

## **Voichanka Maryna Alegauna**

Belarusian State University of Transport

The research Advisor: Putsiata Volha Vasileuna, Master of Engineering, senior lecturer;

Filimonchik Volha Mikalaeuna, senior lecturer

### **CYNOLOGICAL SERVICE OF CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES: CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

*Research Field:*

*Current Issues of State Border Protection*

The Cynological Service of the Customs Authorities is one of the most important elements of effective drug, psychotropic substances, explosives and money detection mechanism. Currently, the Cynological Service of the Customs Authorities founded in 2001 contributes a lot to economic security protection and protection of citizens' lives and health<sup>1</sup>.

The main number of the service dogs is German shepherds, Belgian shepherds, Labradors and Spaniels, but other dog breeds are also in use. A dog should have a penchant for playing and a good appetite because training is based on a game-and-taste approach. Any aggression against human must be excluded. Before the service a dog takes a special test. If the result is positive (not less than 70 %), a dog will be engaged. Each dog is assigned to a particular cynologist and is being managed at their household which allows a better socialization and interaction of the dog and the cynologist.

At present the Cynological Service of the Customs Authorities operates in accordance with the International Treaties and acts in the field of Customs regulation, the Customs legislation of member states and the following regulatory legal acts:

1. "Regulations on the Cynological Service of the Customs Authorities of the Republic of Belarus" approved by the order of the Chairman of the SCC of the Republic of Belarus No. 553 of 10 November 2015 "About the Cynological Service of the Customs Authorities of the Republic of Belarus".
2. "The instruction on the service dogs use and training" approved by the order of the Chairman of the SCC of the Republic of Belarus No. 553 of 10 November 2015.
3. "The instruction on the dogs handling" approved by the order of the Chairman of the SCC of the Republic of Belarus No. 553 of 10 November 2015.

---

<sup>1</sup> Resolution of Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 1054 of 14 July 2000 "On approval of the Concept of Creation and Development of the Cynological Service of the Customs Authorities of the Republic of Belarus".

4. The order of the Chairman of the SCC of the Republic of Belarus of 29 December 2016 No. 587 “On the organization of work in the Customs Authorities of the Republic of Belarus with narcotics, their precursors and analogues, weapons, ammunition and explosives used in the service dogs training” (with amendments and additions).

Let’s consider the results of the activity of the Cynological Service on the example of the Cynological Service Department of the Gomel Customs from 2017 to 2021.

Table 1.1 – Performance indicators of the Cynological Service Department of the Gomel Customs from 2017 to 2021.

Indicator	Year				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
The number of in the field activities with the use of the service dogs	773	950	1058	1052	1159
	+57	+177	+108	-6	+107
The number of inspected vehicles	22329	23308	22942	23080	26423
	-3587	+979	-366	+138	+3343
The number of inspected railway vehicles	3172	4015	3914	505	0
	+608	+843	-101	-3409	-505
The number of inspected baggage and hand luggage units	10008	122975	123521	57263	39349
	-1974	+22887	+546	-66258	-7914
The number of revealed administrative offences	1	6	9	37	53
	-3	+5	+3	+28	+16
Number of suppressed attempts of illegal movement of drugs and psychotropic substances	22	19	18	11	9
	+5	-3	-1	-7	-2
Number of criminal cases initiated on the basis of crime indicators identified by officials of the Cynological Service Department	22	19	18	11	9
	+5	-3	-1	-7	-2
Number of cooperative activities with law enforcement agencies	53	21	53	33	30
	+30	-32	+32	-20	-3
Preventive measures	9	11	17	15	12
	-1	+2	+6	-2	-3

During the study period there was 1.5 times increase in the number of in the field activities with the use of the service dogs. The number of inspected vehicles increased by 1.2 times. The number of inspected railway vehicles decreased to zero value while the number of

inspected baggage and hand luggage units increased by 3.9 times which was due to reorientation to the cargo movement and to the operational situation.

The number of revealed administrative offences increased by 53 times. At the same time, the number of suppressed attempts of illegal movement of drugs and psychotropic substances decreased by 2.4 times and, consequently, the number of criminal cases initiated on the basis of crime indicators identified by officials of the Cynological Service Department. This trend was influenced by the reorientation towards cargo movement due to the epidemiological situation and restrictions on the movement of individuals.

The number of cooperative activities in the framework of cooperation with law enforcement agencies is at a high level despite a decrease of 1.8 times during the analysed period. It should be noted that for the period from January to June 2022 the officers of Cynological Service Department took part in 40 cooperative activities with law enforcement agencies of Gomel city and Gomel region (11 cases in 2021 for the same period). Preventive measures play an equally important role in the activities of the Cynological Service Department. Thus, during the analysed period their number increased by 1.3 times.

In 2017-2021, the Department stopped attempts to import the following narcotic and psychotropic substances: clonidine, hashish, marijuana, amphetamine, cannabis, LSD, alpha-PVP, MDMA, mephedrone, methamphetamine, Tramadol, Halcion, B-NBOME, and Diazepam pills. The ammunition and weapons found included gas pistols, bullets, and a hand grenade. In addition, illegally transported cigarettes, currency, pork fat and printed materials were detected.

The Cynological Service Department of the Gomel Customs has always been its pride. However, in 2023 due to the restructuring of Customs and current operational situation this Department was reorganised into a Cynological Service Sector with a staff of two members who are in charge of four service dogs while the other cynologists were assigned to others Cynological Service Departments.

The Cynological Service contributes a lot to the protection of the state and its citizens and is actively developing and improving. Among the promising areas of development of the Cynological Service three key areas such as improvement of staffing, improvement of inter-agency and intra-agency cooperation may be identified.

***Improvements in Staffing.*** Today the advanced studies of cynologists are carried out at the “State Institute for Advanced Studies and Retraining of Personnel of Customs Bodies of the Republic of Belarus”. However, neither higher nor specialized secondary education provides basic training in cynology. In this regard, the issue of creating “Cynology” major seems worth considering. It would be rational to integrate this major with “Veterinary Medicine” since

knowledge of dogs' anatomy and physiology and the psychophysiological basis of their behaviour is essential for the cynologist. Students should have the opportunity to get training in a variety of agencies including the Customs authorities as part of their practical training in this area. Forms of interaction may also include practical visits, internships in Cynological Service Departments and attendance at cynologists and their service dogs' demonstrations.

***Inter-agency cooperation.*** In addition to passing on experience to younger generations and training future cynologists, inter-agency experience-sharing plays an important role in the development of the Cynological Service. Thus, there are cynologists not only in Customs but also in border troops, internal troops, and armed forces. Currently, there is a growing trend of interaction between cynologists of the Customs authorities and cynologists of other law enforcement agencies, since their common task is to ensure the security of the Republic of Belarus. In order to perform this task as effectively as possible it is necessary to regulate aspects of interaction at the legislative level and to hold seminars for the exchange of experience between colleagues from different agencies.

***Intra-agency cooperation.*** A possible form of intra-agency cooperation is closer cooperation between the Customs departments such as the Department of Technical Means of Customs Control, Communication and Computer Technologies and the Cynological Service Department. The combined use of technical means for detection of illegal substances and service dogs would significantly increase the efficiency of Customs control with regard to detection of drugs, explosives, weapons and ammunition. While the technology will assist in identifying the illegal substance, the service dogs will be able to point out the exact location where the substance is located. Consequently, the likelihood of the detection is significantly increasing.

Therefore, the prospects for development of the Cynological Service of the Customs authorities of the Republic of Belarus are the creation of a new major "Cynology", holding field events and creation of opportunities for internships for recent officers in the Cynological Service Departments, strengthening of interaction between the Customs authorities and other law enforcement agencies as well as between Customs departments, in particular the interaction with the Department of Technical Means of Customs Control, Communications and Computer Technologies. Implementation of these projects will increase the efficiency of the Cynological Service and its contribution to the protection of economic security of the Republic of Belarus and its citizens' lives and health.