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Civil Defence as an Important Element of Public Education

Introduction

Civil Defence (CD) is a system of measures, usually taken by government agencies, to protect civilians in wartime and to take emergency response actions in the event of disasters, and to prevent and mitigate the effects of larger dangerous peacetime incidents. The priority of the system is the safety of the citizen or public safety fulfilled by other entities present in the state, as part of their rights and obligations.¹ The basic legal act in this regard specifies that "Civil defence is aimed at protecting the population, workplaces and public utilities, cultural goods, saving and providing assistance to victims of war, and cooperation in combating natural disasters and environmental threats and removing their effects."² On the other hand, according to the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts, "the term civil defence means the fulfilment of humanitarian tasks, aimed at protecting civilians against the dangers resulting from military operations or natural disasters, and overcoming their immediate consequences, as well as ensuring the conditions necessary for survival."³ The general principles of the CD operations and tasks in Poland do not differ significantly from those present in other countries. Civil defence reflects the efforts of the authors

¹ *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa*, eds. O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, R. Kopeć, Kraków 2018, p. 482.

² Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Art. 137, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2021, item 372.

³ Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, (AP I), Art. 61.a, <http://www.sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/protokoly-dodatkowe-do-konwencji-genewskich-z-12-sierpnia-1949-r-16794697> [accessed: 12.06.2021].

of international humanitarian law to alleviate the effects, losses, damages and suffering caused to civilians as a result of the systematic development of methods and means of combat. This objective is also broadly reflected in the rules created for the protection of the civilian population in the event of an attack as set out in the First Additional Protocol of 1977 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions (AP I). The Fourth Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilians in Time of War already grants civil protection organizations and their personnel the right to operate under foreign occupation. AP I extends the protection of civil defence activities during an international armed conflict. It guarantees protection during the performance of civil defence tasks and provides a distinctive sign for their identification. Although the 1977 Second Additional Protocol (AP II) to the 1949 Geneva Conventions do not contain a direct reference to the matter, the provisions relating to civil defence activities should also be complied with in non-international armed conflict as part of the overall protection of the civilian population against threats arising from hostilities.⁴

Civil defence – historical outline

The events of 24 June 1859 can be considered pivotal to creation of fully functional system of protection for general population (at the time it was mainly concerned with providing assistance to soldiers). As a result of the ongoing clash of Austrian troops French forces, over 40,000 soldiers were killed or injured on both sides. At that time, the Swiss writer, trader and financier Henri Jean Dunant, seeing the suffering of combat victims and the lack of effective help for the wounded and injured, initiated the idea of protecting the wounded soldiers and individuals supporting them and guaranteeing that they cannot be the target of war attacks.⁵ Civil defence in its present form was initiated at the beginning of World War I in England. The beginnings of civil defence were stimulated by the experience of aerial bombardments of civilian areas by German airships. The mass use of combat gases by the participants of World War I focused the interest of CD creators on creating elements responsible for this threat within its framework. In 1935, the Ministry of the Internal Affairs established a special government department, the Civil Defence Service. It was responsible for the previously existing APC, as well as firefighters, [initially the Auxiliary Fire Brigade (AFB), and later the National Fire Service (NFS)], rescue teams, first aid points, transport of casualties and industry. During World War II, over 1.9 million people were active members of English civil defence, and almost 2,400 lost their lives as a result of enemy actions.⁶ Deteriorating international situation in the late 1940s and the beginning of the “Cold War” provided an impulse for British government to re-establish a voluntary civil defence force in line with the Civil Defence Act of 1948. The new body was called the “Civil Defence Corps”. Soon after, the United States, the

⁴ *Ibidem*, (AP II), Art. 13, par. 1.

⁵ *Ochrona ludności w czasie pokoju oraz w okresie kryzysu i wojny*, ed. A. Skrabacz, Warszawa 2010, p. 5.

⁶ *Brief History Of UK Civil Defence*, p. 1, <https://civildefenceassociation.uk/history/> [accessed: 10.06.2021].

USSR, and other countries provided evidence of a nuclear capability that culminated in the development and testing of a hydrogen (H) bomb. It provided focused direction towards organizational development, training courses and preparation of equipment and infrastructure.⁷ The beginnings of civil defence in Poland date back to 1921, when the Social Committee for Gas Defence was formed, becoming the first association of military and civilians in the country, aiming to prepare the civilian population for protection against the consequences of a possible armed conflict.⁸ The outbreak of World War II verified the preparations in this regard as insufficient. The experience in the organization of passive air and gas defence in the Second Polish Republic and the legal acts developed were used in the liberated territories of the Republic of Poland as early as 1944. Together with the air defence department established on 6 November 1944 in the military office of the Ministry of Administration, which became their coordinating body, they took on all matters related to the Air Defence and the protection of the population against the effects of the ongoing war. Fundamental changes in this respect took place in 1973, when, on the basis of the Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 112/73 of 18 May, the Civil Defence was established, defining the organization of civil defence, the purpose and tasks of state administration bodies, social economy units and social organizations in this area.⁹ At the same time, by Resolution No. 112 of the Council of Ministers of 18 May 1973 on the training of the population in the field of universal self-defence, the goals, topics, scope and participants of the training were precisely defined.¹⁰ Another significant change in the functioning of Civil Defence in the period of the People's Republic of Poland was introduced by Resolution No. 191/83 of 23 December 1983, under which the heads of the Civil Defence at the local level were charged with the implementation of a number of organizational tasks. In addition to the above-mentioned tasks, the scope of civil defence also included organizing and conducting training of the population as part of universal self-defence.¹¹ Throughout the period of its operation, which was also emphasized in the documents from 1973 and 1983, an important task of the CD was to educate the society and prepare it to combat the effects of enemy attacks. The profile of preparations was adjusted to the current threats at a given stage. In the first stage, attention was focused on anti-aircraft and anti-gas defence, observation and warning, blackout and first aid. The next stage was defined by the threat of "nuclear" weapons and the related threats, the adaptation of new generation shelters and the behaviour of the population.

The key moment in the functioning of Civil Defence within the Third Republic, creating new political foundations, was the signing by the President of the Republic of Poland on 19 September 1991 (drawn up in Geneva on 8 June 1977) of Additional

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

⁸ J. Suwart, *Zarys obrony cywilnej w Polsce w latach 1920–1996*, Warszawa 2003, p. 24.

⁹ Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej, Dz.U., 1967, no 7, item 31.

¹⁰ Uchwała nr 112 Rady Ministrów z dnia 18 maja 1973 r. w sprawie szkolenia ludności w zakresie powszechnej samoobrony, Monitor Polski, 1973, no 25, item 152.

¹¹ Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 23 grudnia 1983 r. w sprawie szczegółowego zakresu działania Szefa Obrony Cywilnej Kraju oraz szefów obrony cywilnej województw, miast, dzielnic, gmin oraz miast i gmin, Dz.U. 1983, no 73, item 324.

Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 on the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I) and the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II). These documents, especially Protocol I in Chapter VI, detail important tasks in the field of civil defence. In addition to the definition of civil defence quoted in the introduction, Art. 61 contains the tasks facing CD, which include:

- warning;
- evacuation;
- management of shelters;
- handling of blackout equipment;
- rescue;
- medical services, including first aid and religious care;
- fire-fighting;
- detection and marking of danger zones;
- decontamination and other similar protective measures;
- provision of emergency rooms and supplies;
- immediate assistance to restore and maintain order in disaster zones;
- immediate restoration of the operation of necessary public services;
- immediate burying of the dead;
- help in saving goods necessary for survival;
- additional activities necessary to fulfil any of the tasks mentioned above, including planning and organizational work.

During an armed conflict, the protection of civilian civil defence organizations, their personnel, buildings, facilities and shelters ceases if they operate or are used to carry out activities harmful to the enemy (Art. 65). The authors of the legal acts in question included in Art. 80 point 2 the obligation for states ratifying the documents to issue appropriate orders and instructions to ensure compliance with the Convention and to supervise their execution. Fulfilling the above obligations, Poland issued the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 September 1993 on the subject of civil defence,¹² which meets these requirements. At the same time, on 28 September 1993, ordinances were adopted on general principles of self-defence of the civilian population and on the detailed scope of activities of the Chief of Civil Defence of the Country, heads of civil defence of voivodships and communes, as well as the rules and procedures for managing and coordinating their preparation and implementation of civil defence projects. It was characteristic of the shaping of the new civil defence system to depart from close ties with the Armed Forces in favour of subordination to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In addition, it should also be emphasized that from the beginning of the 1990s, a far-reaching discussion was taking place in regards to the new way of protecting civilian population in Poland as a consequence of the emerging completely new security environment. Poland made a sovereign decision to search for a new strategic partner in the field of defence. The selection concerned the North Atlantic Alliance, in which matters

¹² Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 28 września 1993 r. w sprawie obrony cywilnej, Dz.U., 1993, no 93, item 429.

concerning, amongst others, civil protection and rescue are handled by crisis management structures. This initiated a discussion about a qualitatively new formula, referred to by the same term.

Another point of interest for Poland in order to ensure security and development was the European Union. One of the important elements of this specific organization is civil protection and crisis management. The pursuit of EU membership forced our country to take up another challenge – the creation of a crisis management system. Such serious problems, additionally burdened by the reforms carried out in the administration, the Armed Forces, the economy and many other areas, including attempts to reorganize the structures responsible for civil protection, led to the transfer of the duties of the Chief of National Civil Defence to the Commander-in-Chief of the State Fire Service in 2000. The Office of Crisis Management and Civil Protection was also closed, making the State Fire Service Headquarters the headquarters of the civil defence. This change was beneficial for the creation of a new, effective and efficient crisis response system, the key subject of which was to be the National Rescue and Fire Fighting System, built under the aegis and with the main participation of the fire brigade, while in the same time resulting in the abolition of the CD service and an almost complete collapse of the field of training, expansion and maintenance of material and technical facilities.¹³

The basis of the functioning of Civil Defence in Poland

The functioning of civil defence in Poland is regulated by the Act of 21 November 1967 on the universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland and the implementing acts issued with it, including amongst others:

- Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 25 June 2002 on the detailed scope of activities of the head of the National Civil Defence, heads of civil defence of provinces, districts and counties;
- Regulation of the Minister of the Internal Affairs and Administration of 26 September 2002 on serving in civil defence;
- Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 29 March 2005 on positions considered equivalent to serving in civil defence;
- Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 September 1993 on self-defence of the civilian population.

Based on Art. 17 of the Act "Chief of Civil Defence of the Country and Local Civil Defence Authorities", the central body of government administration in civil defence matters is the Chief of Civil Defence of the Country, appointed by the Prime Minister at the request of the minister responsible for internal affairs. The Chief of the National Civil Defence reports to the minister competent for internal affairs, and his duties include:

- preparation of draft assumptions and principles of civil defence operation;
- establishing general principles for the implementation of civil defence tasks;

¹³ *System reagowania kryzysowego*, eds. J. Gryz, W. Kitler, Toruń 2007, s. 172.

- coordinating specific projects and monitoring the implementation of civil defence tasks by government administration bodies and local government bodies;
- supervising the performance of essential civil defence service.

The local civil defence bodies are voivodes, head of the county, mayor of the commune or mayors (city presidents), whose scope of activities includes managing and coordinating the preparation and implementation of civil defence projects by state institutions, entrepreneurs and other organizational units and social organizations operating in their area.¹⁴

Chapter IV of the Act in question is entitled "Civil Defence" but it is difficult to find in it the basic subject – tasks facing civil defence. In Chapter 1, Art. 137, they are defined in the one-sentence formula quoted in the introduction to this article. The following chapters deal in detail with the tasks and duties of citizens in the field of CD, the course of service in CD formations, the principles of education for defence and training of the population in the field of self-defence. More and more precise data can be obtained by analysing the regulation of the Council of Ministers on the scope of activity of heads of CD at individual levels.¹⁵ The scope of activities of the Chief of Civil Defence of the Country includes:

- 1) initiating, preparing, issuing and reviewing draft normative acts concerning civil defence,
- 2) agreeing the draft state civil defence plan with the Minister of National Defence and other competent ministers,
- 3) outlining the principles for civil defence plans for voivodships, powiats, communes and entrepreneurs,
- 4) development of principles and directions of education and training of employees, rescuers and the population in the field of civil defence,
- 5) assessing the state of civil defence preparations in voivodships, powiats and communes,
- 6) planning in terms of financial and material resources necessary for the implementation of own tasks in the field of civil defence,
- 7) defining the principles of the evacuation of people and property in the event of a mass threat,
- 8) initiating scientific and research activities related to civil defence, as well as participation in unification and standardization works in this field,
- 9) preparation of information on civil defence for the minister responsible for internal affairs and the Prime Minister,
- 10) organizing and coordinating exercises in civil defence,
- 11) controlling the preparation of civil defence and rescuers to conduct rescue operations,
- 12) controlling the conditions for performing basic civil defence service,
- 13) establishing standards for the supply of civil defence bodies and formations with equipment, technical means and uniforms necessary to perform civil defence tasks.

¹⁴ Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r..., *op. cit.*, Art. 17.

¹⁵ Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 25 czerwca 2002 r. w sprawie szczegółowego zakresu działania Szefa Obrony Cywilnej Kraju, szefów obrony cywilnej województw, powiatów i gmin, Dz.U., 2002, no 96, item 850.

On the basis of the above scope of activity, the Head of the CD issued a number of guidelines, including establishing the norms for the formation for general tasks¹⁶, created the division of rescue services for special tasks. Determining the rules of organization and the manner of conducting training in the field of civil defence¹⁷ and planning were of great importance in the field of civil defence preparations. The presented scope of activities is very wide, but similar tasks that the Council of Ministers assigned to the subordinates of the Head of the National Civil Insurance are quantitatively doubled – they are included in 26 points. In general, they include tasks in the field of:

- organization and planning;
- information and training;
- preparing society for the dealing with natural disasters;
- preparation for rescue operations and evacuation;
- provision of equipment;
- maintaining order in areas affected by disasters and military operations;
- activities pertaining to the maintenance (restoration) of water and food supplies;
- preparation for provision of emergency assistance in burying the dead.

The heads of civil defence of voivodships, districts, municipalities and institutions, entrepreneurs, other organizational units and social rescue organizations develop long-term and annual action plans in the field of civil defence, which are subject to agreement with civil defence authorities appropriate to the area. When coordinating the preparation and implementation of civil defence projects, the Head of the National Civil Defence and the heads of civil defence for provinces, powiats and municipalities also take into account the activities of civil defence enterprises for which the Minister of National Defence is the founding body and organizational units subordinate to the minister of internal affairs or by him supervised, in particular in the field of the detection, alerting and early warning systems, evacuation of civilian population as well as the resources allocated to conduct rescue operations. Civil defence chiefs establish tasks and control their implementation, as well as coordinate and manage activities in the field of preparation and implementation of civil defence projects:

- Chief of Civil Defence of the Country – heads of civil defence for provinces,
- Chief of civil defence of the voivodship – heads of civil defence for districts,
- Chief of civil defence of the district – heads of civil defence for community,
- Chief of civil defence of the community – heads of civil defence in various institutions, entrepreneurs, social rescue organizations and other organizational units operating in the community.

In accordance with Art. 138 of the Act on the Universal Duty of Defence of the Republic of Poland, the basic organizational units intended to perform civil defence tasks are civil defence formations. Civil defence formations are equipped with personal protection equipment and the simplest rescue equipment. As part of benefits

¹⁶ Wytyczne Szefa Obrony Cywilnej Kraju z dnia 3 marca 2014 r. w sprawie normatywów, w zakresie zaopatrzenia organów i formacji obrony cywilnej w sprzęt, środki techniczne i umundurowanie niezbędne do wykonywania zadań obrony cywilnej, z uwzględnieniem ramowych struktur organizacyjnych i podstawowych zadań formacji obrony cywilnej.

¹⁷ Wytyczne Szefa Obrony Cywilnej Kraju z dnia 11 stycznia 2016 r. w sprawie zasad organizacji i sposobu przeprowadzania szkoleń z zakresu obrony cywilnej.

in kind, they perform their tasks using facilities, technical devices and equipment of enterprises of the national economy. Civil defence formations are created, by way of a regulation, by ministers, and voivodes, starosts, village heads or mayors (city presidents) – by ordinance, taking into account in particular: the scale of the threats, type of formation, their purpose, personal status and internal organization. In peacetime, civil defence formations are not being fully utilised. The readiness to act will be achieved successively when higher states of defence readiness are announced. The activities, duties, schedules and methods of carrying out these operations are determined by the ordinance and guidelines of the head of the National Civil Defence. One of the essential documents in civil defence is the “Civil Defence Plan”¹⁸ developed in order to establish and prepare the manner of implementation of civil defence in the face of external threats to state security and war. Civil defence plans, drawn up at each level of government and local government administration, include: conclusions from the threat assessment, a general concept of action in the period of external threats to state security and war, procedures relating to increasing defence readiness, tasks and obligations of persons and entities entrusted with the implementation of tasks in civil defence. In addition, they contain functional appendices specifying: monitoring of threats, warning and alerting, directing and communication, medical care, contamination removal and other similar protective activities. They also contain data on the preparation and maintenance of protective structures, rescue, emergency restoration of the operation of necessary public services, ad hoc burial of the deceased, ad hoc assistance in restoring and maintaining order in areas affected by disasters, a list of needs and a water supply plan, as well as other types of activities and data. The scope of activities of the heads of civil defence of voivodships, powiats and communes, in their area of operation, also includes the preparation and operation of the detection and alarm system and the early warning system. The following are used to announce and cancel alarms:

- alarm sirens forming a part of the centralized city alarm systems;
- radio stations and television centres;
- radio broadcasting stations for wire radio;
- alarm sirens not included in the municipal alarm systems (sirens of workplaces, voluntary fire brigades, etc.)
- alternative means of alerting (handheld sirens, vehicles with amplifiers, gongs, church bells, etc.).

Despite the equal workload of civil defence chiefs at all levels, the community, as the lowest level of local government administration, taking into account the number of employees and tasks and the fact that all events occur most often at this level, is the most burdened in terms of the practical implementation of civil defence related tasks. That includes, among others, ensuring the safety of citizens, maintaining public order, fire and flood protection.¹⁹

¹⁸ Wytyczne Szefa Obrony Cywilnej Kraju z dnia 27 grudnia 2011 r. w sprawie zasad opracowania planu obrony cywilnej, województw, powiatów i gmin, https://www.lodzkie.eu/data/other/wytyczne_do_planow_oc.pdf [accessed: 10.05.2021].

¹⁹ Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. o samorządzie gminnym, Art. 7, sub-s 1, Dz.U. 1990, no 16, item 95.

Assessment of the functioning of Civil Defence

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland in Art. 5 ensures that “The Republic of Poland guards the independence and inviolability of its territory, ensures freedom and human and civil rights as well as the security of citizens, protects the national heritage and protects the environment, guided by the principle of sustainable development.” For the deliberations on the subject of civil defence, the constitutional guarantee of the security of citizens is of importance here. Is the organization and functioning of this important element in the national security system sufficient? When analysing the documents, legal acts and statements of politicians and specialists in the field of national security relating to the subject of Civil Defence in the country, numerous opinions can be noted that in its current form, the CD is not sufficient to meet contemporary threats, and thus it is not effective in peacetime and therefore it is unlikely to be effective in wartime. The need for changes in this area was emphasized by the President of the Republic of Poland in his speech during the signing of the new National Security Strategy on 12 May 2020. He emphasized that

I hope that now, in the near future, we will be able to add to this very important law on national security management, as well as on civil defence and civil protection, because these are the acts that should complement this strategy. I hope that in the near future we will appoint appropriate teams that will develop these legal acts, and they will be able to be presented to the parliament as a fulfilment of the framework created by the National Security Strategy.²⁰

Important tasks, which are reflected in the provisions of the National Security Strategy in the field of security, including civil protection, are included in the chapter – National Security Management. They are as follows:

- the need to integrate the national security management system, including the management of the state defence, enabling the combination of processes, procedures and operating practices, by integrating the systems in operation so far, in particular national security management, crisis management and cybersecurity;
- creation of a supra-ministerial mechanism of national security management coordination, responsible at the strategic level for examining matters related to policies, strategies and programs in the field of national security management, in a manner ensuring coherence and consistent implementation, and its connection with the elements of crisis management at the central level;
- adaptation of the national crisis management system to the crisis response system of the North Atlantic Alliance so that it also covers the area of political and military conflict and enables a smooth transition from a state of peace to a state of crisis and a state of war;

²⁰ The speech of the President of the Republic of Poland at the inauguration of the new National Security Strategy, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/art,1049,wystapienie-podczas-uroczystosci-zatwierdzenia-strategii-bezpieczenstwa-nat.html> [accessed: 12.05.2021].

- review and determination of the hierarchy and interdependence of strategic and planning documents, as well as the mechanisms implementing them, in the field of national security and state defence;
- ensuring, within the framework of a comprehensive and integrated national security system, at all levels of government and self-government administration, coherence of civil planning and defence planning, as well as the possibility of selective implementation of tasks, depending on the needs;
- to implement the above activities, it is necessary to develop an act on national security management.

A specific reference to civil defence can be found in the chapter – State Resilience and Universal Defence: “Redefine the system of civil defence and civil protection, making it universal, both in urban agglomerations and in rural areas, with an emphasis on building the capacity for permanent adaptation of the system in the face of changing challenges and threats. To develop an act comprehensively regulating the issues of civil defence.”²¹ To redefine means to make significant changes, to rebuild or re-create – what direction will be adopted and who will be tasked with meeting this challenge is still unknown one year after the publication of the Strategy. The highest-level institution appointed to control the functioning of the state and which calls for changes in the functioning of civil defence is the Supreme Audit Office (NIK). It is very likely that the activities of the Supreme Audit Office in this area contributed to the final decisions on the need for changes. In 2012, the Supreme Audit Office prepared a post-audit document (information on the audit results) entitled “Preparation of Civil Defence structures for the implementation of tasks in the period of war and peace”, which is the result of its activities in seven voivodeship offices, seven starosts and fourteen municipalities. The Supreme Audit Office negatively assessed the preparation of the country’s civil defence structures for the performance of its statutory tasks. The audit revealed significant irregularities in this respect and negligence of responsible persons at all levels. The method and level of financing of civil defence did not ensure the efficient functioning of the civil defence system and made it practically impossible to equip the civil protection units with the necessary equipment, including the replacement of worn out and obsolete devices.²² Despite the work undertaken since 2006 by the Chief of Civil Defence and the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration, aimed at creating consistent and precise legal regulations for civil defence, these work have not been finalised by the time the inspection was completed.²³ The audit showed that the functioning model of the country’s civil defence system was not fully adapted to the current needs, including those resulting from Poland’s membership in the European Union, the current state organization and the state of the country’s infrastructure. There were also no mechanisms

²¹ *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego*, Warszawa 2021, p. 16.

²² NIK [Supreme Chamber of Control], *Przygotowanie struktur Obrony Cywilnej do realizacji zadań w okresie wojny i pokoju. Informacja o wynikach kontroli*, Warszawa 2012, <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,3953,vp,5028.pdf> [accessed: 10.06.2021].

²³ The document entitled Draft Act on Civil Protection and Civil Defense was submitted by the Ministry of Interior and Administration for further proceedings on July 4, 2019, <https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12322353/katalog/12604997#12604997> [accessed: 10.06.2021].

ensuring the necessary, effective coordination of activities within the civil defence system itself. The tasks of the civil defence of the country have been entrusted to separate organs and formations, but without precisely defining their mutual relations, rules of cooperation and responsibility for individual tasks. The rules of cooperation with other state authorities performing tasks in the field of civil protection, and combating natural disasters and other extraordinary events have not been established either. The inspection's findings showed that the preparation of local civil defence units does not ensure effective protection of the population against threats. These units do not have the equipment adequate to the potential threats, and the funds allocated for this purpose do not allow for the current replenishment of shortages and the rotation of worn-out equipment. Failure to verify the organization of the CD formation resulted in the fact that a significant number of these units did not have the necessary personnel.

The Supreme Audit Office reassessed condition of protection of civilian population as part of crisis management and civil defence in 2018. The diagnosis of the state of preparation of civil defence structures during the inspection confirmed – unfortunately, the findings and assessments resulting from the earlier NIK inspections. The existing regulations governing the organization and functioning of civil defence still did not ensure effective coordination of activities related to broadly understood civilian population protection and cooperation in combating natural disasters. It was confirmed that the implementing acts concerning civil defence were drafted in a different legal, political and socio-economic order and were not compatible with the situation at that time. What is important and reprehensible – it was found that a significant part of the activity of civil defence entities was focused on the creation of numerous planning and reporting documents, which to a negligible extent translated into actual activities related to the development and modernization of civil defence structures. NIK also pointed out that the degree of formalization of the activity, and in particular the number and volume of all kinds of planning and reporting documentation on civil defence necessary to be prepared at all its levels, in relation to the real possibilities, may only give the appearance of a well-organized and efficiently functioning system. Moreover, a low or negative assessment of the developed action plans was confirmed, as well as virtual nonexistence of the CD formations and the archaic equipment of these formations. The educational activity for the society is carried out at a low substantive level and a very high level of generality. While the State Fire Service plays an important role in education and prevention in terms of typical tasks, the burdening of the Commander-in-Chief with the tasks of the Chief of the Civil Aviation Committee was not the right decision. This is evidenced, in addition to the above-mentioned audits of the Supreme Audit Office, by the tasks in the field of education for the years 2021–2022:

4. in the field of education:

- 1) increase social awareness in the field of responsibility for the implementation of civil defence tasks,
- 2) strengthen the potential of the voivodeship, powiat and commune by ensuring continuous development and training of employees of subordinate units in the field of civil defence,

3) intensify educational activities in traditional and electronic form, in order to increase awareness of threats and to shape security based on involvement of citizens with particular emphasis on promoting pro-social attitudes and behaviour.

4) strive to increase the capabilities of the voivodeship, powiat and commune in the field of counteracting threats and meeting challenges resulting from changing security conditions.²⁴

The tasks in the field of improving the national security system, including civilian population protection and civil defence, presented in the current National Defence Strategy, reflect the recommendations of the Supreme Audit Office and opinions – not presented here – of experts, practitioners and scientists.²⁵ Civil defence, just like civilian population protection, is a national matter, while our membership in the European Union gives the opportunity to benefit from the experience of other members and even help in specific situations. In line with Art. 196 of the Treaty, it is the Member States' responsibility to take all measures aimed at protecting people, property and the environment in emergency situations, including rescue operations. In the same time the Union's task is to support and complement their national, regional and local action in the field of preventing and responding to natural and man-made disasters. The tool used for this purpose is the Community Civil Protection Mechanism. It is similar with our membership in NATO, where civil defence planning is an element of crisis management. Its purpose is to collect, analyse and share information on national planning activities by member states to ensure the most effective use of existing resources and capabilities in crisis situations in line with Alliance's objectives. Nevertheless, it is up to the authorities of the Republic of Poland to decide what shape such a system will function in, how strong it will be, and what its capabilities will be in terms of protecting citizens. Regardless of our membership in the above-mentioned and other organizations, especially in a state of war in the field of civil defence and civilian population protection, we should count primarily on ourselves. An interesting concept of an integrated civilian population protection system is presented by Waldemar Kitler, who states:

Protection of civilian population takes place during all stages and conditions of country's functioning and as a result of current international law it takes on dual role, protection of civilian population: *in the state of permanent alertness and simultaneous emergency responsiveness, in situation of crisis caused by forces of nature or man, during a state of natural disaster and state of emergency*, and civil defence: *during an armed conflict (during a war), during martial law and during the occupation*.²⁶

²⁴ Wytuczne Komendanta Głównego Państwowej Straży Pożarnej – Szefa Obrony Cywilnej Kraju dnia 28 grudnia 2020 r. do działalności w dziedzinie ochrony ludności, ochrony przeciwpożarowej i obrony cywilnej w 2021 i 2022 roku, <https://www.gov.pl/web/kgpsp/dokumenty-do-pobrania> [accessed: 10.06.2021].

²⁵ The need for a reform of civil defence, with the results of research, is presented, inter alia, by: J. Piłżys, *Obrona Cywilna w Polsce. Współczesność i perspektywy*, Toruń 2019.

²⁶ W. Kitler, *Organizacja bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Aspekty ustrojowe, prawno-administracyjne i systemowe*, Toruń 2018, p. 434.

Conclusions and Proposals

The necessity to create uniform legal provisions clearly defining the powers of the authorities, citizens' obligations and ways of increasing public awareness in the field of civil protection emerges from the efforts made by experts, civil defence employees and other related institutions, and those controlling the level of the state's preparation to ensure the security of citizens. There is a need to accelerate the legislative work on the Act on Civil Protection and Civil Defence. When defining the concept of civilian population protection, civil defence must be seen as preparation and implementation of civilian population protection tasks after the introduction of martial law and during the war. Civil defence in peacetime will only constitute a set of organizational and planning undertakings (in the non-military scope) ensuring efficient preparation of the state (including all organs and entities) for the implementation of civil defence tasks during martial law and war.

Civil defence structures need to be included in the crisis management system, amended according to the announcements of state decision-makers, taking into account the response to military threats and the scope of operations. In such a situation, it is necessary to create a central-level management body²⁷ with a separate civil defence division. One of the main goals of the new system should be to educate the public. Regardless of whether it will be called civilian population protection, civil defence or something else, some threats to the population during the war period are specific, e.g. the effects of attacks with various types of weapons, but even those occurring in everyday situation, e.g. fires, will be more difficult to manage due to the simultaneous occurrence of combat operations, causing for them to have a greater range and to exert greater psychological pressure and results will often depend solely on the preparation of citizens.

Breakthrough is needed in the field of education: civil defence workers, administration and society. Workers should be enabled to acquire knowledge and skills in the field of civilian population protection and civil defence. Another important element of civilian population protection is a well-prepared and informed citizen, who should be able to acquire knowledge and skills on how to behave in situations of threat to his life or health, as well as on the scope of their prevention, defining his rights and obligations. An important element of training in the field of civil defence should be clarification of contemporary threats – from cyber threats to the still current threats from nuclear weapons. Good results of training in kindergartens and schools, are exemplified by the behaviour of children in critical situations and the ability to call for help and they prove the role of education on the matters of safety. The mass media and various types of social organizations, including pro-defence ones, have a significant role to play in this respect.

There is a need to adapt action plans, structures, personnel preparation and equipment to real life situations and threats. Modernization of weapons, introduction of new types of weapons – precision and intelligent weapons, increase in importance of activities in cyberspace makes it necessary to adapt to their operation.

²⁷ Pursuant to the Act of April 26, 2007 on crisis management, the governing body is the Council of Ministers.

Autonomous means are growing in importance – we already have airborne measures and we are introducing ground-based ones, but it is questionable whether they are capable of identifying civil defence personnel.

The Armed Forces should be an important element supporting the process of change and training. In terms of civilian population protection in peacetime, the regulations are sufficient, while in times of war, especially on own territory, they will provide assistance depending on the military situation – based on experience, for example, from participation in stabilization operations against local civilians. The suggestion by some experts of basing civil defence on the Armed Forces²⁸, especially TDF, is incomprehensible. The purpose of the army is different, and although AP I allows such situations, they are strictly defined, and moreover, soldiers, regardless of their tasks, become prisoners of war when in contact with the enemy and will not be able to carry out their mission. In peacetime, the armed forces should be heavily involved in educational activities. It should focus on making the public aware of the effects of the use of the latest weapon systems, such as modern aviation and artillery and missile systems. Activities should be carried out from kindergarten to university, in workplaces and during open mass events.

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²⁸ I met such suggestions, among others, at work.: M. Pietrek, G. Pietrek, *Obrona cywilna jako element systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, Warszawa 2020, p. 165, 177.

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Civil Defence as an Important Element of Public Education *Abstract*

Civil defence (CD) is a system with the aim of protecting the civilian population, workplaces, public utilities and cultural goods, to rescue and provide assistance to victims of war and to cooperate in combating the effects of natural disasters and catastrophes. The organization of civil defence in Poland is the responsibility of the National Civil Defence, the head of which is the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service. Civil defence carries out tasks that form a part of crisis management, such as: planning actions necessary in regards to protection against the effects of military operations, both in regards to the civilian population and workplaces, public utilities and cultural goods; detection of threats and creation of conditions for warning and alerting the public; preparing shelters and places of safety for the public and keeping them ready for use; collection and storage of individual protective equipment for civil defence units and the civilian population; equipping civil defence formations with specialized rescue equipment, instruments and apparatus for detecting various types of threats; systematic training in the field of third party liability insurance; cooperation in combating natural disasters and environmental threats, and removal of their effects. An important role in the activities of civil defence,

especially in the past, formed the education of the society in terms of preparation for defence against the effects of enemy actions. At present civil defence requires decisive remedial measures to improve its condition, as stated in the post-inspection reports of the Supreme Audit Office and announced by the President of the Republic of Poland.

Key words: civil defence, civil protection, education for security, public education

Obrona Cywilna jako ważny element w edukacji społeczeństwa *Streszczenie*

Obrona cywilna (OC) to system, którego celem jest ochrona ludności, zakładów pracy i urzędów użyteczności publicznej, dóbr kultury; ratowanie i udzielanie pomocy poszkodowanym w czasie wojny oraz współdziałanie w zwalczaniu skutków klęsk żywiołowych i katastrof. Organizacją obrony cywilnej w Polsce zajmuje się Obrona Cywilna Kraju, której Szefem jest Komendant Główny Państwowej Straży Pożarnej. Obrona cywilna realizuje zadania, które są również przedsięwzięciami zarządzania kryzysowego, tj.: planowanie w zakresie ochrony zarówno ludności, jak i zakładów pracy, urzędów użyteczności publicznej oraz dóbr kultury przed skutkami działań zbrojnych; wykrywanie zagrożeń i stwarzanie warunków do ostrzegania i alarmowania ludności; przygotowanie schronów i ukryć dla ludności oraz utrzymanie ich w gotowości do użycia; gromadzenie i przechowywanie indywidualnych środków ochronnych dla formacji obrony cywilnej i ludności; wyposażenie formacji obrony cywilnej w specjalistyczny sprzęt ratowniczy, przyrządy i aparaturę do wykrywania różnego rodzaju zagrożeń; systematyczne szkolenie w zakresie OC; współdziałanie w zwalczaniu klęsk żywiołowych i zagrożeń środowiska, oraz usuwanie ich skutków. Ważną rolę w działalności OC, szczególnie w przeszłości, stanowiła edukacja społeczeństwa w zakresie przygotowania do obrony przed skutkami działań nieprzyjaciela. Kondycja obrony cywilnej wymaga zdecydowanych działań naprawczych, co stwierdza w raportach pokontrolnych Najwyższa Izba Kontroli i zapowiada Prezydent RP.

Słowa kluczowe: obrona cywilna, ochrona ludności

Zivilschutz als wesentlicher Bestandteil der öffentlichen Bildung *Zusammenfassung*

Zivilschutz ist ein System mit dem Ziel, die Bevölkerung, Arbeitsplätze, öffentliche Einrichtungen und Kulturgüter zu schützen, Kriegsopfern zu retten und zu unterstützen sowie bei der Bekämpfung der Auswirkungen von Naturkatastrophen und Unglücksfällen zusammenzuarbeiten. Die für den Zivilschutz zuständige Behörde in Polen ist der Nationale Zivilschutz. An der Spitze des nationalen Zivilschutzes steht der Oberkommandierende der staatlichen Feuerwehr. Im Rahmen des Zivilschutzes werden Aufgaben wahrgenommen, die auch das Krisenmanagement umfassen, wie z. B. die Planung von Aktivitäten zum Schutz vor den Auswirkungen feindlicher Handlungen im öffentlichen Raum, an Arbeitsplätzen und in öffentlichen Einrichtungen und Kulturgütern; Erkennung von Bedrohungen und Schaffung der Voraussetzungen für die Warnung und Alarmierung der Öffentlichkeit; Vorbereitung und Bereithaltung von öffentlich zugänglichen Schutzräumen, Sammlung und Lagerung von persönlicher Schutzausrüstung für Zivilschutzverbände und die Bevölkerung; Ausstattung der Zivilschutzverbände mit speziellen Rettungsgeräten und -ausrüstungen zur Erkennung verschiedener Gefahren; systematische Ausbildung im Bereich des Zivilschutzes, Zusammenarbeit bei der Verhütung und Bewältigung von Naturkatastrophen und Umweltrisiken. Eine wichtige Rolle in den Aktivitäten des Zivilschutzes spielte vor allem in der Vergangenheit die Bildung der Gesellschaft im

Hinblick auf die Vorbereitung auf die Abwehr der Auswirkungen feindlicher Handlungen. Der Zustand des Zivilschutzes erfordert die Einführung entscheidender Abhilfemaßnahmen, wie in den Prüfberichten der Obersten Kontrollkammer und in den Erklärungen des Präsidenten der Republik Polen angegeben.

Schlüsselwörter: Zivilschutz, Schutz der Bevölkerung

Гражданская оборона как важнейший элемент образования общества

Резюме

Гражданская оборона (ГО) – система, предназначенная для защиты населения, учреждений, предприятий, общественных зданий, культурных ценностей; проведение спасательных операций и оказание помощи жертвам военных действий, а также взаимодействие в борьбе с последствиями стихийных бедствий и катастроф. Органом, ответственным за гражданскую оборону в Польше, является Национальная гражданская оборона, которую возглавляет главный комендант Государственной пожарной службы. Гражданская оборона выполняет задачи, которые также включают управление кризисами, напр.: планирование защиты населения, предприятий, инфраструктуры, культурных ценностей от последствий военных действий; обнаружение угроз и создание условий для предупреждения и оповещения населения; подготовка и поддержание в готовности убежищ для населения; сбор и хранение средств индивидуальной защиты для формирований гражданской обороны и населения; обеспечение формирований гражданской обороны специализированными спасательными средствами и техники для обнаружения различных видов угроз; систематическое обучение гражданской обороне; взаимодействие с разными ведомствами и организациями в борьбе со стихийными бедствиями, экологическими угрозами и действиями, направленными на ликвидацию их последствий. Важную роль в деятельности гражданской обороны, особенно в прошлом, играла система образования общества в области подготовки к защите от последствий действий противника. Состояние гражданской обороны требует принятия решительных мер по исправлению имеющихся недостатков, на которые указывают отчеты Верховной контрольной палаты и заявления президента Польши.

Ключевые слова: гражданская оборона, защита гражданского населения

