Summary

Doctoral dissertation
Activity of the Polish national minority in the Republic of Belarus

The doctoral dissertation presents the problem of the activity of the Polish national minority in the Republic of Belarus. The author presented the main research assumptions covering the years 2020-2024, i.e. the period before the presidential campaign in Belarus, protests and repression related to the elections and against the Polish national minority in Belarus, as well as the subsequent political situation in this country and its impact on the activities of the Polish minority. A key element of the analysis was the assessment of the activity of the Polish community in the context of these events. Nevertheless, the work also covers a wider time frame, taking into account examples of earlier socio-political situations that influenced the formation of the position of the Polish minority in Belarus.

The dissertation draws attention to the socio-political status of the Polish national minority in Belarus, cultural and educational activities and the impact of the contemporary political situation in the Republic of Belarus on the functioning of this minority. The author attempted to answer the research questions she posed, including: How is the concept of a national minority defined? How does the Polish national minority define its national identity? What are the main areas of activity of the Polish national minority in the Republic of Belarus? How did the situation in the Republic of Belarus after 2020 affect the involvement of the Polish national minority in socio-political activities? What is the attitude of the Belarusian authorities towards the Polish national minority? How does the Polish state support the Polish national minority in Belarus after 2020? What are the prospects for the development of the Polish national minority in Belarus?

In order to answer the questions posed, empirical research was conducted in the form of surveys and in-depth interviews with people associated with the Polish national minority in Belarus, as well as in-depth expert interviews with specialists dealing with the problem of Poles in Belarus and the socio-political situation in the Republic of Belarus. An in-depth analysis of the obtained research material allowed for the presentation of the results in individual chapters of the dissertation.

The first chapter presents the Polish national minority in Belarus as a research problem. The interpretation of the concept of "national minority" was presented, an analysis of Belarusian legal regulations applied to the Polish minority was presented, and attention was drawn to the directions and current state of research on the Polish minority in Belarus.

The next part presents the characteristics of the Polish national minority in Belarus. The analysis was based on data from population censuses conducted in the Republic of Belarus in 1959, 1970, 1989, 1999, 2009 and 2019. The author also presented the results of empirical research, presenting the characteristics of the national identity of Poles in Belarus and the involvement of the minority in socio-political activities.

The third chapter addresses issues related to the status of the Polish minority in the Republic of Belarus and social relations between Poles and Belarusians. In order to explain this problem, the results of empirical research were presented: surveys and interviews, which showed the current situation of the Polish minority, the policy of the Belarusian authorities towards the minority, and also described Poland's policy supporting Poles in Belarus.

The last part of the dissertation is a presentation of the activities of the Polish government in protecting the rights of the Polish national minority in Belarus, the prospects for the development of the Polish minority in Belarus and opinions on the future of Polish-Belarusian relations in the face of the current dynamic situation in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

The conclusions presented in the dissertation constitute an important contribution to scientific activity devoted to issues related to the Polish national minority in Belarus and the problem of the Republic of Belarus as a state, filling the gap in previous scientific research in this area. The results of the conducted research may in the future be a source of inspiration for further studies on similar topics, but also draw the attention of the state authorities of the Republic of Poland to the situation of Poles in Belarus in the face of contemporary events in this country and region.

Keywords

national minority, Poles in Belarus, Polish national minority, Republic of Belarus, socio-political activity