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'Legal aspects of the operation of the Polish Border Guard in 1918-1939'

Summary

The aim of the doctoral thesis 'Legal aspects of the operation of the Polish Border Guard in 1918-1939' is to present the history of the formation of Poland's borders including the Border Guard after Poland regained its independence. It will focus on featuring the essential elements which played an integral role in the history of border formation, as well as showing a passage within the protection of the border to be provided by the institution, which would be fully adapted to ensure such protection and have both adequate facilities and experience.

The thesis will also consider legal regulations which were an integral part of the history of the formation of Poland's borders. A number of factors that will be explored in this thesis include legal norms on the basis of which the formation of individual borders were established as well as legal norms shaping cross-border, economic and environmental relations with neighbouring countries. The objective of the thesis is to present the Border guard as a state institution that had a significant impact on the process of the protection of the interests of the Polish State in times of peace and military operations, as well as showing its role in the protection of the border in both economic and military terms.

There are four fundamental issues which constitute the underlying idea of the thesis. These are: the process of shaping the state borders after regaining its independence in 1918; the formation and organisation of the First Border Corps; the creation of the Border Guard; and bilateral relations between Poland and its neighbours in matters of the protection of borderland. For these reasons the thesis has been divided into four chapters.

The first chapter shows the shaping of the border of the reborn Polish State, which had been absent from the map of Europe for one hundred and twenty-three years, as well as the difficulties arising from new divisions of Europe after the First World War. It also shows the resulting differences in ways of establishing border lines in the east, west, south and north of Poland. It also presents the influence of neighbouring countries in the shaping of the border protection system in the Between-the-Wars period.

The second chapter refers to the genesis of the Border Guard at the same time emphasising the forms of border protection from the birth of the Polish State to September 1939. It presents the formation of individual borders from 1918 to 1928 both on the eastern and western flank of the country.

The third chapter is a synthesis of the first two and its aim is to draw attention to the formation, organisational structures, area of operating, human resources and its objectives, as well as Border Guard intelligence – a formation that was established in 1928 and which operated until the outbreak of the Second World War. It also shows the reliance between border services and other organisations of the Polish State.

The last chapter of the thesis presents the Republic of Poland's cooperation with its neighbours concerning legal regulation of crossing borders and mutual benefits, along with cooperation in the area of the protecting of the borderland, the environment and transit and economic exchange.