

The basic act of Polish petty offences law, which is the Petty Offences Code of 20 May 1971, was adopted over 45 years ago, and is so completely different than the present social, economic and political conditions. Despite numerous amendments, the vast majority already made in the new political system after 1989, the act remains archaic and incongruent to contemporary socio-economic realities. This translates into serious dysfunction of many institutions of the petty offences law. In addition the Petty Offences Code is in many places incompatible with other and newer regulations, and thus violates the consistency of the Polish legal system. At the same time the indicated inconsistency has not only a horizontal character, concerning the relationship of the Petty Offences Code to other laws (including the Criminal Code of 1997), but also vertical, which lies in the contradiction of this regulation with the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and binding international law. It requires to note at the same time that the Petty Offences Code is very imperfect and is not the only problem of contemporary Polish petty offences law. After all, the law outside of the Petty Offences Code, which include a much larger number types of the petty offences than in the special part of the Petty Offences Code has also many defects.

This leaves no doubt that the Polish petty offences law requires changes. The necessity of these changes becomes even more evident when one considers that the petty offences law is an important component of the repressive law and is essential for the functioning of the society and the individual units. On the one hand it has to provide protection against mainly minor offences, although burdensome and relatively frequent violations of law, on the other to guarantee respect for human rights. Hence, it is socially desirable to provide appropriate shape of petty offences law, free from defects and dysfunction.

At the same time there should be no doubt that the changes in the petty offences law, as well as major changes in any other area of law, must be preceded by a broad and cross-cutting, based on multiple methods of research, the scientific analysis. There is no way to talk about the proper reform of petty offences law without the leading research, involving the identification and description of the imperfection of this regulations and express *de lege ferenda* demands. Meanwhile, appearing in the last decades of scientific work on the petty offences law are almost exclusively fragmented or commentary. Anyway, in general, it can be observed small and still declining interest in research on this area of law, which is particularly evident when we compare them with research on the criminal law *stricto sensu*. Consequently, there is a lack of broad and cross-cutting, based on a number of research methods and current work, analyzing in detail Polish petty offences law, revealing its imperfections and indicating the directions of the reform. The presented project serves to fill this unjustified and preventing proper reform of petty offences law research gap.

The scientific objective of the project is therefore an identification and description of the imperfections of Polish petty offences law and creating a proposals for its reform. Numerous research methods will find application in the project, which from one side are intended to determine the status *de lege lata*, from the other side are supposed to help to express *de lege ferenda* demands. The starting point will be a dogmatic method, combined with the applied analysis of literature and case law. An important support for the dogmatic method will be historical method, used to show the evolution of Polish petty offences law and its determinants as well as necessary criminology and criminal policy motifs. The kind of research method is connected with a plan of empirical researches in the form of statistical analysis and a survey addressed to the judges adjudicating in petty offences cases. The purpose of this survey is to identify the needs and demands of changes of law in practical perspective. A significant part of the project will be a widely used comparative method, applied primarily as the search for best practices for creating an optimal model of reaction to minor offences.