

## **“RAPID RESPONSE SYSTEM - CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES, RESOURCE PROVISION, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION”**

The issues related to the subject of my lecture were regulated in Poland by the Act of 26 April 2007 on emergency management (Journal of Laws 07.89.590). The above is a new legislative act that has been in effect since 22 August 2007.

The common security area regulated by the said act covers both the protection of life and health of citizens, as well as the protection of what is known as critical infrastructure. These include the equipment, installations and services essential for the security of the state and its citizens, necessary for the minimum orderly functioning of the economy and the state (energy systems, communication systems, water and food supplies, health protection, etc.).

The act principally specifies the tasks and responsibilities of the prime minister, the Council of Ministers, individual ministers, province governors, district governors and commune heads (city and town mayors).

The emergency management system covers the central and local government administration bodies, the armed forces, and selected entities of the private sector (owners of the critical infrastructure).

It should be pointed out that the Supreme Chamber of Control had a considerable impact on the drawing up of the said act, which during the problem controls carried out over recent years in the ministries of internal affairs and administration indicated, among other things, the need to review the applicable legislation with respect to the emergency response and taking initiatives aimed at adopting cohesive legal solutions to regulate the functioning of the integrated system for emergency response, as well as to provide funds required for the organisation and operation of the system.

**Emergency management** is **broadly** understood as the activity of the public administration authorities constituting an element of the state security management that consists of **preventing** emergencies, preparing for **taking control** during emergencies by implementing planned actions, responding in the event of emergencies, **removing the effects thereof**, and reconstructing the resources and critical infrastructure.

The crucial element of the emergency management definition is the notion of **emergency**. Pursuant to the act, it is a situation that has a negative impact not only on the level of security of the citizens, but also, to a large extent, the security of property, or the environment, causing significant limitations in the activity of the appropriate public administration bodies due to the use of inadequate forces and measures.

**The structure of the authorities appropriate for the emergency management issues at individual levels is as follows:**

### **I. State level (Level I):**

- The emergency management is exercised by the **Council of Ministers** (Art. 7 of the Act), and in urgent cases, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration.

The Government Group for Emergency Management was established by the Council of Ministers to act as the authority appropriate for giving opinions and advice on how to initiate and coordinate the actions taken in the scope of emergency management.

The Group consists of:

- 1) Prime Minister – Chairperson;
- 2) Minister of National Defence and the minister appropriate for internal affairs – Deputy Chairpersons;
- 3) Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- 4) Minister for Coordinating Special Services – where such has been appointed.

The Group meetings include, as members, the government administration bodies appointed by the chairperson, as required. These may include the ministers, Central Police Headquarters Chief, Deputy Commander-In-Chief of the Border Guard, Chief Sanitary Inspector, and Chief Veterinarian.

The President of the Republic of Poland may also appoint to work within the Group, as members, the State Security Office Chief or other representative.

The service of the Council of Ministers, the prime minister, the Group and the minister appropriate for the internal affairs with regard to issues related to emergency management is ensured by the **Government Security Centre** that also acts as the state centre for emergency management.

The Centre is a government-funded unit directly subordinate to the prime minister.

The individual ministers managing the government administration departments and the chiefs of the central offices implement, as per the scope of their competence, and create their own:

- **Emergency Management Groups**, and
- **Emergency Management Centres**.

The responsibilities of the Emergency Management Centres include:

- 1) Performing round-the-clock duty in order to ensure information flow for emergency management needs;
- 2) Cooperating with the emergency management centres of the public administration bodies;
- 3) Exercising supervision over the functioning of the detection and alert system and the early warning system;
- 4) Cooperating with the entities implementing the environmental monitoring activities;
- 5) Cooperating with the entities responsible for carrying out rescue, search and humanitarian aid actions;
- 6) Cooperating at all government administration levels in the scope of informing and transmitting those orders to be carried out in the round-the-clock system to the health protection units in emergencies, fortuitous events and system operation disturbance.

## **II. Provincial level (Level 2):**

The authority appropriate for emergency management on the territory of a province is the **province governor** (Art. 14 of the Act).

The province governor shall be appointed by the **Province Emergency Management Group** acting as the province governor's assistance body to ensure the performance of the tasks as part of emergency management.

The responsibilities of the Group include:

- The assessment of the existing and potential threats that may have an impact on public security and forecasting the threats;
- Preparing action proposals and submitting to the province governor those applications related to the execution, change or refrain from taking the actions defined in the province emergency management plan;
- Publishing the information related to emergencies;
- Giving opinions on the province emergency management plan.

The **Provincial Emergency Management Centres** are also established in the province governor's offices that perform round-the-clock duty to ensure the proper information flow for emergency management needs.

Their tasks are adequate to the responsibilities of the Centres established by ministers and the central administration bodies.

### **III. District level (Level 3):**

The authority appropriate for the issues related to the emergency management in the territory of a district shall be the district governor (Art. 17 of the Act).

The district governor shall perform his/her tasks with assistance from the **District Emergency Management Group**. The district group carries out the tasks entrusted to the province group in the territory of a district.

In each district, the **District Emergency Management Centres** were also established to ensure information flow for emergency management needs and carry out the tasks delegated to the province centres.

### **IV Commune level (Level 4).**

The authority appropriate for the issues related to the emergency management on the territory of a commune shall be the **commune head, town/city mayor** (Art. 19 of the Act).

The assisting authority of the commune head or the town/city mayor for ensuring the performance of the tasks as part of the emergency management shall be the **Commune Emergency Management Group**.

The Group shall carry out, on the commune territory, the tasks delegated to the province emergency management group.

**The commune head or the town/city mayor shall ensure the following on the territory of a commune (town/city):**

- Alerting the commune emergency management group members on a continuous basis, and in case of emergency, performing round-the-clock duty to ensure correct information flow,
- Cooperating with the emergency management centres of the public administration bodies;
- Exercising supervision over the functioning of the detection and alert system and the early warning system,
- Cooperating with the entities implementing the environmental monitoring activities;
- Cooperating with the entities carrying out search and rescue operations and humanitarian aid actions;
- Implementing the tasks of the continuous duty to raise the level of state defence readiness.

For the purposes of implementing the above tasks, the commune head may establish **Commune (Town/City) Emergency Management Centres**, which, however, represents part of his/her powers, not his/her legal responsibility.

In such cases, their tasks correspond to the responsibilities of the District Centre.

### **Manner of operation**

The state administration bodies referred to above act as part of and on the basis of the emergency management plans created at the following levels:

- State,
- Province,
- District, and
- Commune.

Each such plan describes the potential threats and the potential of forces (main plan), including the **emergency response procedures** that specify in detail:

- List of undertakings in the event of a specific emergency,
- Procedure to be followed when forces and measures are being put in place to remove the effect of the threats,
- Procedure for launching the actions prescribed in the emergency response plan,
- Principles of cooperation,
- Methods for reducing the extent of damages and removing the effects of the threats.

The plans also include the **functional appendices of the main plan**, which constitute the typical operational procedures for all entities performing the tasks, including:

- Organisation of communication between the foregoing entities,
- Organisation of the threat monitoring and warning system,
- Rules of informing the public about the threats and the manner of proceeding in the event of such threats,
- Organisation of evacuation of the endangered areas,
- Organisation of social and medical care,
- Organisation of the protection against radiation, biological and chemical hazards,
- Rules and the procedure for assessing and documenting damages.

The general statutory practice of the services referred to above is that the proper action must be taken by the authority appropriate for emergency management that was the **first** to learn of the occurrence of a threat.

The authority shall immediately inform the high and low level authorities of the occurrence and give its assessment thereof along with information about the intended action. The responsibility of the authorities at individual levels depends upon territorial extent of the event.

The province governor may, on the province territory, enforce the appropriate alert level depending on the scale of the threat of a terrorist or sabotage attack.

In an emergency, the province governor may currently apply to the minister of National Defence for putting the regiments of the Polish Armed Forces at his disposal. This applies where the use of any other forces and measures is unfeasible or may prove to be insufficient.

### **System financing:**

The financing of the performance of own tasks in emergency management at the commune, district and province levels shall be planned as part of the budgets of the communes, districts and province self-governments, respectively.

The above bodies shall also receive subsidies from the state budget for the financing of the government administration tasks with which they have been entrusted.

The financing of the performance of the emergency management tasks on the state level shall be planned as part of the state budget in those parts that remain at the disposal of the province governors, the ministers appropriate for the internal affairs and other ministers managing the responsibilities of the government administration bodies, including the central government administration bodies.

### **International cooperation**

The responsibilities stipulated in the act in the scope of international cooperation shall be carried out by the Government Security Centre which:

- cooperates with the NATO and the EU entities, bodies and organisational units and other international organisations responsible for the emergency management and the protection of critical infrastructure.
- organises, conducts and coordinates the training courses and practical exercises on emergency management and participates in the international and domestic exercises;
- ensures the correct information flow between the domestic and foreign emergency management authorities and structures.

The director of the unit shall hold talks with the appropriate authorities of the EU Member States and shall take the stance agreed on at the state level.

His responsibilities include the cooperation with the European Commission and providing it with the relevant information on the kinds of risk, threats and weak points of the system.

Thank you for attention.