

Crisis Management and Protection and Rescue Systems in Macedonia: Synergy or Rivalry?

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Abstract

At the beginning of the 21st century, the security paradigm (challenges, threats, processes and institutions), compared to the past, has gained significant new features. Under these conditions, the significant objective factors that determine the reality of security (geostrategic, security, environmental, etc. . .) have basically changed. Obviously, the security environment has become unpredictable and uncertain, and the main feature of this environment is the complexity of the threats to security. In other words, the connection, interference and mutual effect of military and non-military threats to security are getting higher and higher. (e.g. ethnic conflicts, crime, natural and other disasters, terrorism, environmental threats, etc.). Thus, the text presents an analysis of the security paradigm and challenges in the view of the relationship between crisis management and system for protection and rescue in the Republic of Macedonia. The main focus of research is on this crucial relationship between two immensely important elements of the security system and to give an answer to the central question if there is synergy or rivalry between them.

Keywords: security, system protection and rescue, crisis management, the Republic of Macedonia.

Introduction

System of protection and rescue and crisis management in the Republic of Macedonia are distinctive organized elements of the national security system. These are two relatively independent sub-systems, with their own organization, activities, tasks and competences. The efficiency of the overall security system depends on the following questions: is there rivalry between them or their mutual relationship is based on synergy? What is the role of mutual coordination of activities and how tight should cooperation be in

order to contribute to the efficient and effective system of national security? This paper presents a quest for answers to these essential questions based on the findings of a recent survey¹ carried by the Protection and Rescue Directorate. Also this institution is being analyzed from perspective of its organization and functions as defined by legal regulations. Finally, the overall research endeavor is to detect any discrepancies within the wider national security system, and especially discrepancy between the concepts, legal framework and objective way of functioning.

Organization and Structure of the System for Protection and Rescue

Protection and rescue represent a complex sub-system with numerous subjects, activities and missions. Its central goal is protection and rescue of people and material goods in case of need. Consequently, it is organized as a distinct system aimed at detection and prevention of certain threats and risks as well as at elimination of the consequences caused by natural disasters and similar events. The general mission has been accomplished through various activities, but one may point out at the following as the most important ones: monitoring, detection and analysis of the possible risks and dangers that may occur out of natural disasters and other *vis major* causes; mitigation and prevention; notification and warning; education and training; organization of protection and rescue forces and units; self-protection, self-help and mutual aid; mobilization and deployment of forces and equipment; selection of and implementation of the protective measures; rescue and assistance as well as receipt of foreign assistance (Mitrevska 2010, 261). The system for protection and rescue is expected to be fully operational in peace, during emergencies and/or war in case of any natural and other disaster. Its activities thus may contribute to strengthening general security in the country, and indirectly even in terms of state sovereignty and integrity. In the Republic of Macedonia it is organized as a single system to detect and prevent the occurrence of accidents and disasters and has a predominantly preventive character. In general, it follows the general standards that are set in the developed states. The protection and rescue in Macedonia is organized and carried out by a vast list of subjects such as: state bodies, state agencies, agencies of government authorities, public enterprises; public facilities and services; companies; associations of citizens; citizens; and the forces for protection and rescue (*ibid.* 260).

¹ The survey was carried out within the Protection and Rescue Directorate by Robert Serafimov, postgraduate student under the supervision of the author of this text.

The whole system is organized around one central body i.e. Protection and Rescue Directorate (PRD). The Directorate has its own headquarter which manages all activities. There are also forces for protection and rescue that include: the rescue forces on the level of the Republic and territorial units for protection and rescue. State agents, in addition to the Directorate, include the following: the Parliament, the Government, various administrative bodies; the municipality councils and mayors; companies, enterprises, institutions and services; citizens and civil society organizations, humanitarian organizations and NGOs (Official Gazette of the RM 2012). At the proposal of the Government, the Parliament adopts National Strategy for Protection and Rescue; performs planning and preparation of activities for the implementation of measures for protection and rescue; the strategic and medium-term objectives for protection and rescue; adopts normative research and development projects etc. Furthermore, the Government enacts: decision for formation of protection and rescue forces established by the Republic of Macedonia; decision to provide material supplies for the needs of protection and rescue; a decision to send humanitarian aid for protection and rescue abroad, and to accept foreign humanitarian assistance; decision for sending abroad the forces for protection and rescue established by the Republic of Macedonia for the purpose of training and education, and humanitarian activities; decision on evacuation of citizens; and, decisions concerning instruction, training and practicing within the state administration bodies, local self-government, business companies, public companies and others.

1.1. Protection and Rescue Directorate

The Protection and Rescue Directorate was founded according to the Law on Protection and Rescue, and started operating in 2005. It is an independent state agency that was established by merging the previous Department for Civil Protection in the Ministry of Defense and Inspectorate for fire protection by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Directorate bears responsibilities in terms of prevention, mitigation of consequences, operational activities and reconstruction, which are all segments in the system for protection and rescue (Protection and Rescue Directory 2012, 14). The preventive role is introduced through a legislation on physical planning, during construction of facilities and infrastructure in the designing documentation of the facilities and technological processes and supervision (*ibid.*, 15). Operational activities are accomplished by mobilizing troops and equipment; they involve the headquarters. Reconstruction goes through restoring, providing assistance, etc.

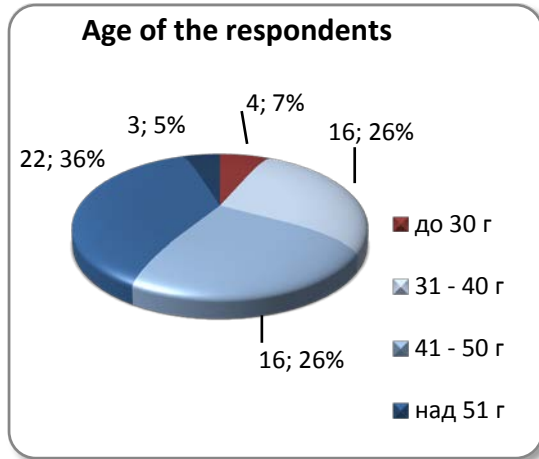
As a responsible authority in the field of protection and rescue, the Directorate is also coordinating body that takes care of all the activities of entities entitled to take part in the system for protection and rescue but it also participates in the system for crisis management. It is composed of 6 divisions with 19 departments, three independent departments and 35 regional departments for protection and rescue in accordance with the adopted changes of the structure of the Protection and Rescue Directorate.²

The Protection and Rescue Directorate has numerous competences, including the following: making plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters; assessment of the threats from natural disasters; organize and prepare the system for protection and rescue; proposes measures for equipment and system development; assures the functioning of the prevention and detection of occurrence and removal of consequences of natural and other disasters; provides timely deployment and efficient use of state forces for protection and rescue and rapid response teams; takes care of complete incorporation of measures for protection and rescue; provides implementation of strategic and medium-term objectives for protection and rescue; participates in completing and implementing the mobilization of state forces.

1.2. Interpretation and Analysis of the Survey Results

The survey was conducted in the Directorate for Protection and Rescue, and the respondents included employees from various ranks. The choice was random. With respect to the gender of the respondents, out of the total 61 employees surveyed, 31% of them were female, 66% were men and 3% did not respond this question. In terms of education, there was not a single respondent with primary education, while 16% of the employees are with secondary education, 74% are with higher education, 3% of the employees hold master degrees, while 7% did not give any info about their education. From these data it can be concluded that majority employees in the Directorate hold university degree, which in turn provides a good ground for successful institutional development. In this context, the age of the respondents is also of significance.

² The number of sections and departments in the Protection and Rescue does not match the number given to the web site of the Protection and Rescue Directorate, because the data have not been updated. The data were obtained in consultation with experts from the Directorate.

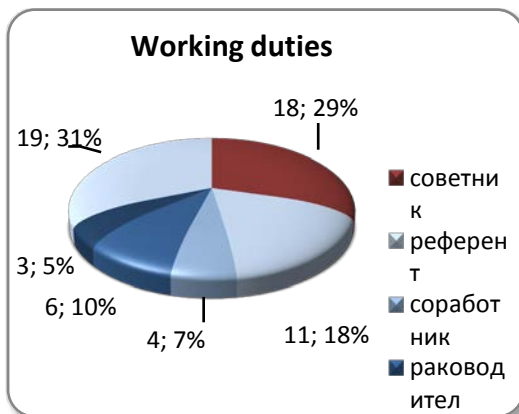


Graph 1

up to 30 years	4
31 - 40 years	16
41 - 50 years	16
over 51 years	22
N/A	3

Table 1

As presented in graph 1, only 7% of employees are at the age below 30, 26% are at the age of 31-40, the same percent (26%) are those at age of 41-50, 36% are at the age over 51, 5% did not respond. Obviously the majority of the Directorate's employees are with solid experience, which is a factor that contributes to the efficiency and the development of protection and rescue. With respect to the work duties, the percentage of advisors reaches 29%, officers are 18%, associates make 7%, there are 10% managers, supervisors are just 5% and as many as 31% did not respond to this question. The data are shown in Graph 2 and Table 2.

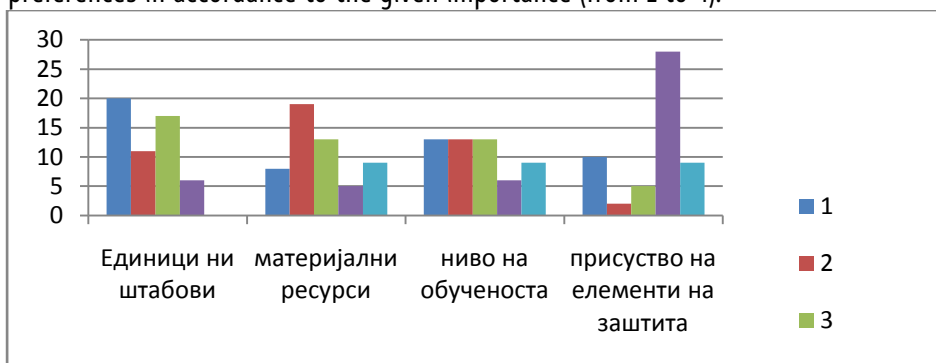


Graph.2

Working duties	Respondents
Advisor	18
Officer	11
Associate	4
Manager	6
Supervisor	3
N/A	19

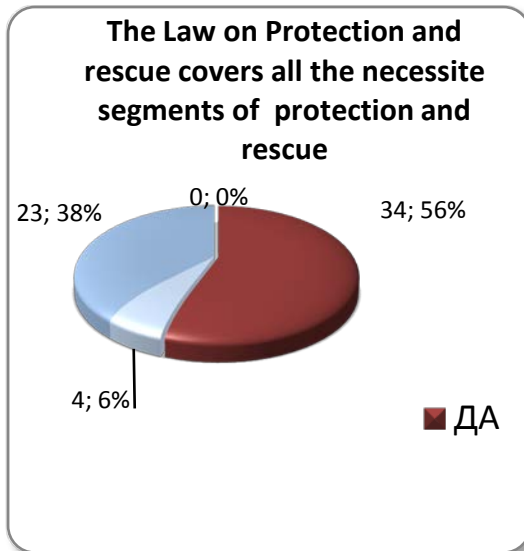
Table.2

In order to get adequate information and findings with regard to the problem that is researched in this paper, a questionnaire was designed - it contained 31 questions/items. Out of many insights, in this context we highlight certain questions/answers that directly refer to the essence of the researched problem. For instance, the item No. 1 read: "The principles of effective protection and rescue include the units and headquarters, material resources, level of training and/or the presence of elements of protection". It was responded by 54 out of the total 61 respondents. The respondents were asked to arrange their preferences in accordance to the given importance (from 1 to 4).



Graph 3

Analysis shows that most of the respondents believe that the units and headquarters are the most important principle of protection and rescue system. The second most important principle is material resources, while the presence of elements of protection and rescue and their operation (self-protection measures, activities and forces) take the last place. Regarding the question that referred to the importance of the training level, participants split their preferences in the first three levels of importance. Approximately equitable distribution of the level of training of the first three places of the scale leads to the conclusion that for the respondents the meaning of training ranges from necessity to doubt about the quality of the actual training.



Graph.4

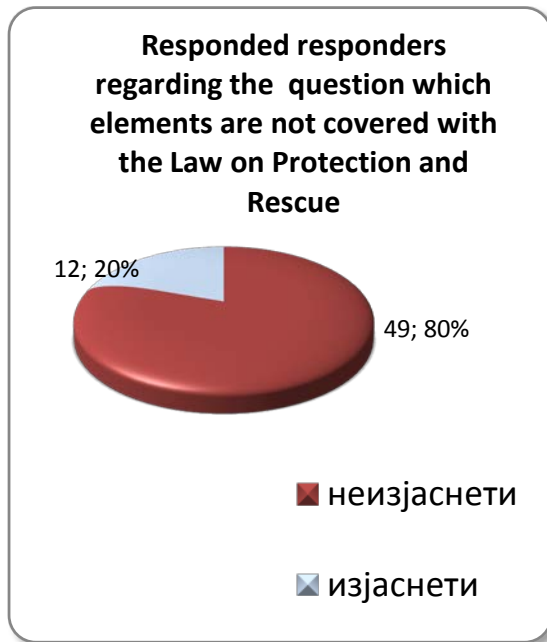
ANSWER	RESPONDENTS
YES	34
NO	4
PARTIALLY	23
DON'T KNOW	0

Table 4

The next question read: "Do you think that the Law on Protection and Rescue regulates all necessary segments of protection and rescue?"

From the results presented in Table 4 and Graph 4, one may see that the percentage of those who answered affirmatively is 56 %, only 6 % answered "no", while 38 % of them answered "partially". Therefore, we can conclude that all respondents, without any hesitation, showed knowledge of the Law on Protection and Rescue, as well as of the segments that cover the protection and rescue. Also, it can be concluded that the high percentage of respondents that opted for "partially" (38%) leaves space for further improvement of the current Law. It could be easily done in consultation with experts from the field but also through consultation with those segments of society that under certain circumstances would suffer the biggest consequences (municipalities, citizens associations and NGOs).

3. If you think that the Law on Protection and Rescue does not cover all elements of protection and rescue, please add the missing elements according to your own opinion?



Graph.5

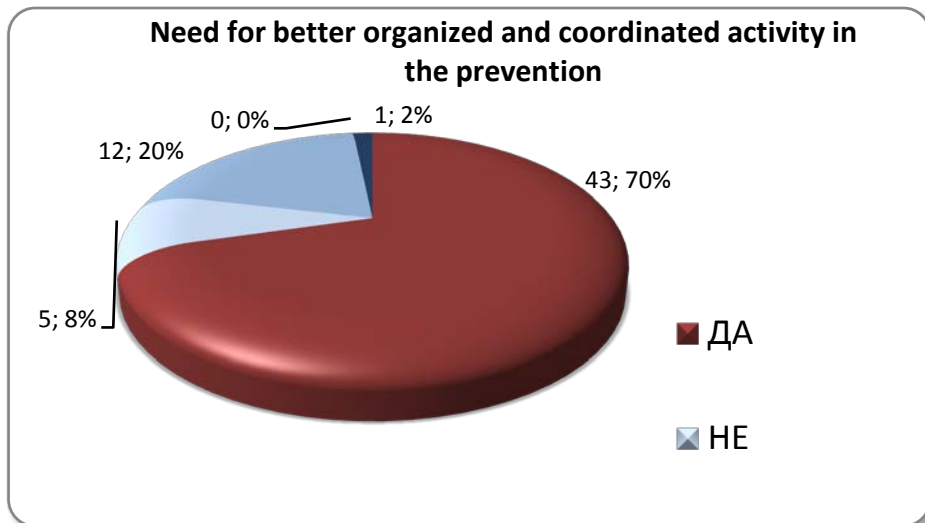
category	respondents
N/A	49
responded	12

Table 5

Obviously, quite a small number of respondents shared their views and opinions on necessary items missing in the Law on Protection and Rescue (presented on Table 5 and Graph 5). However, the views of the other 20% respondents are quite interesting because they point out the legal insufficiencies and weaknesses. They also argue that there is a need for further clarification of the respective Law. The specific proposals and criticism include the following items: lack of attention with regard to the consequences of terrorism, cyber-terrorism and climate change; the issue on reanimation of the area hit by natural disaster and catastrophes is not being treated; amendments and supplements to the Law regarding the staffing of protection and rescue forces; regulations of the police forces duties in case of protection and rescue in accordance with the EU standards; providing material assets

and technical means for the needs of the forces and for the purpose of SDR³ standardization, as well as providing assistance according to the EU standards; purchase of transportation motor vehicles to be prescribed by law and to get priority in planning, training and cooperation; the legal provisions still contain elements from the old system, especially in the part that refers to the mass participation, which in present circumstances is outdated and unnecessary; the law includes all protection and rescue elements, but on the ground the units should be equipped also for some other activities; they also need specific cadres such as fireworks technicians; the staff needs special insurance and early retirement benefits; the law should cover the issues on rescuing in the mountains; there is a need of harmonization of the law on protection and rescue with the other laws, such as the law on water resources.

4. The question read: is there any need for better organized and well-coordinated activity in the prevention and management of natural disasters and catastrophes in future?



Graph 6

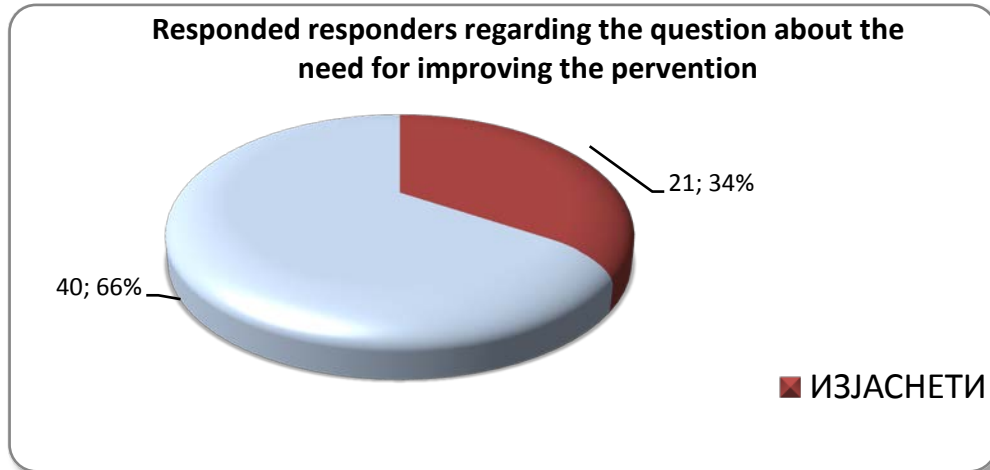
³ The acronym stands for Strategic Defense Review, Strategiski odbranben pregled.

Need for better coordination	respondents
YES	43
NO	5
MAYBE	12
DON'T KNOW	0
N/A	1

Table 6

As many as 70% of respondents said that there is a need of better organization and coordinated activities in the prevention against accidents and disasters; 8% of respondents said there is no such need, while 20% of the respondents thought that perhaps there is a need for better organization. Only 1% of the respondents did not give any reply. The survey results indicate a need for revision of the activities related to prevention.

5. Question read: "What is your opinion on the necessity of better organized and coordinated activities of the authorities responsible for prevention and managing of natural disasters and catastrophes?"



Graph 7

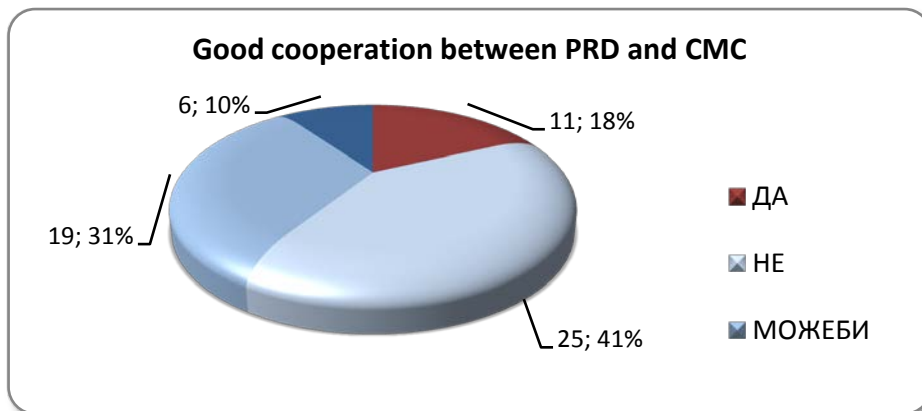
CATEGORY	RESPONDERS
RESPONDED	21
NON RESPONDED	40

Table.7

Compared to the other questions that required personal opinion, interestingly this question was responded by quite a small number of respondents: i.e. only 34% did respond, while 66% did not. The opinions of those who decided to respond include the following: local authorities are not sufficiently involved and they usually do not pay much attention to the protection and rescue from disasters and catastrophes; there should be a clear distinction of the competences, and simplification of the procedures; local authorities should invest more in the protection and rescue; the involved subjects should be acquainted with their competences in a way to avoid overlapping of the responsibilities; risk assessments and analyses should be under the competence of the Protection and Rescue Directorate; the units should be better equipped; there is need to adhere to the subsidiarity principle (i.e. the decisions should be made at the lowest level possible), the system of command and coordination in case of incidents should be regulated through amendments to the Law on Protection and Rescue; the entitled subjects should carry out their activities in mutual agreement and in a coordinated manner; the Protection and Rescue Directorate should establish better relations and communication with all stake holders for the purpose of better education, exercise and prevention; more emphasis on preventive measures for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents should be given by all relevant subjects; undertaking measures for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents in due time and in accordance with SDR; in order to get better organization of the services full adherence to the legislative by all factors is necessary; strengthening of the municipalities' capacities and permanent investment in education, training and equipment; Protection and Rescue Directorate is the only body competent to coordinate and manage all the activities related to natural disasters and other accidents; exercising of all SDR within the institutions both on horizontal and vertical level as well as among the institutions; the method of coordination of the subjects should be prescribed by separate legal act. The following response deserves special attention: *"there is no need for both Crisis Management Center (CMC) and Protection and Rescue Directorate (PRD) to exist, or more precisely there should be just one institution entitled to manage protection*

and rescue; more financial means to be invested in providing adequate equipment; the institutions should be informed about their mutual competences, while the Centre for Crisis Management should be directed towards the original purpose at the time when the Information and Alert Centre (IAC) had been established; it should be merged with Protection and Rescue Directorate for the sake of better data collection and communication.”

6. The question read: “Do you think that the cooperation with the Crisis Management Center (CMC) is good?”



Graph.8

COOPERATION BETWEEN PRD AND CMC	RESPONDENTS
YES	11
NO	25
MAYBE	19
DON'T KNOW	6

Table 8

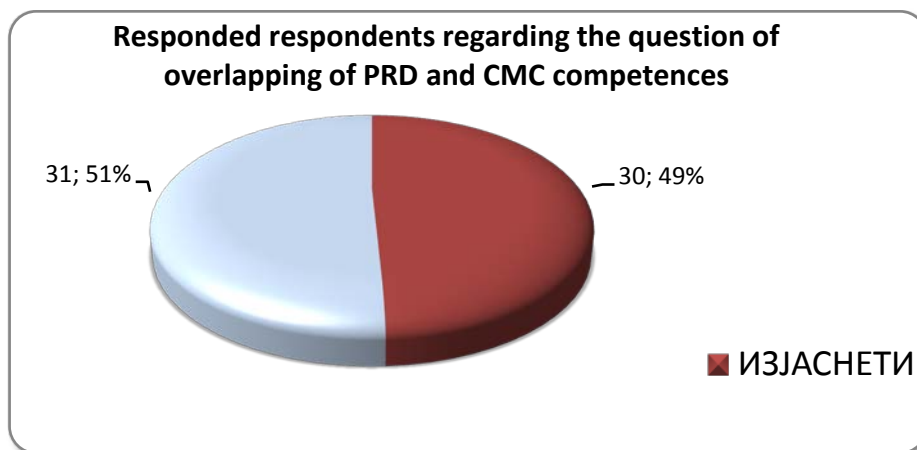
The response of the 18% of the respondents was that there is good cooperation between PRD and CMC, but 41% gave opposite answer i.e. that the cooperation is not good at all. One third of the respondents however see this cooperation as limited, while 10% said that they did not know. The high percentage of the respondents that answered negatively (including the ones that did not know) speaks of their perception on these two institutions.

They are perceived as “competitors” that lack cooperation or keep it on an insufficient level. Some notice overlapping of competences, no distinction among the local units, and even competition over the distribution of the resources.

7. Question read: “Do you think that there is an overlapping of PRD and CMC competences? If yes, please specify why.”

CATEGORY	RESPONDENTS
RESPONDED	30
N/A	31

Табела бр.9



Graph 9

Compared to the other questions that required individual responds, even 51% of the respondents did not answer the question. The opinions stated by those who responded include the following:

- The competences of PRD and CMC overlap and there is need for more clear-cut differentiation between the competences of these two institutions;
- CMC is not a successor of the former Civil Protection, but rather of the Information and Alert Centre. CMC lacks capacities necessary for dealing and managing natural disasters and other accidents: it neither has enough forces nor formal competences to do so. There is interference in the competences and the whole process becomes even complex. PRD is ready to respond to all types of disasters and catastrophes;

- The overlapping is in a form of positive conflict of competences at times when crisis is not formally declared. PRD deviates from the concept for crises management as accepted by the EU and NATO, so the protection and rescue is its only point of interest;
- CMC perceives its competences with regard to PRD in an inappropriate manner. In order to overcome any misunderstandings these two institutions should be integrated;
- CMC is a permanent institution and is seen as identical with the Managing Committee that brings together ministers of the Government, representatives of the President's Office and of other state services, who then play as if they are all ministers and generals. They form a headquarter (which by definition is an operative professional body) but have no units under their command, neither resources and equipment nor any legal bases for engagement of the business companies; hence they only create confusion; the public services and institutions do not know with whom to cooperate with, since they are not familiar with the competences of these two competing institutions;
- There is overlapping of competences in the part of management and coordination; there is interference in the activities for protection and rescue, so different information circulate to the media as well as to the other relevant authorities;
- The competences of PRD overlap with those of CMC, or more precisely CMC undertakes PRD's competences especially in the sphere of planning and establishing headquarters;
- The competences do not overlap and in accordance with the law they are clearly distinguished; however there are indications of CMC's interference in the competences of PRD;
- There is no overlapping or only partial overlapping, CMC undertakes measures that are not within its competence;
- CMC should be part of PRD as liaison office;
- CMC does not have human resources, forces and Transport Motor Vehicle but behaves as bearer of activities managed by PRD;
- Some members of the Protection and rescue headquarter are at the same time members of the crisis management headquarter of CMC;
- There should be a distinction in leading any activities in state of peace-PRD, state of emergency – CMC, and war –Ministry of Defense (MD);

- There is no overlapping with the competences of CMC but CMC uses some weak segments of PTD in order to interfere in some of PRD competences. (Serafimov 2015, 80-87)

Conclusion

Since 2005 the Protection and Rescue Directorate has created a solid ground for further improvement and development of protection and rescue system in accordance to modern trends in the region and in the world. These goals directly depend on the economic development and on the assets allocated for the system needs on annual basis. In addition to the large number of regulations and other by-laws, the survey shows that there are opinions that it is necessary to reconsider and revise the Law on Protection and Rescue, especially the provisions included in articles 34, 44, 55, 58 and 120. As an example, pursuant to the Law on Protection and Rescue, the citizens are to be informed about the protection and rescue through a unique system of informing. However, formally this issue is under the competence of the Crises Management Centre, i.e. according to the respective law it is supposed to alert the citizens. On the other hand, the Law on Protection and Rescue cannot be completely implemented in practice especially in terms of operationalization of the protection and rescue from the point of view of transparency, mobilization of the citizens and the relevant institutions through acceptance of their responsibilities. There is an impression that the citizens are not well acquainted with their obligations but also with their rights when it comes to protection and rescue. The role of local self-government, professional staff and the mass media are not sufficiently understood and implemented (Serafimov 2015).

During its short history the Protection and Rescue System has gained rich practical experiences. It also gives an insight into a series of weaknesses, such as: overlapping of competences with other participants in the protection and rescue system as well as in the crises management system; there is lack of sophisticated equipment and technical means; there is need for continuous development of human resources through training and education; operative procedures for efficient engagement of the resources in managing the crisis are insufficiently developed; insufficiently developed operative procedures for efficient receipt or providing assistance to other countries through international institutions and especially through the institutions within the Euro-Atlantic organizations; insufficient

transparency; lack of unique assessment of the risks and threats for the security of the Republic of Macedonia.

The conclusion is that the Protection and Rescue Directorate and the Crises Management Centre are not the same. There is no need for rivalry - yet their competences should be distinguished and clarified through adequate legislative.

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