

ISMS XIV conference: *Defence Alliances and Partnerships*
Venue: DGI Byen, Copenhagen, Denmark. November 6-8 2023

Preferred panel: Security and Defense Policy Strategy

Autor: dr Marlena Blicharz, War Studies University, Poland

Title of article: *Polish-Korean cooperation in the defense industry*

Abstract:

February 24, 2022 became a day that forever changed the current geopolitical situation in Europe and in the world. The unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against independent Ukraine made it necessary to verify existing alliances and international order, established after collapse of iron curtain in 1989.

Poland, as a country that is the external border of NATO, the EU and the Schengen zone, has become a strategic player in Central and Eastern Europe and even more broadly. This has resulted in the emergence of new challenges for Warsaw, but also some opportunities. Supporting Ukraine, including several types of assistance, has become an essential matter: from humanitarian, through logistical, to military. In humanitarian matters, Poland and Poles passed the test of empathy and support for the Ukrainian nation to the highest mark, by opening their homes to Ukrainian refugees and organizing help from grassroots - before any decisions at the central level were taken.

From a logistics point of view, Rzeszów in south-eastern Poland, has become a strategic hub across Europe. Jasionka Airport became a back-up facility for the fighting Ukraine. This is where President Joe Biden landed, transports with armaments for the army arrive, equipment is repaired and wounded soldiers are transferred.

When considering military issues, it should be mentioned that Poland is the third largest donor for Ukraine in the world in terms of military support - after the US and the UK. Considering the significant disproportions of the economies of these three countries, it is undoubtedly a huge effort for the Polish state. Such a significant involvement in the shipment of military equipment to Ukraine naturally resulted in the need to supplement own warehouses. In 2022, the Polish government established arms cooperation with the Republic of Korea for the purchase of K2 tanks, K9 howitzers and FA-50 aircraft which is one of the biggest Polish defense orders in recent years. The aim of the article is to present Polish-Korean arms cooperation, which was spurred by the outbreak of war in Ukraine. The author will analyze the signed contracts, their costs, scope, and significance for European security.