 km	 Łotwą - 106 km	 Wolnym Miastem Gdańskim - 121 km
 Rumunią- 347 km	 Litwą - 507 km	 Niemcami - 1304 km
 ZSSR - 1412 km	 Prusami Wschodnimi - 607 km	 granicą morską- 140 km

**Figure 1.** Map of Poland in September 1938.

Source: Author's own study based on the map: Europe in the years 1923 - 1939 [in] Historical Atlas of the World, Warsaw 1974, p. 138 and the Small Statistical Yearbook 1938 p. 11

of Gdańsk 126 km, in the east with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics 1412 km, with Latvia 106 km and Lithuania 507 km and in the south with Czechoslovakia 984 km, and with the Kingdom of Romania 347 km. For more see, CDIA in Lviv, *Collection of Files of the Malopolska Regional Inspectorate of the Border Guard, Lectures from the Borders of Poland*, ref. act no. 204/2/2134, sheet 9,...

The reason for this state of affairs was the fact that in over 95% of the borderline of the Second Polish Republic ran in an area where it had never existed before. It re-divided the area which for the last 123 years was a compact territory of one of the three partitioning powers. The newly drawn borderline introduced a legal regime, also everywhere where there had never been any restrictions in the sphere of economic activity and in basic civil liberties, i.e. in the form of freedom of settlement, residence and movement of the population. Therefore, in the interwar period, the state border was perceived differently by the inhabitants of central Poland, and even differently by the inhabitants of the borderland.

The new political division in this part of Europe, which significantly complicated the situation of ordinary citizens in this area, required international regulation as soon as possible. The above issue is pointed out by Henryk Dominiczak, who, describing the state of affairs on the Polish borderland after 1923, states that "*due to the intersection of many farms with the border line, the problem of regulating local border traffic remained (...)*"<sup>4</sup>.

The emergence of new countries in Europe after 1918, with diverse economic levels and different structures of budget revenues, quickly contributed to the emergence of price differences on a single commodity between individual countries. The excessive fiscal policy applied in this period by individual countries (including Poland), the imposition of high customs duties on goods from abroad, as well as the imposition of high taxes on goods manufactured in Poland in a short time, led to significant price disparities for individual goods. During this period, the high prices prevailing in the country generated a supply of cheap contraband products. The existing demand for items from contraband in a short time contributed to the fact that the Polish borderland became a place where border crime and customs and fiscal crime began to accumulate. In connection with the above, the concept of "state border" evolved in the twentieth century in the area of international law, in addition to its political and military meaning, it gained a new meaning - economic.

It is worth emphasizing at this point that the independent Polish state, throughout its existence in the years 1918 - 1939, tried to change the attitude of society toward the state border through preventive measures. By conducting pro-state activities, educating the society, and building new relations between the society and the state, attempts were made to point out the positive aspects of the state border, changing the awareness of Polish society in this respect.

When considering the concept of border, it should be mentioned that in the initial period of the existence of states, formal borders delineated by border lines did not exist because they were not able to be practically drawn in the field. The states were limited by natural obstacles that formed lines running through riverbeds, sea

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<sup>4</sup> H. Dominiczak, *The history of the borderlands and the border of the Polish state in the east from the earliest times to 1945*, Toruń 2011, p. 362.

and lake shores, or desert areas, e.g. "Wild Fields" or forests that were difficult to cross. Watercourses and areas formed natural borders separating the territory of individual countries. However, the economic development of the countries that took place at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the increase in population, but also political factors contributed to the fact that the state borders began to take on a linear character. This, in turn, indicates the historical conditioning of the very concept of the state border, which has been modified over the centuries.

Therefore, it is worth quoting the historical meaning of this concept after Józef Szymański, from which it follows that initially "*... the border was first understood as a border line, then a border strip, from which the concept of a linear border was only created*"<sup>5</sup>. The modern name of the borderline is the concept of the border zone and the border strip<sup>6</sup>, which are used in the legal nomenclature. On the other hand, Grzegorz Balawajder, reflecting on the evolution of the function of borders in modern history, stated that already in the 19th century, nation-states "*...by adopting the principle of territoriality, gave borders the character of rigid lines stretching in geographical and geopolitical space*"<sup>7</sup>.

In connection with the above, the consequence of this state of affairs was the fact that the sovereign power of the state was limited to the area defined by the boundary line constituting the end of its jurisdiction. This in turn points to the function of the boundary in the internal and external dimensions. Taking into account the issue of protection of the southern border of the Second Republic of Poland in the years 1935 - 1939 and the impact of the events that took place in this area on the state of internal security of the state, it will be important for the issues raised to present the function of the border in the external area. G. Balawajder, quoted earlier, when analyzing the functions of the state border, believes that "*... the external dimension of the border concerns the restriction of access to the territory of the state by all entities operating outside its territory*"<sup>8</sup>.

This means that accordingly to this function, to protect its political and economic interests, the Second Republic of Poland had to have an efficiently functioning border protection system that reacted to these threats in the form of: /KOP, Border Guard, State Police and the customs and tax office/. Teresa Grabińska, on the other

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<sup>5</sup> J. Szymański, *Auxiliary sciences of history from the end of the 4th to the end of the 18th century*, Warsaw 1976, p. 103..

<sup>6</sup> G. Zaremba, *The origin of the concept of the border and its protection in historical thought throughout history*, [in] *Problems of border protection*, Bulletin No. 39/2008, Kętrzyn 2008, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> G. Balawajder, *Evolution of border functions and the future of the nation state*, [in] *Evolution of the border institution in contemporary Europe*, Opole 2010, p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> For more see G. Balawajder, *State borders as a legal, political and social category*, [in] *State borders as the boundaries of the jurisdiction in the European Union*, Dąbrowa Górnicza 2012, p. 13.

hand, defines the concept of the border as "... separation of areas of the state or closure, as well as an end, i.e. an impassable point <sup>9</sup>..."

Considering the concept of the state border, it is worth getting acquainted with the interpretation of this concept found in the Universal Encyclopaedia of 1862. According to the definition contained therein, borders are: "*the last border of a country (...)*", and in old Polish "*the borderlands were called*"<sup>10</sup>. The author of the presented definition refers only to the territory, but there is no reference in the definition to the course of the borderline separating neighbouring countries.

On the other hand, in the Illustrated Encyclopaedia published in 1926 during the period of the independent Republic of Poland, there is a definition of the border referring to the issue of the political border: [political borders of states] "(...) are divided into natural and artificial; the first ones are based on certain lines set by nature, e.g. mountains, banks, rivers; the second result from the arrangement of neighbouring countries"<sup>11</sup>. In the presented definition, the criterion of the boundary line is already mentioned, as well as the issue of bilateral agreements regulating mutual border matters concluded by neighbouring countries.

For the first time, a modern definition of the state border appears in the regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of December 23, 1927 "*on the state borders*". This is a definition that takes into account all the then applicable norms in the field of international law at the beginning of the 20th century. Pursuant to Art. 1 above of the regulation: "*The state border is a borderline established in the manner provided for by international agreements, separating the territory of the Republic of Poland from the territory of neighbouring countries, or a line separating the Polish coastal sea from the high sea (...)*"<sup>12</sup>.

The presented definition contains three basic elements important from the point of view of the discussed issues in the field of internal security of the state. The first element is a border line, delimited in the field and marked with border devices - border signs. In accordance with the applicable rules in this regard, the process of demarcation, i.e. setting the border, was the result of joint work of the border commission<sup>13</sup>, for example for the southern border: Polish-Czechoslovak or Polish-Ro-

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<sup>9</sup> T. Grabińska, *State borders, separation or approximation, closure or opening*, [in] *Security in border areas Volume I*, edited by B. Kaczamczyk, Toruń 2017. p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Universal Encyclopedia*, Print by S. Olgerbrand, Księgarz i Typografa, Warsaw 1862, p. 573..

<sup>11</sup> *Illustrated Encyclopaedia*, Trzask, Evert and Machalski Publishing House, Warsaw 1926, p. 326.

<sup>12</sup> Art. 1 of the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 23.12.1927 on state borders, *Journal of Laws of 1927*, No. 117, item 996..

<sup>13</sup> Demarcation of the border in the field was carried out in 5 stages. The first is reconnaissance, during which technicians equipped with topographic and cadastral maps, technical reports, plans for regulating border rivers and plans for the parcelling of larger borderlands, as well as excerpts from land and mortgage registers checked the course of the future border in the field. In the next stage of

manian commission<sup>14</sup>. The final stage of the work of the mixed border commission was the border protocol with a detailed technical description of the borderline and a map on which the border was marked in detail, as well as technical devices marking the border.

The second element of the definition was the notification of the state borders, i.e. their international recognition. This was usually done based on bilateral agreements concluded by neighbouring countries or based on international treaties ratified by individual governments.

The third element of the presented definition referred directly to the territory of the state, ie to the territory. As defined in the 1936 Universal Encyclopaedia, the triforium of a state means "*an area of the country defined within its borders*"<sup>15</sup>. In the presented definition, there are references to the area of the state as well as to its borders that define and limit its area. It is worth emphasizing at this point that at that time the concept of the area of the state was closely related to the customs territory. In the interwar period, the Polish customs territory included the territory of the Polish state and the Free City of Danzig<sup>16</sup>.

Presenting the evolution of the concept of the state border, it is worth quoting the definition found in the "Instructions of the Border Protection Corps" introduced in 1928 for official use by the then commander of the formation, Maj. Gen. Henryk Odrowąż-Minkiewicz. According to the provisions of art. 1 of the quoted manual: "*The border of the Polish State is the line separating the territory of the Polish State from the territories of other countries, or from the high seas. The boundary line*

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joint work, the "stacking of the border", i.e. provisional marking of the border, was started. After the previous course of work had been approved by the delimitation commission, the next stage was the installation of appropriate border posts with national emblems and basic technical data regarding the description of the border. As soon as the boundary markers were placed, a control measurement of the boundary line was carried out again using various measurement methods, which allowed the boundary line to be transferred on the map. The final stage of the work of the technical commission was the preparation of a description of the border course included in the final survey; it consisted in checking the results of previous measurements with the location of boundary markers. All technical and measurement works (including the survey) were approved on behalf of governments by delimitation commissions. For more see. L. Wasilewski, Work on establishing and marking the borderline [in] "*Border Guard 1928-1933 on the 5th anniversary of entering service on the borders of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw 1933, pp. 26-27*"; A. Skorek, *Border signs of the Second Polish Republic (poles)* [in] Bulletin of the Central Border Guard Training Center 3/2004, Koszalin 2004, pp. 108-109..

<sup>14</sup> The Polish-Czechoslovak border was marked out during the delineation of the common border in the years 1920-1926 by the "Commission de Delimitation de la Frontiere Polono - Tchecoslovaque". List of conventional signs used for sketches of the border in the scale of 1: 5000, "Karpacka Brygada WOP" No. 4/1956.

<sup>15</sup> *Universal Encyclopaedia*, vol. 17, Gutenberg Publishing House, Kraków 1930, p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> Chapter I, point 4. *Instructions of the Border Guard* service part I, Warsaw 1931, p. 9.

*marks the demarcation of state sovereignty on the ground, underground and in the air*<sup>17</sup>.

The analysis of the above term shows that the definition was formulated in a simple way so that it was understood by a private soldier of the Border Protection Corps (hereinafter KOP). At the same time, due to its content, it is a universal regulation that takes into account all aspects of the modern twentieth-century world.

The presented KOP definition of the state border - in addition to the content transferred directly from the regulation on state borders regarding the borderline and state area - introduces a new element that is worth paying attention to from the point of view of state security. Well, it indicates that the boundary line has two spatial dimensions: horizontal and vertical. The first concerns the course of the state border in the field, and the second - vertical - refers to the airspace and reaches deep into the earth. Including the state border in the spatial dimension is associated with the development of aviation, and thus with the issue of violation of Polish airspace by foreign aircraft (e.g. spy flights), which was reported by the Polish border services, as well as with the protection of Polish mineral deposits against their illegal exploitation by foreign countries - this issue concerns, for example, mines in Silesia. In the 1920s, the smuggling of goods across the state border in Silesia was also carried out underground in the galleries of old mines that crossed the state borderline underground.

Due to the course of the borderline in the area, in the interwar period the following types of borders were distinguished:

- terrestrial (artificial and natural);
- air;
- river;
- marine<sup>18</sup>.

The natural borders were mountain ranges, watersheds and forests. Artificial borders were marked in the field with border posts, mounds, panicles, ditches and embankments. In the interwar period, border signs were common (for neighbouring countries) when the state border ran in a straight line from the middle of one border marker to the middle of another border marker, or they belonged to one of the countries when border markers were placed on a borderline that ran: in the middle of the

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<sup>17</sup> P. Skubisz, *Service manual of the Border Protection Corps*, Warsaw 2010, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> *State territory and borders*, [in] *Czaty magazine of the Border Guard* No. 24 of August 31, 1931, p. 3.

border road: border ditch and watercourses. In this case, the border signs were placed alternately on the side of one or the other country<sup>19</sup>

The situation was completely different in the case of border watercourses. Following the applicable international regulations, river borders ran in the middle of the border river, and in the case of navigable rivers in the middle of the main channel or current. Very often there were cases of natural shifting of the riverbed, then the state border still ran along the old riverbed. The bridges and footbridges located on the border rivers belonged in half to the neighbouring countries, and the state border runs through the middle of the bridge. In the case of rivers and watercourses in the interwar period, the rule was that a border state could not have both banks of a river. Frequent changes occurring within the natural and river borders under the influence of the forces of nature have been the cause of numerous international disputes<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, in most cases, attempts were made to delineate state borders and base them on artificial borders.

In the interwar period, sea borders were based on the principle of freedom of the seas adopted in the early 18th century. However, due to ensure the safety of the coast and due to the economic interest of a given state, the area of territorial waters was excluded from the sea area and subjected to the jurisdiction of a state with access to the sea. According to the Dutch rule introduced in the 17th century: the power of the state having access to the sea coast extends to the coastal waters and reaches from the line of the greatest low tide to three nautical miles (5555.4 m) into the sea. The resulting legal regulation was widely accepted and recognized by all countries, including Poland<sup>21</sup>.

An efficient system of state border protection in the period of the Second Republic of Poland was based on special powers of border services to control persons residing or temporarily staying in the border zone and to control buildings, rooms of state and private institutions, personal belongings, as well as all commercial, customs and fiscal documentation related to trade in goods. The detailed competencies of the Border Guard in this respect are defined in the regulation on state borders, on the Border Guard and in internal regulations issued by the minister of internal affairs in consultation with the minister of treasury.

Authorizations to carry out official activities in the field of state border protection have been narrowed down for border formations to the border area of the state directly adjacent to the state border. This area - called the borderland - in accordance with the regulation on state borders, covered an area up to 30 km wide in a straight

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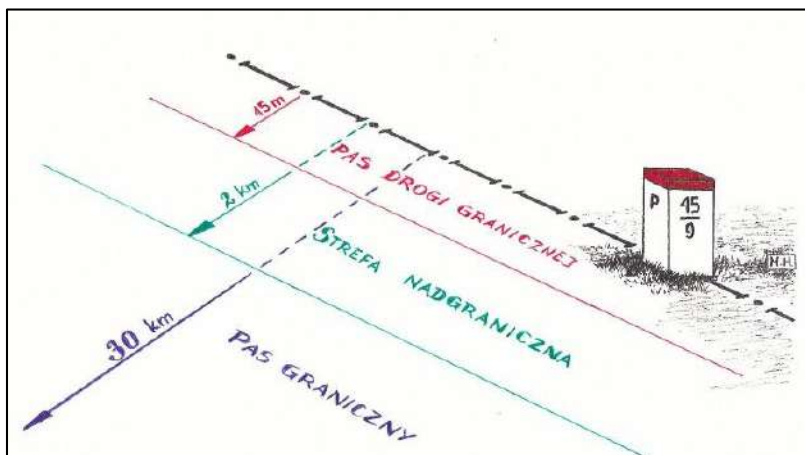
<sup>19</sup> State Archives in Toruń, Files of the Brodnica Border Guard District, *Border Service - manual for Border Guard officers*, reference number act No. 69/1356/10/1, k 4 -5

<sup>20</sup> *State territory and borders* [in] *Czasy magazynu of the Border Guard* No. 24 of August 31, 1931, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> There. p. 3.

line from the border into the interior of the state. To secure the protection of the state border, but also to facilitate the performance of official duties by the Border Guard, the borderland throughout the territory of the Second Republic of Poland was divided into three strips of different width adjacent directly to the border line. Pursuant to Art. 3 above According to the regulation, the division of the borderland was as follows:

- a) the strip of the border road - covering the area of land from the borderline into the interior of the country, 15 meters wide;
- b) border zone - covering the area starting from the borderline into the interior of the country with a width of 2 km;
- c) border strip - covering the area of counties adjacent to the state border. which is 30 km from the borderline into the country<sup>22</sup>.



**Figure 2.** Scheme of the division of the borderland on the basis of the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of December 23, 1927 on state borders.

Source: Author's own study.

The legal provisions in force on the borderland imposed a number of rights and obligations on public administration authorities, land and real estate owners, as well as on borderland residents. For the purposes of this publication, the Border Guard's powers in this regard will be presented. It is worth emphasizing that each of the above-mentioned border zones was assigned a specific role by the legislator in the system of protection and security of the state border.

<sup>22</sup> Art. 3 of the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 23.12.1927 on state borders, Journal of Laws of 1927, No. 117, item 996..

The strip of the border road, due to its course in the field, was an area where patrols could move without any obstacles on the part of the land owners and border guard posts or the Border Protection Corps could be set up. Only persons with valid identity documents who were obliged to undergo identity checks by border guards were allowed to stay in this area. In justified cases, when landowners made it difficult for the Border Guard authorities to perform official duties or there were other reasons related to the need to protect the border, land adjacent to the state border located in the border road strip was expropriated and taken over from their previous owners by the State Treasury<sup>23</sup>.

The border zone, lying in the direct hinterland of the state border, was a special place in the security system. Due to the fact that this area was at risk of various forms of border crime, at the request of the Border Guard, the territorially competent *voivodes* could introduce restrictions regarding: possession of weapons, hunting, staying at night, using roads, as well as introducing an obligation to register for persons staying temporarily in this area. /The above regulations significantly restricted civil liberties/. In justified cases resulting from the need for border protection, the minister of internal affairs could introduce temporary restrictions on the movement of people and means of transport in the border zone and introduce the obligation to obtain residence permits in the border zone for persons not registered in this area. In cases where access to land located in the border zone was difficult for Polish border formations, and the buildings located in this area made it difficult to perform official duties, land and buildings could be expropriated and taken over by the State Treasury.

In addition, due to the need to ensure the visibility of the borderline and technical devices marking the state border in the field, the Border Guard (hereinafter referred to as Border Guard) could apply to the *poviat* authorities to cut down trees and bushes and to clear a strip up to 1 km wide from the border line<sup>24</sup>.

The border strip due to its specificity, i.e. an area up to 30 km from the border line, a large number of permanent residents, the number of people temporarily added, as well as the terrain and its urbanization, was very difficult to "*control and secure*" by the pre-war Border Guard. Additional difficulties in securing the border strip were generated by numerous communication routes in this area, usually leading from the state borderline into the interior of the country. They facilitated the quick movement of people and goods to the centre of Poland. The border strip created ideal conditions for border crime, customs and tax crime, as well as the operation of illegal warehouses and warehouses of smuggled goods, and the local population was quite willing

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<sup>23</sup> CDIA in Lviv, *Collection of Files of the Malopolska Regional Inspectorate of the Border Guard, Strip of the border road*, [in] *Instruction of the border service...* Warsaw 1930, ref. act No. 204/2/2042, sheet 9.,

<sup>24</sup> Border zone, [in] "*Instructions of the border service...*", sheet 9–10.

to participate in the process of smuggling and distributing goods. The Border Guard was forced to apply to poviats authorities with a request to limit basic civil liberties in the scope of free settlement and movement of persons. During this period, in the applications prepared by the Border Guard, the reason for issuing the decision on resettlement from the border zone was the conviction by a valid court judgment of persons for: border crimes, anti-state activities and espionage<sup>25</sup>. Foreigners and stateless persons with the right to stay on the territory of Poland were subject to separate rules in the border area with regard to the purchase and lease of real estate, as well as the conduct of activities related to production and trade in goods.

To sum up, it should be stated that the state borders played a different role throughout the history of Poland. They were an indicator of Poland's statehood and should be a source of pride for its citizens. However, as the contemporary history of the Polish state shows, they were poorly associated in the consciousness of society. As it has already been noted, their frequent exchanges undertaken in the privacy of political offices, away from the real problems that occurred in the areas crossed by the border line, were the cause of dissatisfaction, frustration as well as sabotage of the existing regimes on the part of citizens.

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