

CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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Abstract

In Croatia, the mission, set of goals and general issues of crisis management are still not completely, and to a sufficient extent, defined by appropriate legal solutions, regulations and strategic documents. Therefore, access to this vital area of safety issues is still divided to certain areas depending on the type of crisis or threat. The necessity of establishing a comprehensive and unified system to manage crises was recognized over fifteen years ago, and a series of discussions has been held on the issue, as well as the issue of developing the concept of a crisis management system. Despite these efforts, there have been no significant results. The issue was approached in 2004. by passing the Law on Protection and Rescue and the establishment of the State Protection and Rescue Administration (DUZS), and again in 2005. by passing a new Civil Protection Law. However, the civil protection system covers only a part of an integrated crisis management system at the national level, such as protection and rescue, disaster and major accident management. The normative framework of the Republic of Croatia, even after Croatia entered the EU and adopted it's *acquis communautaire*, is marked by the lack of comprehensive solutions regarding the definition of national crises and the establishment of a crisis management system.

Therefore, this paper analyzes the existing normative framework of crisis management in the Republic of Croatia, as well as its functionality with a focus on the system of civil protection.

Key words: Crisis management, normative framework, civil protection system.

Introduction

In the Republic of Croatia, there have been numerous papers, which conceptually and contextually deal with the term crisis, as well as the architecture of crisis management. Various literary publications contain the appropriate categorization, descriptions and explanations of the term crisis. There is, however, no clear and unambiguous definition of the concept of crisis management. This is the result of a lack of an integrated crisis management system in the Republic of Croatia. In various documents that can be found in the Central Catalog of Official Documents of the Republic of Croatia, the term crisis appears in 174 valid legal regulations, however, these mentions are mainly related to specific areas of expertise⁵⁰.

The normative framework of the Republic of Croatia is marked with a lack of integral and complete solutions concerning determining national crises as well as establishing a crisis management system, even after Croatia entered the European Union and adopted its *acquis communautaire*.

The first qualitative step in introducing and defining the concept of crisis in its own normative regulations was made by the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia, and with its membership in international organizations, other state authorities have gradually started introducing the concept of crisis in their field of work and everyday vocabulary.

The term crisis management, as well as all of its semantic derivatives appear less and less frequently in the legal regulations of the Republic of Croatia. Even when they are mentioned, they are referred to as being sector-oriented, as well as the term crisis.

⁵⁰ Registry of legal regulations is available at <http://www.digured.hr/>. Access January 22nd, 2017.

Numerous strategic documents in the Republic of Croatia interpret in different ways what should be an integrated crisis management system, depending on the period of their passing. These documents are consolidated in noticing the absence of such a system and connecting its establishment with the civil protection system. The concept of crisis management is conceptually linked to the development of a civil protection system in 2002, as an organizational framework for disaster prevention and remedying the aftermath of natural and technological disasters, as well as destruction caused by war. However, in the absence of better solutions, it is most often connected with the above mentioned. Tatalović S., Grizold A. and Cvrtila V. (2008) believe that an attempt to resolve the issue of the lack of an integrated crisis management system was the founding of the State Protection and Rescue Administration (DUZS) on January 1st, 2005. DUZS was established in order to avoid the overlapping jurisdiction of various state-owned defense and rescue bodies, as well as coordinating their activities in the event of an accident or disaster. Despite this, the expected results have not been achieved to date. Therefore, the concept of an integrated crisis management system has still not been defined. Although several proposals were presented, the competent state bodies have not yet reached a consensus. In the National Strategy on Chemical Safety (Narodne Novine 143/08), the DUZS is described as an integrating system at the national level. It is also described as "...the foundation for the structure of crisis management in local and regional authorities." utilizing its regional protection and rescue offices.

DUZS is the only central body of state administration founded with the aim of dealing with the crises and eliminating disaster consequences. Since its founding, it has been proposing potential solutions and crisis management models, which are being included in the public hearings of central government bodies. These solutions and models are, however, halted at these hearings. The main reasons for this are the unpreparedness of such proposals from the highest level of government, the unwillingness to effect change in the state administration system and the inadequate number of involved entities willing to prepare solutions and models of crisis management.

The role of DUZS is extremely important and unavoidable in all phases of crisis management⁵¹. DUZS is the administrative and inspection authority responsible for the civil protection system as well as the fire brigades, in charge of communication and coordination through the 112 Centers, international co-operation, training and education of personnel required for the needs of a crisis management system, critical infrastructure and state intervention firefighting units and civil protection⁵². It is also developing the concept of Zoning Warehouses and is the responsible body for coordinating search and rescue operations in the event of aircraft crashes on land and inland waterways on the territory the Republic of Croatia, and so on. (Toth, I., Trut, D., Ćemerin, D. and Vitas P., 2007).

Over time, the trend of legislators' attempts to design and propose crisis management framework is noticed. One of these attempts is going one-step further and mentions the existence of a "national crisis management system"⁵³. Observed in the context of the response to the threats of possible consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction, it was stated that "for the management of crisis situations, the Government of the Republic of Croatia provides central management, planning, supervision and coordination of the crisis management system", suggesting that Croatia still has a crisis management system. This depends, though, on different points of view and is questionable how to look at the above mentioned from different discourses.

It is undisputed that the Government of the Republic of Croatia, as the highest executive body, is responsible for the establishment of a crisis management system. It

⁵¹ The Law on the Civil Protection System stipulated the powers, obligations, rights and duties of the central state authority in the civil protection system but did not establish its name and status in the state administration system. However, the provisions of Article 36 of the Law on Organization and Scope of Ministries and Other Central Government Bodies (Narodne Novine 93/16 and 104/16) established that it is the central state administration body of the State Protection and Rescue Administration.

⁵² and even in the recovery phase where it assumes the initial coordinator's role, before the relevant sectors fully assume their responsibilities.

⁵³ Eg. in the National Strategy for Prevention and Countering Terrorism (Narodne Novine 139/08) and the Action Plan for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism (Narodne Novine 136/12) as well as the National Strategy and the Action Plan to Suppress the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (passed on January 10th 2013, at the 71st session of the Government of the Republic of Croatia)

has, however, too many managerial functions and is hierarchically too far removed from the field to deal with crisis management systematically, timely and without interruption. For this, a developed system and a specialized body is required, which will refer to the above mentioned as its daily job. Such a body would collect and analyze all relevant information on all potential crises of national interest and would prepare draft decisions for the Government of the Republic of Croatia, all the while having the power to make the most important executive decisions independently. It is a fact that many other countries are faced with an identical challenge (Toth, I., 2015).

The Republic of Croatia has the necessary components for a crisis management system, different solutions for different crises, as well as a developed crisis management infrastructure. There is, however, no integrated system or central crisis management body for the entire spectrum of crises. For the time being, despite all the aggravating circumstances, DUZS is the body most often associated with dealing with crises and crisis management.

Legal basis for establishing crisis management

Although an integrated system of managing crises and crisis management is not explicitly conceptualized and regulated in Croatian legislation, the lack of experience is compensated by using the available solutions established by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the provisions of various laws, regulations and documents⁵⁴. Fundamental civil rights, government organizations as well as mutual

⁵⁴ Eg. in the Civil Protection Law, the Critical Infrastructure Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Radiological and Nuclear Safety Act, the Law on Protection against Natural Disasters, the Water Act, the Disaster Recovery Law in the Vukovar-Srijem County, Law On the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service, the Law on Fire Protection, the Firefighting, the Law on Defense, the Law on Participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, the Police, Civil Protection and Civil Servants and Employees in Peacekeeping Operations and Other Activities Abroad, the Coastal Law The Republic of Croatia, the Law on Health Care, the Law on the Transportation of Hazardous Goods, the Non-ionizing Radiation Act, the Law on Humanitarian Demining. Also, relevant documents for the study of crisis management in Croatia are Estimation of the Republic of Croatia's threat of natural and technical-technological disasters and major accidents, Protection and rescue plan for the territory of the Republic of Croatia, various other regulations,

powers and competencies are defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Narodne Novine 41/2001). Article 135 of the Constitution stipulates that local self-government units carry out local-level tasks that directly address the needs of citizens... "And enter the domain of crisis management and civil protection⁵⁵ in a direct and indirect manner. The above-mentioned provision puts civil protection into the jurisdiction of local authorities, which is essential for the development of a crisis management system in the Republic of Croatia. The provisions of the Constitution show that the organizational model for the protection of citizens begins to be built at the level of local authorities. Civil protection is an area of activity that brings together and complements all the participants, normative solutions, citizen protection measures and the active role of citizens themselves in the system of prevention, preparedness and response to crises, as well as the elimination of the consequences of major accidents and disasters (Toth, I., 2015).

There is a multitude of laws and regulations that partially regulate procedures in various crisis situations. The basic legal act regulating crisis management is the Civil Protection Act (Narodne Novine 82/15). It regulates the institutional structure, rights and responsibilities of all participants, procedures, as well as the management of the civil protection system. The Civil Protection Act, however, in its provisions, does not describe the term crisis or crisis management, nor does it individually define them. Furthermore, it provides for the establishment of a civil protection headquarters at the national level, as well as at the level of local (regional) authorities. The Civil Protection headquarters of the Republic of Croatia is established and managed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia. In the area of the local (regional) authorities, the management of said regional and local authorities falls to chiefs, mayors, governors and the executive authorities.

the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union implemented in Croatian legislation, bilateral intergovernmental agreements and obligations of the Republic of Croatia taken from membership in various international organizations.

⁵⁵"... and in particular relating to housing and development, spatial and urban planning, communal services, childcare, social welfare, primary health care, education and primary education, culture, physical culture and sports, technical culture, consumer protection, protection and improvement of the natural environment, fire protection and civil protection" (Article 135 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia)

According to the Plan, procedures and measures of protection and rescue are readiness, alertness, mobilization and growth of operational forces, as well as protection and rescue measures.

The purpose of the plans is removing critical occurrences of importance for the operation of the protection and rescue system. This is achieved through synergy and joint action of the governing and administrative parts of the system and operational forces. The plans provide for levels and stages of readiness, ways of reacting in individual phases, the state of logistic capacity, and other important provisions for effective protection and rescue of human lives, material goods and the environment in disasters and major accidents.

The Protection and Rescue Plan for the Republic of Croatia defines DUZS as the central body in all procedures and measures of protection and rescue. DUZS issues instructions and recommendations to all participants in the protection and rescue system, and has the obligation to alert and inform the public. The DUZS Director has the ability to make standard operating procedures (SOPs) and has direct command of the operational protection and rescue forces. The area of critical infrastructure, an important crisis management factor in the Republic of Croatia, has not been fully developed nor does it conform to the requirements of the European Union and NATO. The Republic of Croatia will have to progressively and methodologically differentiate certain areas of crisis management in order to be compatible with the solutions of the above-mentioned associations and partner countries in these organizations. An example of this is the obligation to identify, determine and protect critical infrastructures and disaster risk assessment, as well as the introduction of measures and activities from the NATO Handbook on Crisis Management in Croatian Legislation. The implementation of the above-mentioned standards in the Republic of Croatia started in 2013 by passing the Critical Infrastructure Act (Narodne Novine 56/13).

This Act regulates national and European critical infrastructure, national critical infrastructure sectors, critical infrastructure management, risk analysis, owner/manager security plans, the critical infrastructure security coordinator, sensitive and classified data handling, and oversight over the implementation of the Act. The Republic of Croatia has taken on the obligation to identify European critical infrastructures on the territory of the Republic of Croatia from other members of the Union and it has the power to determine the critical infrastructure of interest for the Republic of Croatia on the territory of other Union members. It has established the

legal basis and platform for the interdepartmental cooperation process in identifying, defining and protecting critical national infrastructures, as well as co-operation with neighboring countries and the European Union bodies in determining and protecting critical infrastructure on the territory of the Republic of Croatia and other countries (Toth, I., 2015)

Using the above mentioned law, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has given DUZS the important role and responsibility to, in cooperation with responsible central governing bodies whose scope the individual critical infrastructures belongs to, regularly monitor and assess the threats and propose operational and other measures to assess the critical level and the need for the proposed measures for the management and protection of critical infrastructures. DUZS is designated as a means and distributor of information exchange and coordination of activities related to the European Critical Infrastructures with other Member States and European Union bodies. Given that the Republic of Croatia, as a member of the European Union has an obligation to evaluate risk and submit risk data to the European Commission, the Government of the Republic of Croatia entrusts the above-mentioned task to DUZS. This indicates that the Government has designated DUZS the central body of civil protection and crisis management system of the Republic of Croatia.

Croatia's membership in NATO imposes an obligation to accept and implement NATO's Crisis Response System (NATO Crisis Response System), which has been fully developed, taking into account different NATO concepts, capabilities and arrangements. This system is described in the NATO's Crisis Response System Manual (NATO Crisis Response System Manual). The system is designed to ensure uniform treatment between NATO headquarters, strategic commands and member states. The Manual provides measures for managing and responding to crises. As all NATO members are required to fully participate in the crisis response system and apply crisis responses from the above mentioned Manual, all States also have a duty to align national crisis response systems with the NATO system to achieve compatibility with principles and procedures described in the Manual. The process works by NATO headquarters announcing a single measure or more measures to respond to the crisis. It is the obligation of each Member State to notify NATO on whether or not it has been able to implement the measure declared wholly or partially. The decision on the implementation of the measure is always proclaimed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Operational dimension

The effectiveness of the civil protection, safety and rescue system of the population, material and technical resources, environment, critical infrastructure and all socially acceptable resources of valuable protection and rescue is visible in the readiness and abilities of each individual member of the crisis management system and the system as a whole in the implementation of measures and activities involving prevention, readiness, reaction and recovery in cases of extraordinary events. The readiness and ability of the crisis management system in Croatia is monitored through the following:

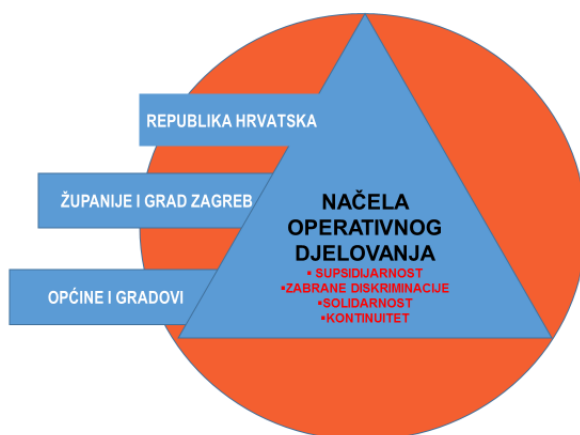
- Readiness and effectiveness of the participants and operational forces of the civil protection system
- Principles of activation
- Chain of command and coordination
- Development of skills and abilities
- Communication connections for management in crisis situations

The civil protection system consists of the participants and operational forces of the civil protection system. The Participants are the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the DUZS as the central state administration body responsible for Civil Protection, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, the police and the executive and representative local (regional) Authorities. The operational forces consist of the Civil Protection Headquarters at the local, regional and national level, the operational forces of the fire brigade, the Croatian Red Cross, the Croatian mountain rescue service, civil protection units and commissioners, the site coordinators and legal persons in the civil protection system. Their relations are determined by the aforementioned acts.

The general principles on which the civil protection system is based are humanity, prohibition of discrimination, subsidiarity, solidarity and continuity of action. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, decisions and measures are made and implemented by engaging all available resources of the local (regional) authorities that is hit by a major accident or disaster. This is derived from the provisions stipulated by the Constitution, the Law on Local and Regional Authorities, the Law on the Civil Protection System and the provisions of various other laws. This principle ensures that the local incident remains within the limits of local governance and resolution. According to the principle of solidarity, if objective circumstances exceed these limits

and resources, additional assistance is provided to the affected local (regional) authority. Other local and competent regional authorities are required to provide assistance as a high-level administrative-territorial political entity. If an incident escalates beyond the local (regional) authorities' capabilities, the Government is also required to provide assistance. According to the principle of continuity of action, the system and operational protection and rescue forces continue to carry out regular missions in major accidents and disasters.

Figure 1: General principles of operation of the CP system in the Republic of Croatia

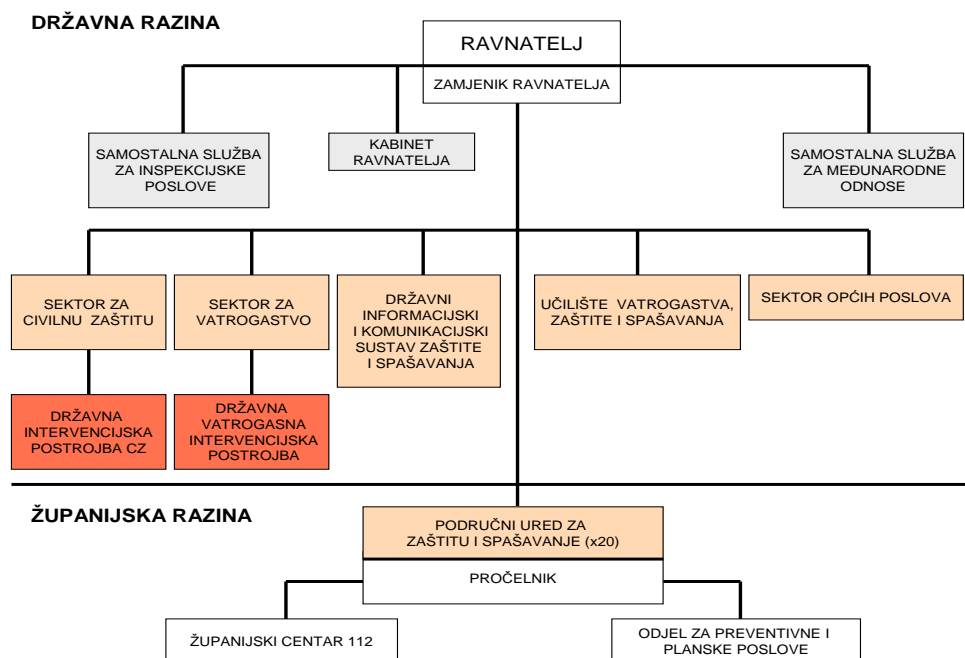


Although these principles are universal and practically applicable, there are examples in Croatia that show that they are not being applied. In the past few years, the most notable examples of this have been flood situations. The local levels did not make use of all their available resources, but at an early stage demanded assistance from the state level, thus bypassing the level of regional authorities. This often required the involvement of the Croatian Armed Forces as a strategic state resource without utilizing all civilian resources, from the local (regional) to the state level. This indicated a lack of understanding of how the system functions, traditional (but not always correct) confidence in the speed and efficiency of the Republic of Croatia's Armed Forces response units, and the efforts of the local community save their own resources.

On the other hand, some threats and challenges are identified as too large and too great a risk for these principles to apply, and for the system to be activated and start to operate from a lower to a higher level. In these cases, coordination and

leadership from the state level to the local level is required. An example of this are the dangers of nuclear, chemical and biological threats to which the state alone has certain capabilities of prevention, alertness and response.

Figure 1: Organization of the State Protection and Rescue Administration



Source material: DUZS (2015), author's processing.

The Chain of Command and coordination is formally established and regulated by the Constitution, strategic and planning documents, laws and subordinate acts and mutual cooperation protocols. Establishing conditions and clear guidelines for managing the crisis management system is the responsibility of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Government's role in such situations is crucial in providing official statements and informing the population (which it may delegate to the DUZS Director), in deciding whether or not to provide or receive international assistance, declare a disaster, introduce extraordinary measures to eliminate the consequences of a disaster, introduce readiness at a strategic level, securing funds in the state budget for

the material renewal of readiness for protection and rescue forces within state commodity inventories, response and implementation of long-term protection and rescue measures (Kešetović, Ž., Toth, I., 2012; Kešetović, Ž., Korajlić, N., Toth I., 2013;).

In emergency situations, DUZS acts as a coordinator between civil protection participants, while in major accidents and disasters it manages the operational forces and coordinates the activities of other participants in civil protection activities, distributes information in a timely manner, monitors the implementation of prescribed measures and activities in civil protection as well as conducts mobilization for the needs of the crisis management system. DUZS manages the Civil Protection headquarters of the Republic of Croatia (SCZ RH) until a state of disaster is declared.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia pragmatically decides how it will fulfill its obligations and which tools and capabilities it will utilize, depending on the potential crisis situation or the crisis that has occurred. An example of such an action is the establishment of the crisis headquarters. One of the few central state authorities taking advantage of this possibility and actively benefiting from it is the Ministry responsible for healthcare. The Crisis Headquarters is activated and operates in health crisis situations, as well as during complex inter-agency responses to crisis situations.

In inter-agency co-operation, the role of the civil protection headquarters established in each territorial unit of the Republic of Croatia is paramount. They represent expert, operational and coordinating bodies that serve as support to decision-makers at the local, regional and state level - the mayor, governor, chief and director of the DUZS. Each territorial unit establishes its own headquarters according to its needs, while the Civilian Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia is established by the Government by appointing civil protection heads from central government bodies and the system of important operations forces. The headquarters function as coordinators, play a role in the exchange of information between the participants of a crisis event, represent a forum for the exchange of opinions and prepare draft decisions.

The development of the capabilities of each individual system member is of paramount importance for the efficiency of crisis management systems and the development of universal standards, exercises, education and training. DUZS organizes and annually conducts a large number of such cross-sectoral activities on a national and local level. Communication interconnection contributes significantly to the response rate, duration of overall activities, coordination between system participants and citizens, as well as the protection and rescue of citizens and their property, material

and cultural goods, the environment and critical infrastructures. 112 centers and the State Protection and Rescue Center have this role in all complex incidents and crises in the Republic of Croatia. They are the organizational part of the DUZS and support all the participants of the crisis management system. 112 Centers play an indispensable role in early warning and public alert systems, as well as international coordination in all types of natural, anthropogenic and complex crisis situations that are addressed by the analyzed crisis management system. Proper managing in crisis situations is the crown of the entire crisis management system and all its components. The Protection and Rescue Plan for the Republic of Croatia provides for a framework for action in the following phases: warning, readiness, mobilization and growth of operational forces, protection and rescue measures. The principles of action within these phases apply to most of the natural, anthropogenic and complex dangers addressed by the crisis management system as we know it in Croatia. Since the basic principle of crisis management is that a crisis event determines organization and response, the Protection and Rescue Plan for the territory of the Republic of Croatia also recognizes events that require an increase in forces and a different approach than those common models.

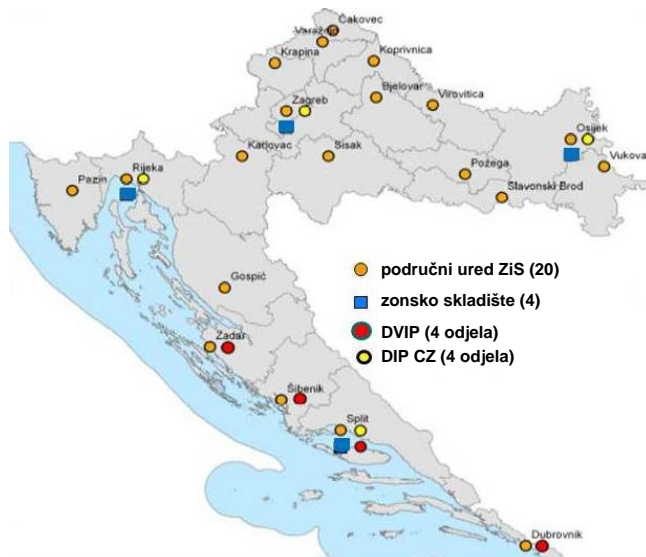
The first measure in the system is early warning (we would add prediction as a pre-warning phase) wherever possible in a timely manner. For most natural hazards (with the exception of earthquakes) early warnings are possible and consequently the most effective measure in protecting the population, material and cultural goods. Concurrently, this measure is also the least expensive way of preparing to deal with the consequences of extraordinary events. There are different early warning systems in the Republic of Croatia that use emergency services, local (regional) authorities, legal entities and state authorities with special powers and responsibilities such as DUZS. The most important national and international systems are used by DUZS to activate the crisis management system, but also to alert the population to potential dangers.

A successful reaction primarily by emergency services, and then crisis management systems is conditioned by timely and quality information about an emergency event. The role of citizens and legal persons is extremely important in the aforementioned. Every citizen of the Republic of Croatia is required to report that there is a possibility of an incident or that an incident is underway. Legal persons using hazardous substances are required to establish warning systems within their own facilities, as well as those for alerting the local population. Timely information about the

extraordinary event and the quick and efficient response of emergency services create the conditions for keeping a local incident at a local level. DUZS monitors these incidents, collects and analyzes data and information, ensures communication between necessary emergency services, collects feedback, records events, and compiles reports. At this stage, DUZS evaluates all the information gathered and decides whether the responses of emergency services to the relevant incident should be kept at the local level or it is necessary to activate individual participants and operational forces of civil protection depending on the type and magnitude of the crisis event (Toth, I., 2015).

If DUZS assesses that a local incident might escalate or has already escalated, it will raise its monitoring level through its regional office for protection and rescue and will initiate the introduction of readiness for parts of the necessary system participants (units of local authorities and operational forces), as well as their own organizational units (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Territorial layout of the DUZS organizing units



Source material: (DUZUS, 2016)

Depending on the type of extraordinary event, DUZS has two procedures at its disposal. The first one - informs citizens through regular communication systems - by

publishing information on their web site and by informing the media, primarily radio and television. The second one - uses the public alert system in affected areas. Readiness, mobilization, and growth of civilian operational forces are a part of the active preparations to prevent an incident or to remedy the consequences if an incident, if it is already underway. If the incident has escalated outside the boundaries of a legal entity's facility, if it is no longer a local incident and has surpassed the ability of local emergency services to deal with it successfully, and presents a potentially greater risk to life, health and property, the crisis management system is activated and the participants and operational forces needed to solve the crisis are activated. In accordance with the Protection and Rescue Plan for the territory of the Republic of Croatia, the DUZS Director has the responsibility and the ability to directly command the operational forces of civil protection, using the Catalogue of Capability of operational forces and civil protection participants with a review of total rescue capacity, divided by activities of civil protection interest in the Republic of Croatia. Even though there is a possibility of direct command within the crisis management system, inter-agency activities are increasingly using the term co-ordination, since the system has been established in a way that all participants are aware of their competencies and responsibilities so that it is not necessary to command them, but to coordinate their actions. The DUZS Director decides on the activation of the civil protection headquarters of the Republic of Croatia and the mobilization of all operational forces of civil protection of the Republic of Croatia. If necessary, DUZS will propose to the Government of the Republic of Croatia whether it needs to send or receive international assistance. In the event that an incident may cause unwanted consequences on a large scale, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, upon the proposal of the DUZS Director, declares a state of disaster. The Government of the Republic of Croatia takes command of the civil protection system in disasters, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia or, on their behalf, a member of the Government or the head of the civil protection headquarters of the Republic of Croatia (DUZS Director) takes over the work of the civil protection headquarters of the Republic of Croatia.

International aspects

There are numerous initiatives and areas of international cooperation on this matter, in which the Republic of Croatia is involved, from bilateral and regional

cooperation⁵⁶ to membership in international organizations and initiatives⁵⁷. In the observed crisis management area, it is necessary to regulate co-operation between the contracting parties in the area of prevention, alertness, response and removal of disaster consequences. International civil protection cooperation agreements concluded and ratified in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia form an integral part of the legal order of the Republic of Croatia and, by law, supercede all other laws. The Croatian Parliament has ratified 12 bilateral mutual assistance agreements in the event of disasters and major accidents while three more agreements are being ratified. Bilateral co-operation also takes place with other countries through various specialized programmes (Toth, I., Cemerin, D. and Vitas, P. 2011). The core areas of cooperation covered by bilateral, regional and worldwide international cooperation include: planning and implementation of preventive measures to protect against floods, earthquakes, fire, navigation accidents, radiological hazards and industrial and other civilizational accidents; mutual sharing of information on the dangers, emergence and disaster consequences; mutual assistance in protection, rescue efforts and removing consequences of a disaster; co-operation in education and training of civil protection participants, fire-fighters and other members of rescue teams, as well as protection and rescue specialists, and organization and implementation of joint exercises for protection and rescue; exchange of scientific and technical data relevant to disaster protection; cooperation in the development and production of rescue equipment.

Conclusion

The legal basis for the crisis management system in Croatia is formal legislation, with the umbrella law on the system of civil protection⁵⁸, and more relevant laws that regulate the specific areas of risk and danger. What is noticed in analyzing

⁵⁶ Eg. Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for Southeast Europe and the South European council for Civilian-Military Planning in Urgent Situations.

⁵⁷ Croatia is a very active member of the UN Disaster Risk Reduction office, the Open Partial Prevention accord, Protection and Assistance in case of major natural and technological disasters of the European Council; Civil Emergency Planning Committee for NATO Emergency Situations, the Mechanism of Civil Protection of the European Community.

⁵⁸ The entire crisis management area is actually impossible to encompass with a single law, but there is a need for laws that will ensure integrated crisis management.

the crisis management system in Croatia is an all-hazard approach and certain terminological confusion regarding the basic concept of crisis, crisis situation and related concepts. The terms crisis, crisis situation, accident, major accident and other normative terms are often very differently stipulated in various laws (eg. in the areas of civil protection, environmental protection, critical infrastructure, fire protection ...). Also, in most official documents, other general terms such as "disaster", "accident/major accident" or "emergency situation" are used, while the term "crisis" is often used more as a concept in the context of crisis management. Likewise, the criteria for an emergency situation to be deemed a crisis situation are very differently interpreted, which is linked to different degrees of formalization and legal consequences, such as relinquishing operational powers to a higher level of authority, approving special powers or restricting certain civil liberties. Regardless of the type and scope of the crisis, no derogation from the political order is envisaged in the Republic of Croatia.

It can be concluded that Croatia is prepared to handle emergency and crisis situations with legally-regulated ways and methods of organizing the work and activities of the civil protection system, which are the primary responsibility of the Government. Croatia, in addition to well-developed international cooperation in the area of crisis management and civil protection, has also developed bilateral cooperation and signed bilateral cooperation agreements with all its neighbors.

In a world where change and new risks are the only constants and crisis management systems must constantly change, adjust to change and improve, along with their normative legal framework, changing and constantly aligning norms in the area of crisis management are more or less a feature of Croatia as well.

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