



CIVIL PROTECTION MODERN ASPECTS IN CASE OF DISASTERS – BULGARIA

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ABSTRACTS

This article aims on the modern aspects of Civil Protection in Bulgaria by thorough research of the management and the organization of its activities. We used descriptive analysis and summary of scientific publications and state documents concerning the nature, goals, objectives, principles and remedies available to the population in disasters. A study of the documents on the establishment and development of civil protection in Bulgaria was made.

In Bulgaria the organization of the civil protection in disasters includes actions on prevention, emergency rescue, relief and recovery. The structure of the main Integrated Rescue System components was built throughout the country in accordance with the administrative - territorial division, each of which supports 24-hour readiness to respond. The basic principles for protection and prevention should be known by all the citizens because they give the right for defense for each person and priority of the human life rescue.

The conclusion is that the Bulgarian Civil Protection aspects are up to date and correspond to the modern principles of protection, applied in other European Union member states.

Key words: civil protection, disasters, crises management

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of its causes - the result of natural phenomena, human activity or a combination of both, disasters have common characteristics. Most of them include sudden occurrence, difficult prediction, they are high intensity events with relatively uniform consequences for the population, material resources and the environment. As a result, a severe general and medical situation is created, damaging or threatening the life and health of people. The situation requires emergency rescue measures, there's lack of correspondence between the required and available forces and means to eradicate arisen consequences, including providing various types of medical care.

Facing the challenges of the increased in intensity and number natural and man-made disasters the governments develop and implement different strategies. The main goal is to manage the available resources trying to cope with the catastrophes and reduce the negative effects for the population and the environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive analysis and summary of scientific publications and state documents concerning the nature, goals, objectives, principles and remedies available to the population in disasters. Study of documents about the establishment and development of civil protection in Bulgaria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The effective civil protection in crises, disasters and emergencies requires the use of accurate terminology with precise definition of terms and definitions. Nowadays are applied together and with no clear distinction between them multiple concepts like "crisis", "non-military crises", "disaster", "accident", "catastrophe", "crisis situation", "dire situation", "emergency" etc. This variety creates significant problems, related to the uniform understanding and interpretation of the disastrous situations as well as the management and organization of the civil protection. Terminological diversity hampers the development of a unified/common strategy of behavior.

The term "crisis" is mostly generalized and includes any sudden or unexpected change in the established state of life caused by human activities, events or natural phenomena, with negative consequences for the territory, environment, population, citizens and property of the country whose prevention, control and overcome needed urgent coordinated action.

Since 2009 when the Law for Crisis Management (2005) was abrogated there is no legal definition of the term "non-military crises" in Bulgarian legislation. In the regulations it has been erased or has been replaced by the term "disaster" within the meaning of the Disaster Protection Law (DPL). According to Art. 2 of DPL, "disaster is significant disruption of society caused by natural phenomena and/or human activity and leading to negative consequences for the life or health, property, economy and environment which prevention, control and overcoming exceeds the system capacity to serve the usual activities for civil protection".

The United Nation World Health Organization (WHO) has agreed on the unified term "disaster" (translated into Bulgarian language means: evil, trouble, death). WHO defined the disaster as a sudden event, accompanied by severe consequences, casualties, injuries, destructions and damages. These negative effects cause losses and require immediate location and rescue activities on a large scale.

Historical aspects

In the last 15 years, the government in its attempts to create the best possible system of civil protection, on several occasions changed the existing structures. Until 2001 the Civil Protection Service has been in disposition of the Ministry of Defense. In 2001 it was transformed into a State Agency for Civil Protection, subordinate to the Council of Ministers. That's the time when the cooperation with United Nation's International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) started.

Five years later in 2006, the State Agency for Civil Protection became a Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents. Amongst the different Chief Directorates it included a National Civil Protection Service Chief Directorate together with its territorial units, corresponding to the regional division in districts of the country. It became a National Platform for Disaster risk reduction (DRR). The Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents was renamed to Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) in 2008.

An year later, in December 2009, the Ministry of Emergency Situations was integrated with the Ministry of Interior becoming a Civil Protection Chief Directorate.

With the amendments to the Law on the Ministry of Interior (promulgated Official Gazette No 88 of 9 November 2010) two of the Chief Directorates were merged in a new structure. CD Fire Safety and Rescue and CD Civil Protection

became one Chief Directorate Fire Safety and Civil Protection in January 2011.

Since 2012 a Consultative Council was created. Its main idea was to support the Council of Ministers in forming the state policy for disaster protection following the changes in the Disaster Protection Law provisions. It was designated as the new National Platform for DRR in the Republic of Bulgaria. The Order of Procedure of the Council came into force on 28 May 2012. The Council of Ministers continues the state's efforts in this field since 1990 when the International Decade for Disaster Risk Reduction started.

Analysis and overview of the main activities

The civil protection management in disasters is arranged according to the DPL regulations and the Law on Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria. As defined in the DPL "Protection" is a set of activities aimed at ensuring the smooth operation, continuity and integrity of critical infrastructures in order to deter, reduce, mitigate or neutralize the threats, risks or vulnerability.

Disaster protection is accomplished by (See Fig.1):

- Carrying out preventive activities;
- Conducting activities for protection in case of disasters;
- Relief and recovery;
- Resourcing;
- Sending (providing) and receiving aid.

Fig. 1. Disaster protection activities



The basic principles for disaster protection set out in the DPL are:

- Right of protection of every person;
- Priority on saving lives over other activities in defense;
- Publicity of disaster risks information and the activities of the executive authorities in disaster protection;
- Prioritize preventive measures in providing protection;

- Responsibility for the implementation of protection measures;
- Stages of forces and resources protection.

Other important State document in the disaster prevention is the National Disaster Protection Program. The Program aims at creating an effective, adequately resourced and

technically assured, national integrated system of prevention and defines the objectives, priorities and tasks of disaster protection for a period of five years.

Recent changes of the Law on Disaster Protection lead to improvement of disaster prevention through development of a Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and implementation of the requirements of Directive 2008/114/EC of 8 December 2008 on the identification and designation of European critical infrastructures and the assessment of the need to improve their protection.

Legal aspects

The Disaster Protection Law secures provision for each of the disaster protection activities (prevention, response, resourcing, support and recovery, as well as receiving aid) to carry them out in accordance with the approved country's government model at local (municipal), regional and national level.

At national level the current Bulgarian legislation is compulsory for all individuals, legal persons and public bodies, i.e. any law or regulation that assigns some functions to protect the population or the provision of health and living conditions is a legal basis and has to be implemented by the ministries.

At this level, the state policy in the field of disaster protection is carried out by the Council of Ministers, which shall exercise overall guidance of disaster protection and adopt the strategic and planning documents for disaster protection at the national level:

- Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- National Disaster Protection Program and Annual

plans for its implementation;

- National Disaster Protection Plan.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria enacts the National Disaster Protection Plan and creates the National Headquarters. The last consist of a defined leader and members (ministers, deputy ministers, heads of departments or their deputies and others representing institutions). They are obliged to implement the National Disaster Protection Plan on national level.

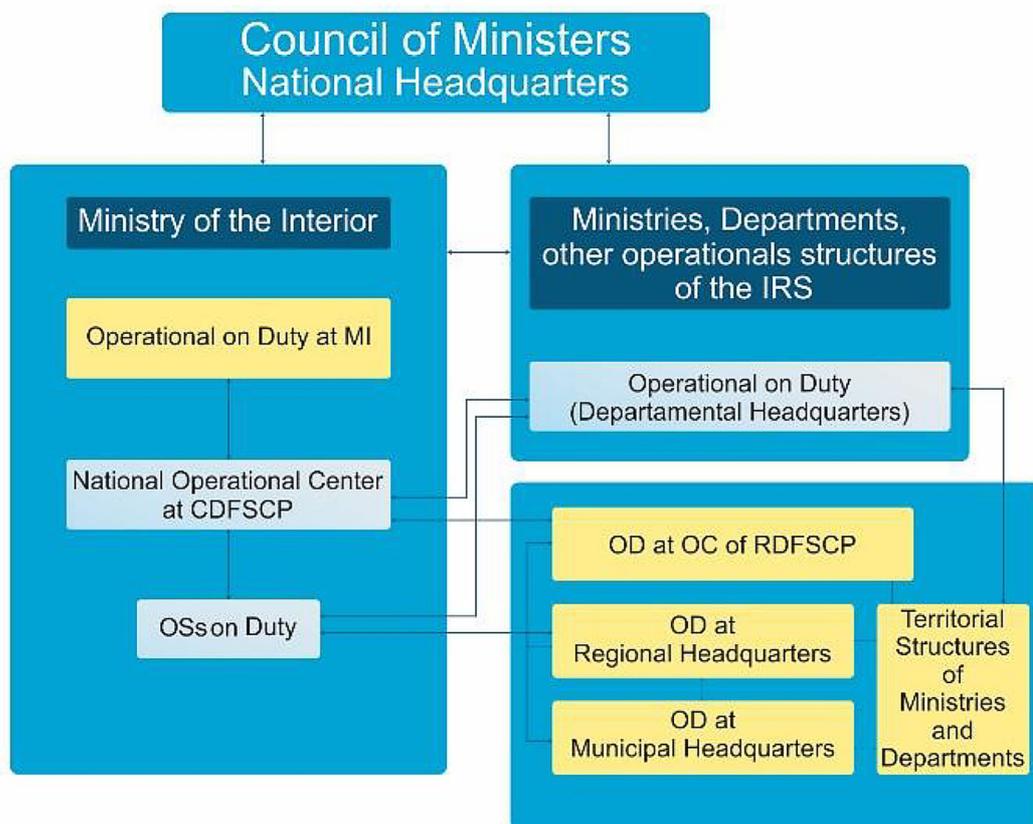
To support the activities of the National Headquarters expert working groups are formed. The members are previously chosen and their names are enlisted in the National Early Warning System.

Activities related to the protection of the population in case of threat or occurrence of disasters are carried out by departments, offices and other operating structures such as:

- Ministries and departments
- Municipalities
- Companies and sole traders
- Centers for emergency medical treatment and other health facilities
- Non-governmental organizations
- Military.

These units, offices and other operational structures are components of the Integrated Rescue System (IRS), while maintaining the institutional or organizational affiliation and their designated functions or objects. (See Fig. 2)

Fig. 2. Structure of the Integrated Rescue System (IRS)



Legend of the Figure 2 Integrated Rescue System components

MI – Ministry of the Interior

CDFSCP - Chief Directorate Fire Safety and Civil Protection

RDFSCP - Regional Directorate Fire Safety and Civil Protection

IRS – Integrated Rescue System

OC – Operational Center

NOC – National Operational Center

OD – Operational on Duty

OSs – Operational Structures

DH – Departmental Headquarters

TS – Territorial Structures

The IRS is responsible for the preliminary organization, coordination and management of the units, offices and structures for disaster response.

Key components of the system are the Chief Directorates of the Ministry of the Interior - Fire Safety and Civil Protection and Rescue, the Regional Departments of the Ministry of the Interior and the Centers for Emergency Medical Care.

The main components provide 24-hours readiness to register messages in case of disasters, their evaluation and immediate response.

These components are built throughout the country according to the administrative-territorial division. They provide assistance upon request according to the plans for carrying out emergency rescue and emergency repair.

The military assists in carrying out emergency rescue and emergency repair in accordance with the orders of the Defense Minister on request of the public authority.

At regional level the emergency planning is done at all levels (municipal, regional and national) and the executive authorities prepare the plans for disaster protection.

The plans provide organized and coordinated actions to prevent or mitigate the consequences of disasters and to secure bottled water supply, food and other necessary means of subsistence kept in stock for the local population.

At regional level, the planning is organized by the regional governor. The governor is responsible for implementing the actions envisaged in the plan in case of disaster in the region.

At local level the mayor of the municipality organizes the disaster planning at local level that should be approved by the municipal council. The mayor is responsible for implementing the municipal plan and approves the disaster protection plans of other local administrative structures and the business. The mayor is responsible for implementing the actions envisaged in the plan in case of disaster in the municipality.

CONCLUSIONS

In Bulgaria the organization of the civil protection in disasters includes actions on prevention, emergency rescue, relief and recovery.

The structure of the main Integrated Rescue System components is built throughout the country in accordance with the administrative - territorial division in districts, each supporting 24-hour readiness to respond.

All citizens should be aware of the basic principles for protection and prevention as they determine the right of defense of each person and state the priority of human life rescue.

The management of the complicated set of activities and structures in the civil protection process in case of disasters is possible only through precise previous advance planning.

The tasks are assigned according to the general state regulations for disaster protection on municipal and regional level as well as the authority regulation of the medical care management by public health authorities in disasters.

Facing the possible risks and the envisaged challenges the Bulgarian government develops and implements different modern strategies to optimally use the available resources and maximally secure the health and lives of the population.

To improve the management and interaction between the structures of the Integrated Rescue System we recommend providing more frequent realistic simulations and drills on different levels, to ensure better collaboration through the various stages of the rescue operations. The simulations and drills should involve large number of people letting them learn safe and proper behavior in disaster and acquainting them with their rights and obligations. This will lead to building confidence in the population for managing disastrous situations which will be most helpful in a real event.

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