



HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF POPULATION

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Abstract: *In recent years, in Bulgaria often arise disasters caused by nature or by human activity. They have a significant adverse effect on the population and the national economy. Therefore reducing the risk of disaster is essential for sustainable development of the country. The likelihood that this trend will deepen is large and there is a need for the establishment of effective governance structures.*

Key words: *reducing the risk, disasters, Geneva Conventions, protection of the population*

Introduction

In the last years of XX and the beginning of XXI century the policy for disaster and accident protection is a top priority for many countries in the world, including Bulgaria. To reduce the risk of them is needed a strong institutional basis, which can be facilitated by capacity building, good governance, promotion of appropriate policies, facilitating the flow of information and the adoption of effective coordination mechanisms. Knowledge of hazards, especially in the increasing volatility and instability of the climate allows for a better understanding of risks, their management, enhancing responsiveness and minimizing the adverse impacts. Information about the economic damage from disasters is also important because it enables the assessment of costs and benefits of various measures to prevent them.

Exposition

Protection of the population, infrastructure and national economy in the event of natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes is a complex activity. It became widespread after the threat of use of nuclear weapons of mass destruction during the Cold War. Since the 70s of XX century began preparations for events to protect the population in case of disasters and catastrophes.

During the period 1936 - 2011, the protection of the population in Bulgaria exists under different names.

On July 18, 1936, was established public service "Civil Protection" with the issued by the Bulgarian King Boris III Decree № 310. The decree approves a Decree-Law of anti-aircraft and chemical protection of the population, as well as rules and instructions for its implementation. It defines the obligations of the civil service and armed forces in activities to protect the civilian population, material and cultural values in the Kingdom. In 1942 was formed Governance "Anti-aircraft and Anti-chemical Protection", which in 1946 was renamed "Anti-aircraft and Anti-chemical Defense" (PVHO). In 1950 events by organizing anti-aircraft and chemical defense and the preparation of the population for PVHO were assigned to the Ministry of Interior (MOI).

In 1951 a Central Management of Local Anti-aircraft defense was formed, which in 1962 was renamed Civil Defense (GO). The structure was directly subordinate to the Council of Ministers (MS) and in 1971 passed the authority to the Minister of Defense. At the Civil Defense (GO) has been established a system of national defense activities, and in addition entrusted tasks of prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and major industrial accidents. In 1978 at the structures of the Civil Defense (GO) a system of resistance was built to withstand sectors and objects of the national economy and protect the population during military conflicts, natural disasters and accidents.

After the democratic changes in Bulgaria in 1989 started a continuous restructuring and reforming of the Civil Defense (GO). In the process of accession of Bulgaria to the European Union (EU), particularly topical became the issues related to updating the legislation with international standards.

In 1992 from Civil Defense (GO), the organization was renamed Civil Protection (GZ), which reports to the Ministry of Defense (MO). In the same year were created the first five professional staff formations for carrying out rescue and emergency restoration activities in case of disasters, accidents and catastrophes. By 2009, the same formations of Civil Protection (GZ) in the country increased to 31.

In 1994 the Republic of Bulgaria joined the group for cooperation to prevent, protect and organize the major disasters and technological accidents established by resolution (87) 2 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Civil Protection (GZ) formations participate in the work of the Task Force to the Central European Initiative. In 1998 were approved "Rules for organization and procedures for prevention and liquidation of consequences of disasters, accidents and catastrophes."

On March 24, 2000, governance "Civil Protection" at the MoD was renamed "Civil Protection" service and on May 1 it was demilitarized. In 2001, "Civil Protection" service at the MoD was transformed into the State Agency "Civil Protection", subordinated to the Council of Ministers (MS). The Agency

implemented the state policy of protecting the population from disasters, accidents and catastrophes.

State Agency "Civil Protection" initiated the establishment of the civil-military emergency planning for the countries of Southeastern Europe. The agreement was signed on April 3, 2001, in Sofia. In September 2002 was adopted a joint program between State Agency "Civil Protection", Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC), Ministry of Interior - National Service "Fire Safety" and the Ministry of Education and Science, which introduced training to protect the population, for students from 1st to 12th grade.

On November 29, 2002, in Brussels was signed "Memorandum of Understanding between the European Community and the Republic of Bulgaria", which regulated the participation of Bulgaria in the "Community Mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection." In 2006 the National Assembly passed the Law on Disaster Protection and "Rules" of the Ministry of State Policy for Disasters and Accidents (MSPDA). They regulated the closing from July 1, 2007, of State Agency "Civil Protection", and the formation in its place of the Main Directorate National Service "Civil Protection" (GDNS-ILI) with 28 regional directorates.

By decision of the National Assembly from July 27, 2009, Ministry of Emergency Situations was closed, and on November 11, 2009, were adopted amendments to the Interior Ministry Law. Through them, the Directorate General "Civil Defense" became a national specialized structure of the Ministry of Interior. DG "Civil Protection" was closed on January 1, 2011, according to the latest amendments to the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on the Interior Ministry. According to it, DG "Fire Safety and Rescue" was renamed Directorate "Fire Safety and Population Protection" (GDPBZN), and assumed the functions of the closed Directorate "Civil Protection".

Currently the defense is organized and carried out by Directorate "Fire Safety and Population Protection" (GDPBZN), which is a national specialized structure of the Ministry of Interior for Fire Safety and Protection of Population in case of fires, disasters, accidents and catastrophes. The Directorate operates independently or jointly with the executive authorities, legal persons and sole traders, in the execution of their duties under the terms and conditions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Law on Disaster Protection. The main activity of the Directorate is to ensure the protection of life, health and property of the population, as well as environmental protection if any disasters. Protection of the population in Bulgaria when declared a "state of war", "martial law" or "state of emergency", is performed in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions from 12 August 1949, and the two Additional Protocols from 8 July 1977.

Geneva conventions

Until the signing of the four Geneva Conventions (12 August 1949) and two Additional Protocols (June 8, 1977), it was a long period of devastating destruction and millions of casualties in the two world wars, use of chemical and nuclear weapons, and numerous conflicts caused by social inequality, poverty, ethnic intolerance and aspirations of imposing dictatorship. Thanks to the efforts of the Red Cross, after prolonged international diplomatic conference in Geneva on August 12, 1949, it came to the establishment of universal norms of humanity in armed conflict.

The purpose of the Geneva Conventions is a limitation of human suffering during armed conflict and prevention of barbaric excesses. From 1864 on, those provisions continue to improve. The terms "First Convention", "Second Convention", "Third Convention" and "Fourth Convention" mean respectively:

- Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949, for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in ongoing armed forces conflicts;
- Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949, for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea;
- Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949, concerning the treatment of prisoners of war;
- Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949, on the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of war;

The term "Conventions" means the four Geneva Conventions from 12 August, 1949, to protect victims of war. Those Conventions are a set of rules governing the detailed treatment of the wounded, sick, shipwrecked persons, medical personnel or prisoners of war and civilians and all persons who do not participate or discontinued their participation in hostilities.

The two Additional Protocols, adopted on June 8, 1977, upgrade the protection granted to certain categories of persons and objects, further regulating the means and methods of conducting warfare, both in international and non-international armed conflicts. The basic rules of the Geneva Conventions can be summarized as follows:

- to persons not involved or terminated participation in hostilities, must be granted life and their physical and mental integrity. They must be protected and treated humanely, without any discrimination;
- it is forbidden to kill or wound an enemy who is disabled or has surrendered;
- subjects of protection are : the wounded, sick and shipwrecked persons, as well as medical personnel, medical equipment, vehicles and materials;
- life, dignity, personal rights and beliefs of captured soldiers and citizens must be respected;
- it is forbidden to use weapons or methods of warfare that could cause unnecessary casualties or excessive suffering;

- it is forbidden prisoners of war to be subjected to physical torture, psychological abuse, cruelty or degrading corporal punishment;
- it is forbidden to impose liability on individuals for acts they did not commit;
- for the protection of civilians and property, it is forbidden to become subject to attack the civilian population and individual civilians. Attacks are allowed only against military targets.

Protection of the population according to the protocols of the Geneva Conventions

As already mentioned, the original goal of creating Civil Protection was to protect the population in case of a military conflict. Subsequently, the organization's mission is to carry out activities to protect the population in case of disasters and accidents. According to Protocol I, by the term "civil protection" is understood the implementation of some humanitarian tasks aimed at protecting the civilian population against the dangers of war or disaster, and assistance for the removal of the immediate consequences, as well as creating the necessary conditions for the survival of that population.

According to the same Protocol I, the main humanitarian tasks of protecting the population are: warning; evacuation; providing havens and their fitment; implementation of measures to blackout in danger of air raids; rescue operations; medical services, including first aid and assistance of a religious nature; firefighting; detection and marking of hazardous areas; decontamination and similar protective measures; temporary shelter and supplies; providing emergency assistance in the restoration and maintenance of order in distressed areas; emergency restoration of essential utilities; immediate burial of the deceased; assisting in the preservation of objects essential to the survival of the population; additional actions needed to perform some of the tasks mentioned above that do not only include planning and organization.

Warning (announcement) – expressed in the provision of timely and effective information on approaching or imminent danger of calamity or air danger to a certain circle of people who need to increase their readiness for responding and taking necessary precautions.

Evacuation. Evacuation is carried out by 1873. Used as a preventative measure to protect the population, it has a humane character. Its nature is expressed in the rescue and relocation of the population from dangerous areas to safer ones, in declaration of an emergency or in case of danger of disaster. Most commonly evacuation applies to floods, river overflow, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, radiological situation and others.

Providing shelters. This task includes design, construction, use, furniture, maintenance, repair of shelters and others. Their construction and maintenance in many countries is imperative as it ensures the safety of the majority of the population in case of different hazards and concerns.

Management of the blackout is a preventive task. It concerns the protection of the population, facilities, military personnel, the means of existence of people and increasing their security of air raids. This task applies only to wartime.

Rescue operations. This task is too complex, diverse, and consists in:

- searching for people in the ruins of buildings damaged by earthquakes, landslides, hurricanes, etc.;
- assistance to people isolated by floods, people found in burned down buildings, buried by avalanches, trapped people in an infected area, etc.;
- assistance to people affected by earthquakes, floods, avalanches, industrial accidents, major catastrophes, etc.;
- are carried out by specialized teams of Directorate "Fire Safety and Population Protection" (GDPBZN) to the Interior Ministry and its territorial units, regional police offices and centers for emergency medical care.

Sanitary and spiritual service. The health service is to provide medical assistance to the injured and affected people from war, flood, earthquake, industrial accidents, catastrophes and others. Performed by medical staff and the Bulgarian Red Cross.

Religious assistance is provided to wounded and dying by clergymen - priests, imams and others.

Firefighting. Performed by specialized services, it aims to rescue people and protect facilities of national economy and population.

Detection and warning for hazardous areas. These activities are required to detect, indicate and mark dangerous areas such as minefields, contaminated areas, volcanic zones, destabilized buildings after an earthquake, zones of radiation, landslides, avalanche areas and others.

Decontamination. The activity includes:

- decontamination of water and water sources (i.e. their cleansing);
- decontamination of persons, housing sites and facilities. Their combustion is allowed in order to not spread diseases and epidemics;
- infected persons are quarantined, and infected areas are under medical supervision.

Providing shelter and food. For survival of the victims are constructed tents, shacks of prefabricated elements, vans and water tanks are provided, clothing, blankets, medicines and others. Mobile kitchens and canteens are formed, food warehouses, water sources are recovered and purified, care is taken for food supplies for the population, and others.

Maintenance of order in the disaster area. This task is usually performed by the bodies of the Interior Ministry. Their task is to fight the crowd at intersections, exit roads, tunnels, underpasses, overpasses, bus stations, railway stations, not to create chaos, disorganization, disorder and the emergence of panic. They should intercept attempts to looting and theft, carried out by unscrupulous and criminal individuals.

Restoring communications. The task objectives are rapid recovery of aqueducts, power lines, gas pipelines, to prevent contamination of certain areas and the occurrence of epidemics.

Burials. They have humanitarian, hygiene, ethnic, religious and routine function.

Protection of sites and resources needed for the survival of the population. The problem is related to the protection and preservation of food warehouses and shops, agricultural sites and areas, animals, plants, irrigation systems, water supplies and other, necessary to feed the lives of civilians. Their protection can be carried out by gunmen.

The last task completes all missed in the following fourteen, and is aimed at liquidation of the consequences of the disaster and survival of the population. This task includes activities related to planning, financing, management of vehicles in the disaster area and others.

Conclusion

Under the provisions of the Law on Disaster Protection and other regulations, one of the main tasks of the state is the development and the formation of national policy to protect the population and national economy, as well as regulation of social relations if any disasters and accidents occur. The law provides protection of life, health and property of the population and environmental protection in case of emergencies. At present, protection of the population is carried out by the General Directorate "Fire Safety and Population Protection" of the Ministry of Interior (GDPBZN-Interior Ministry) and components of the URS. The protection is carried out at national, regional and municipal level by conducting preventive action, preparedness to respond to disasters and emergencies, assistance and recovery, resource provision, delivery and acceptance of the aid.

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