**A wave of good for Ukraine. Nearly 900,000 social media posts about aid in just 6 days**

**Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the situation beyond our eastern border has dominated the media and public discourse in Poland. One of the key elements that is covered in traditional and social media is the unprecedented involvement of Poles in humanitarian aid to war refugees.**

**Twitter is gaining importance**

During the first six days of the war (February 24 - March 1), there were **894,949 social media posts** referring to helping Ukrainians, with hashtags such as #togetherwithukraine, #HELPUKRAINE, #IHelpUkraine or #helpforukraine. 43% of these publications appeared on Facebook and **38% on Twitter**, which shows how huge role this medium has recently played in reporting on war-related events even though it was previously perceived primarily as a space for political and sports discussions.

The aid that Poland offered to war-stricken Ukraine was also one of the dominant topics in the traditional media. In the past six days, **27,085 publications** on helping refugees from Ukraine appeared on the Internet, in the press, on the radio and on television. Their impact exceeded 268 million.

**We are witnessing a hybrid war**

The most active Internet portals (in terms of the number of publications) where information on this topic could be found were: **echodnia.pl, radio.opole.pl, portalsamorzadowy.pl, onet.pl** as well as **wnp.pl.** The presence of the local government portal on this list shows the key role of local governments in activities coordinating aid. In terms of impact, however, the top three portals dealing with the topic of refugee support were: **onet.pl, eska.pl** and **rmf24.pl.**

‘The social media in the context of the conflict in Ukraine once again showed a "different face". We know this space as a melting pot of business, political or entertainment information, but today it has also become a huge platform for helping and sharing knowledge about the war. On the one hand, it is the fastest channel of information about the situation even in the most remote or isolated places, but on the other hand, reports are filled with fake news and unverified data. In this conflict, we are dealing not only with a conventional war, but also with a hybrid one, where the other side perfectly understands the mechanisms of social media and uses them for propaganda,’ comments **Sebastian Bykowski**, CEO of PRESS-SERVICE Monitoring Mediów.

He adds: ‘We should all remember that the narrative is created by users with varying degrees of knowledge and activity in the social media. This means that, apart from the lack of verification of the veracity of the data, we often also deal with the phenomenon of "information echo" caused by sharing and publishing outdated information from a few days before. Reintroduced into the media space it makes additional information noise and leads to disinformation. And this is of great importance in the case of, for example, aid initiatives. That is why so much importance should be attached to verifying reports and using only proven, credible sources of information.’

**The need to verify content is stronger than ever**

‘At the beginning of the war in Ukraine, social media played a key role in disseminating information regarding refugee support. It can be said that we are dealing with the first such large armed conflict in Europe in the era of social media. They were used both by government bodies and hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens. On the one hand, in accordance with the principle of social proof, such activity mobilized us to get involved. On the other hand, it allowed state and local government authorities to coordinate aid at the local and state level,’ indicates **Szymon Sikorski**, president of the Publicon agency.

He also adds that despite the unprecedented help in which millions of Poles have been involved, hour by hour we can observe growing online disinformation about what is really happening on the Polish-Ukrainian border and how we treat refugees who have arrived here. Some of such fake news is duplicated by Internet users and even opinion-forming foreign media. That is why it is so important today to use the media consciously – verify sources, juxtapose them, be sensitive to emotionally charged information or avoid seeking knowledge from comments.

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