

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANS IN CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY HAZARDS

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Abstract

The objective of the conducted research was to assess the value of crisis management plans in the context of real threats. The primary goal was to determine whether these plans contained (contain) procedures and guidelines that could be employed in the presence of occurring hazards. The work involved theoretical research methods, such as review of source literature, legal acts and currently binding crisis management plans, as well as synthesis, generalization and inference. A diagnostic survey method primarily based on the surveying and expert interview technique was employed with regard to empirical studies.

Based on the completed study, the author concludes that crisis management plans:

- essentially contain thematically appropriate descriptions and procedures that can be used directly or after modification in the face of materializing threats,
- constitute a valuable source of information on correct behaviour in emergency situations.

Furthermore, it should be noted that there are often problems in the area of drafting and practical use of crisis management plans.

Keywords: safety, plans, management, crisis, hazards

INTRODUCTION

The history of human civilization is the story of man's struggle against various adversities and threats. It can be said that since the dawn of history mankind has been grappling with various types of natural and civilizational threats, i.e. various emergencies (Smoleński, 2022). The fundamental reason for human's sense of insecurity stems from two distinct sources – nature and man. Concurrently empirical evidence suggests that the greatest threat to humanity is posed by human beings themselves, not nature (Pokruszyński, 2013).

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Over time, as humans have worked to counter and combat threats, planned actions, and thus various types of emergency response plans and subsequently crisis management plans, have become increasingly important. It is worth noting that the transition from emergency response plans to crisis management plans (or a combination of emergency response and crisis management plans) is essentially a natural progression. Simplifying the course of the entire evolutionary cycle in this regard, it can be said that people – societies, in their fairly spontaneous fight against various types of threats, in times of hazard materialization first recognize the usefulness of previously prepared (planned) solutions and procedures – in particular, emergency response plans. Then, appreciating the value of emergency response procedures and plans, systematically revising and improving them, they come to the inevitable conclusion that for an effective fight against threats, mere response is not enough; a holistic approach is necessary. They note that in combating of threats, no less important than the response itself is proper advance preparation for and prevention of emergencies, as well as reconstruction/restoration of damaged, destroyed or worn-out assets and functionalities. We have also gone down this type of path in Poland¹.

Years of experience, especially during the 1997 floods, unequivocally demonstrated the malfunctioning of the formal departmental institutional and competency system, in terms of task implementation, preparation and financing. In fact, it was only after the occurrence of the aforementioned 1997 emergency in Poland that the vast shortcomings in the coordination of emergency services and the lack of a crisis management process began to be noticed. The steps taken to create a proper system took many years (Frankiewicz, 2018).

As response to the tragedy that hit Poland in 1997 the Sejm adopted the Act of July 17, 1997 on the application of special solutions in connection with the elimination of the effects of the flood, which took place in July 1997 (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 1997 No. 80 item 491) (a legal regulation facilitating flood recovery), the Act of July 6, 2001 on the establishment of the multi-annual programme “Programme for the Oder River – 2006” (covering the modernization of the Oder Waterway) (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2001 No. 98 item 1067), and the establishment of an appropriate earmarked reserve in the state budget. Another important step in legislative activities in this area was the drafting and enactment of the Law of April 18, 2002 on the state of natural disasters (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2002, No. 62, item 558).

It should also be noted that in the meantime, recognizing the importance and necessity of regulating the issue of duties and competences in the field of crisis management, a government draft law on civil preparedness and emergency management was also drafted, but it never has been passed. Work on this law was

¹ Read article 5 of the Law of April 26, 2007 on crisis management in the Journal of Laws 2007, No. 89, item 590 and in the Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2009, No. 131, item 1076.

halted due to the veto of Aleksander Kwasniewski, the President of Poland at that time (Chancellery of the Senate, 2010).

Ultimately, the basic issues of crisis management under Polish law were regulated by the Crisis Management Act of April 26, 2007 (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2022, item 261). The main rationale behind the development and implementation of the Crisis Management Law included:

- Poland's accession to the European Union (hereinafter EU) in 2004, which required the adaptation of legal regulations to the EU standards in various areas of state functioning, including, among others, the activities of state administration bodies (Walczak, 2009) also in the sphere of protection of life and health of citizens;
- The lack of legal regulations allowing coordination of the activities of functionally independent bodies, institutions and services in the sensitive period between ordinary functioning of the administration and the threat justifying the introduction of one of the three states of emergency. The legal regulations in force at the time defined in detail the functioning and powers of state administration bodies, but only when citizens and state administration bodies were not threatened or disturbed in their functioning, and during states of emergency, i.e. in situations of special danger that justified the introduction of one of the three constitutional states of emergency. What was problematic, however, was the identification of the legal basis for non-standard but necessary actions in emergency situations.

The new Law on Crisis Management (as of 2007) introduced a number of long-awaited solutions, enabling coordination of independent organizations, institutions, and services (Walczak, 2009). According to the cited law, public administration units carry out crisis management tasks in a four-phase cycle (prevention, preparation, response and recovery). Additionally, in order to be adequately prepared, they handle civil planning, where stages such as analysis, programming, plan or program development, implementation, testing and launching are periodically carried out during a two-year cycle (Wojakowska, Gikiewicz, Koziół, Parada, 2020).

Among other things, the 2007 law made it mandatory to develop plans initially for emergency response plans (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2007 No. 89, item 590), and after the 2009 amendments – crisis management plans (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2009, No. 131, item 1076), which are discussed later in this article.

Emergency response plans and crisis management plans are powerful tools for organizations to remain resilient during operations when unforeseen circumstances disrupt their functioning (Spence, 2020). In simple terms: crisis management plans are much more extensive than crisis response plans. Crisis management plans cover all four phases of crisis management – prevention, preparation, response and recovery. Emergency response plans are meant to guide management's response to dealing with the crisis itself until things get back to normal.

The objective of the conducted research was to assess the value of crisis management plans in view of real threats. The primary goal was to establish whether these plans contained (contain) procedures and guidelines that could be employed in the wake of materialized hazards.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research forming the basis for drafting this article utilized theoretical methods, in particular, analysis review of pertinent literature, legal acts and current emergency management plans, as well as synthesis, generalization and unreliable and reliable inference. In terms of empirical research, a diagnostic survey method was adopted based primarily on the technique of questionnaires and expert interviews.

1. CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANS (theoretical approach)

According to the Law on Crisis Management (Articles 5(1) and 12(2)) (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2022, item 261), crisis management plans are mandatorily developed by:

- The Government Centre for Security (hereafter GCS) – National Crisis Management Plan (hereafter NCMP) – at the national/government level,
 - Provincial Governors – province crisis management plans,
 - County Governors – county crisis management plans,
 - Mayors – municipal crisis management plans,
- and, as functional annexes to the NCMP, by:
- Ministers in charge of government administration departments – according to their powers,
 - Heads of central offices – according to their powers.

The purpose of developing crisis management plans is to prepare state administrations to prevent emergencies, assume control over them, respond when they occur, mitigate their effects, recover from them, and restore critical resources and infrastructure. The crisis management plans specify (for the level of administration, as appropriate) who should take action, what they should do, how they should do it, and with whom they must cooperate. The NCMP is a superior document to all other crisis management plans. The plans of ministers and heads of central and provincial offices should be consistent with the NCMP, which is the starting document in the civil planning process at the central and provincial levels. In turn, district crisis management plans should be developed in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant provincial governor, and municipal crisis management plans should be developed in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant county governors.

The planning cycle in crisis management is two years long with the reservation that crisis management plans are updated not “every two years” but “not less than” every two years. The formula used in the Act is of relevance here: “the planning cycle shall not be longer than two years” (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2022, item 261), which explicitly implies that the cycle should not be longer, but may be shortened accordingly to the needs, situation and circumstances that arise. Thus, the plans should be updated when, for example, as a result of conducted crisis management exercises or the real launch of procedures, the need for a correction, supplement or amendment to the plan or a given procedure is identified, or in the event of a change in legal acts relevant to the crisis management system and individual planning documents, and not just once every two years or at the call (request) of the superior body. This is to ensure that the documents are up to date.

As a rule, crisis management plans are public documents. However, it should be borne in mind that they are developed in compliance with provisions of the August 5, 2010 Law on Protection of Classified Information (Smoleński, 2022) (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. of 2019, item 742), which means that the final determination of whether a plan is unclassified or classified is made by its originator, based on the principles and criteria described in the aforementioned law, i.e. according to the actual content of the plan – the degree of secrecy of the information contained in a specific document. With this approach, it is the originator who can decide, as necessary, whether their plan should be classified and marked with the appropriate classification. It is important to note that any restriction of access to the plan by classifying it may deprive it of its functionality or significantly limit it (Smoleński, 2021).

The content of crisis management plans is specified in detail in paragraph 2 of Article 5 of the cited Law on Crisis Management. According to the requirements outlined there, crisis management plans include:

- the main plan, which contains:
 - a) characteristic features of threats and an assessment of the risk of their occurrence, including those concerning critical infrastructure, as well as risk and threat maps;
 - b) tasks and responsibilities of crisis management entities in the form of a safety net;
 - c) list of forces and resources planned for use in emergency situations;
 - d) tasks defined by short-term action plans referred to in Article 92 of the Act of April 27, 2001 – Environmental Protection Law;
- a set of measures for emergency situations, which includes:
 - a) threat monitoring tasks;
 - b) a procedure for mobilizing the necessary forces and resources, involved in the implementation of planned projects in case of an emergency;
 - c) crisis response procedures, *modus operandi* in emergencies;
 - d) cooperation between the forces referred to in paragraph b;

- functional annexes of the main plan specifying:
 - a) procedures for the implementation of crisis management tasks, including those related to critical infrastructure protection;
 - b) communication organization;
 - c) organization of threats monitoring, warning and alert system;
 - d) principles of alerting the population of hazards and how to deal with them in case of danger;
 - e) organization of evacuation from threatened areas;
 - f) organization of rescue, medical, social and psychological assistance;
 - g) organization of protection against hazards specific to the given area;
 - h) list of agreements and arrangements related to the implementation of tasks included in the crisis management plan;
 - i) rules and procedures for assessing and documenting damage;
 - j) procedures for activating state reserves;
 - k) list of critical infrastructure located within a given province, county or municipality covered by the crisis management plan;
 - l) priorities for protection and restoration of critical infrastructure (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2022, item 261).

In recent years, the structure of the NCMP has been significantly modified. The current document consists of two separate, complementary parts – A and B (available on the Government Centre for Security website). Part A focuses on activities carried out to minimize the risk of an emergency and covers tasks carried out by public administrations in the first two phases of emergency management: prevention and preparedness. Part B describes post-crisis activities of the administration and includes solutions applied during the response and recovery phases. It should also be noted that such (significant) changes in the structure or content of the NCMP automatically force analogous changes in the crisis management plans of ministers, heads of central offices and provinces, and indirectly – in the structure of county and municipal plans (Smoleński, 2021).

The 2022 NCMP contained more than 190 modules(!), which covered the spectrum of activities implemented by the Prime Minister, as well as by each minister in charge of a government administration department, heads of the Internal Security Agency and Military Counterintelligence Service, province governors and the director of the Government Centre for Security. Each module is a compilation of detailed undertakings and their implementation methods. The modules are grouped into catalogues from 1 to 35, separately for each executor, and each catalogue is hosted by a specific minister or province governor. Each of the entities responsible for a particular catalogue is obliged to prepare the modules assigned to it, according to the model contained in the NCMP (<https://www.gov.pl/web/rcb/krajowy-plan-zarzadzania-kryzysowego>).

With the statutory provisions in mind, it should be assumed that crisis management plans should be developed by individual authorities in accordance with their substantive powers (Skomra, 2016). However, individual provincial

plans, ministerial plans or plans of heads of central offices should not duplicate the NCMP (that is not the “coherence” of the plans), but rather complement it, based on the competences and substantive authority of their creators. Unfortunately, in practice – as indicated by the Supreme Audit Office (hereafter SAO) – although the NCMP should not duplicate plans prepared by individual ministers and central administration bodies, but only complement them based on the competences of the Council of Ministers; in reality, this postulate is not really being met, and individual plans are generally competence-based or of a regional nature (in the scope concerning only the competence of the plan’s executor) (Ochrona ludności w ramach zarządzania kryzysowego..., 2018).

2. SELECTED MATERIALIZED THREATS OF THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND DECADE OF THE 21st CENTURY AND EXISTING CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANS

2.1. COVID-19

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (hereafter WHO) announced that the world was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic (the term “pandemic,” according to the PWN Encyclopaedia, refers to an epidemic of particularly large proportions whose scope includes countries and even continents (<https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/>)). Two days later, the WHO reported that the epicentre of the pandemic was in Europe, and the Polish Minister of Health signed a regulation (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2020, item 433) on the announcement of a state of epidemiological threat in the territory of the Republic of Poland from March 14, 2020, which was changed to a state of epidemic from March 20, 2020 (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2020, item 491).

The COVID-19² disease originally appeared in late 2019 in China at a local hospital in Wuhan. The disease then quickly spread throughout China. In the second half of February 2020, outbreaks of infection appeared in South Korea, Italy and Iran (Kusto, Klepacki, 2022).

The emergence of COVID-19 has caused far-reaching, often unpredictable consequences (Szczepanski, 2020, pp. 10–11), although, after all, it cannot be said that epidemics or pandemics are something new or unknown to our civilization. In the past, various diseases, including smallpox, plague and cholera have already spread in the form of pandemics. The largest of those epidemics, which occurred in the 14th century, caused the death of more than 25% of Europe’s population at the time. The introduction of antibiotics and vaccines helped decrease the number of diseases. Thanks to the above, the occurrence of epidemics in Europe became

² COVID-19 is the name of the respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (<https://www.medonet.pl/zdrowie,koronawirus-sars-cov-2---slowniczek-pojec--ktore-wartoznac,artykul,70847711.html>).

increasingly rare, and has occurred since then mainly in India, China and some parts of Africa. In 1918–1919, an influenza pandemic, known as the Spanish flu, reigned supreme, leading to the deaths, according to various estimates, of between 20–40 (Kusto, Klepacki, 2022) and as many as 100 million people. This significant discrepancy in the number of victims of the Spanish flu and problems with its reliable estimation are largely due to the fact that it broke out during World War I. The ongoing armed conflict caused some countries to avoid reporting on the actual scale and scope of the epidemic. These included England, Austria, France, Germany and the US, all of which provided information about the disease to the public in a very limited scope. It was different with neutral Spain, which almost immediately reported on the development of the pandemic and its deadly toll. Numerous flu reports from Spain led to that country being identified with the disease (<https://www.medonet.pl/koronawirus>). Subsequent influenza pandemics occurred in the years: 1957 (Asian flu), 1968 (Hong Kong flu) and 1977 (Russian flu), and the largest epidemics were in: 1948–49, 1952–53, 1965, 1973, 1985, 1995 (Kusto, Klepacki, 2022).

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been and continue to be felt in Poland, which is experiencing its first serious recession since the adoption of a free-market economy in 1989. The freezing or limitation of activities in certain industries has significantly affected the condition of businesses, reduced their revenues, and even in some cases caused their closure or bankruptcy. Many companies have found themselves on the brink or below the profitability threshold. Entrepreneurs in industries such as gastronomy, hospitality, aviation services, events, entertainment, and sports were particularly affected (Stravinsky, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic was a very telling reminder to humanity of its vulnerability to infectious diseases, and to emergency management planners of the old maxim reportedly uttered by US President General Dwight Eisenhower (Trocki, Wyrozębski, 2015) (<https://memoideo.com/symulowany-swiat>): plans are nothing, planning is everything.

2.2. Crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border

Since June 2021, there has been a hybrid conflict initiated by Alexander Lukashenko at the Polish-Belarusian border. As Bartosz Fraszka (Fraszka, 2021) writes, in response to the questioning of the legitimacy of the elections, EU criticism of his actions and the imposition of sanctions on Belarus, the Belarusian leader is fuelling the conflict and conducting hybrid actions as political revenge against the European Union. His actions are directed against the EU, but in practice they are mainly targeted at Poland and Lithuania, which actively support the Belarusian opposition and have given refuge to Svetlana Tikhanouskaya. To achieve his goals, Lukashenko cynically uses immigrants brought in from Arab countries and the so-called good human hearts of citizens of countries vulnerable to human suffering, particularly of children staying in harsh conditions in border forest areas. Using disinformation

techniques (including through the media of the attacked countries), he suggests that the responsibility for the above-mentioned suffering lies with the governments of EU countries and omits Belarus's causative role. Meanwhile, as part of the actions against the EU, Belarusian special and border services gradually brought Middle Eastern economic migrants under the border with Poland, Lithuania and Latvia and not only encouraged but even forced them to "storm" the EU border. In addition to political goals, the Belarusian leader undoubtedly has an economic interest in these actions. The costs associated with migration and the scale of the phenomenon controlled by Belarus make it a highly financially profitable venture for its organizers. To illustrate the scale of the phenomenon, it can be mentioned that, according to G. Sieczkowska and J. Kunert, only in the period from January to November 8, 2018, about 70,000 refugees from Turkey, Egypt and countries of the Middle East and Caucasus entered Minsk, Belarus (<https://tvn24.pl/premium/bialorus-kryzys>). In addition, it is likely that Lukashenko is counting on the recurrence of the so-called Turkish scenario, i.e. a lavish "tribute" from the EU in exchange for stopping the wave of migrants on the territory of Belarus (Fraszka, 2021).

Due to the particular threat to the safety of citizens and public order stemming from the situation on the state border with the Republic of Belarus, the President of the Republic of Poland introduced a state of emergency in part of the Podlaskie and Lubelskie Provinces for a period of 30 days as of September 2 (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2021, item 1612). The introduction of the state of emergency affected 183 precincts, located in 28 municipalities, lying within 8 counties. Subsequently, based on a resolution of the Polish Sejm (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2021, item 1787) of September 30, 2021, approving the extension of the state of emergency, the President of the Republic of Poland extended the state of emergency for a period of 60 days as of October 2, 2021, in the area specified in the earlier regulation (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2021, item 1788). In the meantime, on November 4, 2021, the law on the construction of a border security system (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. 2021, item 1992), i.e. the construction of a so-called barrier on the Belarusian border, came into force. The construction of the physical barrier on the Polish-Belarusian (EU-Belarusian) border was completed in 2022. The barrier is 186.25 km long and measures 5.5 m in height (<https://twitter.com/PremierRP/status>).

It should be borne in mind that although the time of the state of emergency in the Polish-Belarusian border area has passed, the threat and unrest in that zone in 2022 still persisted. At the same time, of course, their "media popularity" in the situation of the armed conflict within Ukraine has lost its value.

2.3. Russian Federation invasion of Ukraine in 2022

The Russian attack on Ukraine that took place on February 24, 2022, was not actually the beginning of a war between these countries, but a continuation of actions from 2014.

Russia's 2014 aggression against Ukraine was, of course, strongly condemned and many countries officially expressed their "displeasure," and yet they did nothing to really "harm" the aggressor. NATO and EU countries then made a necessary demonstration of solidarity (but only a demonstration) and a clear indication of a "red line" that Russia should not cross. Concurrently, they unequivocally exposed the differences that exist within the two organizations in their approach to the status (and thus the scope of rights and the possibility of receiving possible support) of their members and partners. By confirming the readiness for decisive, firm defence of interests and territory of NATO member states, not partners or the European security order as such, NATO clearly signalled that actions beyond the allies' borders would not meet with an equally decisive reaction from the alliance (Madej, 2015).

The tacit acceptance of the situation (Russian annexation of the peninsula) for the sake of global peace and the continuation of mutually beneficial cooperation between the Western world and the Russian Federation, as well as the relatively ineffective individual and economic sanctions officially imposed on Russia and selected citizens (judging from the perspective of the events at the beginning of 2022)³, have clearly contributed to the creation of a feeling among Russian leaders that the quick and consequence-free seizure of another part of Ukraine's territory was possible.

The renewed attack of federal forces on Ukraine, as already indicated, took place on February 24, 2022. The escalation of the armed conflict, the carrying out of actions that clearly are of a military nature, unambiguously indicates that, regardless of the ongoing political and theoretical-definition disputes, we are in fact dealing with a war on the territory of our immediate neighbour, which has a direct impact on the security of Poland and its citizens.

2.4. Existing crisis management plans

In the security environment, we can distinguish various types of threats, military and non-military, internal and external, and demonstrate their importance from the point of view of state security (Charatynowicz, 2021), or prove which ones are more important than the others. However, looking at them in the context of including them in crisis management plans, it should be emphasized that the threats materialized in 2020–2022, indicated in Chapters 2.1 – 2.3 of this study, have been and are being regularly identified and described in the main crisis management planning documents from their first versions up to the latest ones. In spite of the above, at the time of the arrival of a hazard, many bodies, institutions, individuals responsible for crisis management suddenly anxiously begin to "search" for preventive and counteracting solutions and demand the drafting of relevant

³ More on sanctions: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>.

procedures, as if not noticing (not knowing?) that the procedures have already been prepared. Meanwhile, the NCMP takes into account and has previously considered the risks associated with all three of situations mentioned above – they were anticipated, identified, analysed and described beforehand. Nonetheless, it can be said that once again the thesis put forward by Albert Camus has proven true, that even though there have been as many epidemics as wars in the world, epidemics and wars find people always equally surprised (Smoleński, 2021).

Therefore, it can be unequivocally stated that the existing crisis management plans take into account (have taken into account) the most significant hazards that have recently occurred on Polish territory.

It is, of course, a separate issue to examine whether the procedures prepared were adequate and sufficiently adapted to the situation at the time, or whether they required updating or adjustments (if so, which ones), but this could well be the basis for a separate study, the results of which cannot be determined prior to their execution. However, at this point it should be noted that, in this context, the results of the 2018 audit of the Supreme Audit Office (SAO) are not encouraging, as a result of which the following was stated: “None of the crisis management plans developed and approved (until 2018) were considered by SAO as reliably prepared and complete. The results of the audit showed that the authorities responsible for implementing crisis management tasks took very few (then) reliable and timely actions related to full preparation for the proper response to potential threats, which may be proven by non-compliance with the two-year deadline for updating the plan in all audited units” (*Ochrona ludności w ramach zarządzania kryzysowego ...*, 2018). In extreme cases, the negligence was downright shocking – “during the course of the audit, cases were ascertained in which emergency response plans approved under the provisions of the Emergency Management Act as it was in effect until September 19, 2009, were in force.” (*Ochrona ludności w ramach zarządzania kryzysowego ...*, 2018) (2018 audit!).

Given the current research, it is additionally disturbing that at the time of the materialization of the aforementioned threats in 2020, 2021, or 2022, it seems to have been forgotten in many cases (places) that there are crisis management plans that already take into account these threats, in which dedicated response procedures have been prepared in advance. This is all the more distressing because although it is possible to identify threats that have appeared or disappeared from plans along with changes in the world around us, the threats mentioned here have been and continue to be present in virtually every edition of the National Crisis Management Plan.

The conducted studies confirm that in successive editions of the National Crisis Management Plan (NCMP) we may regularly find threats such as epidemics and public order disturbances (previously referred to as “social protests”). Additionally, the NCMP contains, among others, procedures related to the suspension of Schengen Convention provisions/temporary restoration of border controls (SPO-4), actions taken in the event of a mass influx of foreigners into the

territory of Poland (currently SPO-9, beforehand 2017 SPO-10), the organization of evacuation of Polish citizens outside the country (SPO-11), the introduction of states of emergency (SPO-5 concerning the introduction of a state of natural disaster, SPO-6 – the introduction of a state of exception, SPO-7 – the introduction of a state of war) (<https://www.gov.pl/web/rcb/krajowy-plan-zarzadzania-kryzysowego>). These procedures can be highly useful in threats directly and indirectly initiated by situations indicated in chapters 2.1–2.3 (in this publication, for obvious reasons, the author refers exclusively to issues, analyses and procedures contained in public planning documents, particularly in the NCMP).

In accordance with the current recommendations and guidelines for the development of crisis management plans, the provincial crisis management plans include appropriate implementations of the provisions from the NCMP. The inclusion of the discussed hazards (and relevant procedures) in the provincial plans is not solely due to their presence in the NCMP. These threats have also been identified at the provincial level (and not only) by experts (organizational units of provincial offices) developing crisis management plans and sub-reports. For example, epidemics as one of the main threats affecting the provincial area were indicated in all provinces (at the level of district crisis management plans in more than 80% of the documents). Threats related to collective disorder were indicated by 75% ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the provincial offices, and the hazard of mass immigration was indicated in three provinces located on the eastern border of Poland, which is also the EU border (<https://bip.erzeszow.pl/>)(<https://luwwlublinie.bip.gov.pl/>)(<https://www.gov.pl/web/uw-podlaski>).

In summary – appropriate (thematically appropriate) descriptions and procedures can be found in the crisis management plans to address the risks identified in 2.1–2.3. Moreover, in a separate study on the educational value of emergency management plans implemented in 2020–2021 (Smoleński, 2021), 23.71% (almost $\frac{1}{4}$) of respondents indicated that “the existing emergency management plans provide valuable educational material in the area of dealing with hazards” (Smoleński, 2021), and as many as 53.61%, expressed the opinion that they could provide “valuable educational material.” Furthermore, only slightly more than 15% of the respondents (15.16%) identified crisis management plans as the source (one of the sources) from which they derive knowledge on how to properly deal with emergencies (Smoleński, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The crisis management system in Poland is currently one of the most important elements building state security, focused on protecting the power structures, critical infrastructure, civilian population and resources in case of extraordinary threats during peace and wartime. One of the key elements of its proper and harmonious operation is planning. The axis of the emergency planning system consists of crisis

management plans drawn up at all levels of public administration” (Szmitkowski, 2016).

In summary, crisis management is generally an element that enables efficient and effective preparation, prevention and action of the state administration in crisis situations, including the recovery phase, without the need of introducing a state of emergency. However, it should be emphasized that it can and should also be implemented after the introduction of a state of emergency, an increase in the country's defence readiness, or during a war (Majchrzak, 2018).

To conclude it should be stated that crisis management plans constitute an important element of the aforementioned crisis management system. Consequently, assessing their value in view of real threats, it can be said that:

- They generally contain thematically appropriate descriptions and procedures that can be used either directly or after modification also in a situation of current threats – among others, threats directly and indirectly initiated by the events indicated in chapters 2.1–2.3;
- They are a valuable source of information on how to properly deal with diverse threats.

However, it should be emphasised that in practice there are many shortcomings in the development and updating (mentioned, for example, in SAO reports) and use(!) of existing documents. Actions taken in the wake of threats are often carried out in disregard of the procedures from the crisis management plan of the appropriate level/executor. What is more, this does not mean that such actions are implemented illegally, usually this is quite the opposite. This is due to the fact that the relevant procedures are, after all, developed on the basis of relevant applicable laws, on the basis of which (the same regulations!) the responding authority takes its actions.

It is undeniable that plans, in particular those applicable for the same areas, should be consistent with each other (Radzioch, 2020). But it is also necessary to agree with the statement presented in the cited SAO audit materials that the “consistency” of plans does not mean duplicating the same content in multiple plans. Plans should complement, not duplicate each other (*Ochrona ludności w ramach zarządzania kryzysowego ...*, 2018). However, the current legislation requiring all (at each level) emergency management plans to be developed according to the same recommendations, in practice, significantly enforces the duplication of content. This applies, in particular, to the National Crisis Management System and crisis management plans of ministers and heads of central offices that operate in the same area, but in a narrower departmental/official scope. In addition, there are times when superior institutions explicitly force subordinate institutions to replicate their plans as ready-made and valid models.

In the author's opinion, some of the identified shortcomings in the area of civilian planning can be eliminated or reduced by:

1. Assigning statutory powers to the approving authorities to evaluate draft crisis management plans and the possibility to refuse their approval, respectively, as well as sanctions for failing to fulfil obligations to have

updated and approved plans. In the current state of the law, the director of the GCS, the minister responsible for public administration, the provincial governor, the district governor approves crisis management plans in accordance with the cited Law on Crisis Management, respectively. However, there is no indication that they may not approve the plan. What is more, the executors of the plans have a statutory obligation, assigned to each of them in an analogous manner, not to have an approved plan, but only(!) to draft (prepare) and submit for approval a crisis management plan. This implies that, from a formal point of view, if the plan executor drafts it and submits it for approval – the statutory obligation has been fulfilled. Hence the problem with enforcing the application of the requested corrections and incorporation of comments, as can be read in the reports of the Supreme Audit Office (SAO).

2. Organizing a system of specialized training for employees dealing with crisis management issues in government units, including in the drafting and evaluation of major planning documents.
3. Introducing a requirement to have appropriate qualifications (certificates of training or thematic education) for those performing civilian planning tasks.

Given the gravity of the issue, it is absurd and downright unacceptable that crisis management plans are produced – as the SAO points out – merely to fulfil a legal obligation to have such a document at disposal, rather than to create functional tools for managing crisis management processes (*Ochrona ludności w ramach zarządzania kryzysowego ...*, 2018). Such situations can be clearly prevented by the actions postulated above in points 1–3.

Furthermore, in the course of the ongoing research, a question arose that may provide the impetus for further research: is it reasonable to create all crisis management plans according to the same requirements – the same scheme?

Preliminary research leads to the thesis that the development of the NCMP according to principles uniform to all other plans causes excessive sprawl and complexity (which in 2018 led the GCS to develop and publish the “Practical Guide to the National Crisis Management Plan” (*Praktyczny przewodnik po Krajowym Planie Zarządzania Kryzysowego*, 2018) and duplication of content in the NCMP and also, for example, in the plans of ministers (which, in turn, is pointed out by the SAO). In this situation, taking into account the competence of the various executors and the position of the Prime Minister in the crisis management system, as well as the functionality of the crisis management system, in the author’s opinion two documents should be developed in place of the present NCMP: (1) a crisis management plan with its scope covering the activities that are within the competence of the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers and the director of the GCS, as responsible for crisis management and coordination of actions taken on the territory of the Republic of Poland, and (2) a Strategic Plan (Strategy) on crisis management.

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PLANY ZARZĄDZANIA KRYZYSOWEGO WOBEC WSPÓŁCZESNYCH ZAGROŻEŃ

Abstrakt

Celem przeprowadzonych badań była ocena wartości planów zarządzania kryzysowego w obliczu realnych zagrożeń. Przede wszystkim określenie, czy plany te zawierały (zawierają) procedury i wskazówki, które mogą być wykorzystywane w obliczu zmaterializowanych zagrożeń. W trakcie prac stosowano teoretyczne metody badawcze, w szczególności takie jak: analiza literatury, aktów prawnych i aktualnych planów zarządzania kryzysowego, a także synteza, uogólnienie oraz wnioskowanie zawodne i niezawodne. W zakresie badań empirycznych wykorzystano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego opartą głównie na technice ankietowania oraz wywiadów eksperckich.

Na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań autor stwierdza, że plany zarządzania kryzysowego:

- zasadniczo zawierają właściwe tematycznie opisy i procedury, które mogą być wykorzystywane wprost albo po modyfikacji w obliczu urzeczywistniających się zagrożeń,
- stanowią wartościowe źródło informacji na temat właściwego postępowania w obliczu różnych zagrożeń.

Jednocześnie należy stwierdzić, że niejednokrotnie występują problemy w obszarze przygotowania i praktycznego wykorzystywania tych dokumentów.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo, plany, zarządzanie, kryzysowe, zagrożenia